

**MINUTES OF BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF FEBRUARY 7, 2017 AT 4 P.M.**

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met in special session on February 7, 2017, in the First Floor Conference Room at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 4 p.m. in joint meeting with the Asheville City Council where and when the following business was transacted:

The Chairman called the meeting to order with the following members present:

Brownie Newman, Chairman
Ellen Frost, Vice Chair
Joe Belcher, Commissioner
Mike Fryar, Commissioner
Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Commissioner
Robert Pressley, Commissioner
Al Whitesides, Commissioner

The Mayor called the City Council to order with the following members present:

Esther Manheimer, Mayor
Gwen Wisler, Vice Mayor
Cecil Bothwell, Councilman
Brian Haynes, Councilman
Julie Mayfield, Councilwomen
Gordan Smith, Councilman
Keith Young, Councilman

Staff present was: Wanda Greene, County Manager; Jon Creighton; Assistant County Manager/Planning Director; Mandy Stone, Assistant County Manager/HHS Director; Tim Flora, Finance Director; Robert Deutsch, County Attorney; Kathy Hughes, Clerk to the Board; Maggie Burleson, City Clerk; Gary Jackson, City Manager;

Introductions and Welcome

The Asheville City Council and Buncombe County Commissioners introduced themselves and welcomed those attending.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Wanda Greene, County Manager reviewed some of the City and County partnerships including the consolidated dispatch center; criminal justice information system; joint mental health facilities and the geographic information system.

Gary Jackson, City Manager, said that he and the County Manager worked together to oversee these joint ventures with the goal of serving the community in a seamless fashion.

Commissioner Frost asked that the City and County work together to address the opioid crisis. The City Manager said that the framework existed to enable the City and County to work together to address the drug problem.

City & County Capital Construction Updates

Cathy Ball, Assistant City Manager, presented the City's Capital Improvement Plan in a power point presentation. Included was affordable housing; public safety; multi-modal transportation; economic development in the River Arts District and the greenway expansion. Future initiatives included south slope and Charlotte Street redevelopment and the I-26 corridor. She reviewed the bond projects that the City would begin totaling \$74 million for transportation, parks and recreation and affordable housing.

Jon Creighton, Assistant County Manager/Planning Director, presented the largest construction projects that the County is working to finalize including the Isaac Dickson School; Asheville Middle School, indoor firing range and Asheville High School roof project.

Josh O'Connor, Parks and Recreation Director, outlined the work on greenways development in the County. He said that the plans include the eventual extension of the Reems Creek Greenway through the River Arts District all the way to Lake Julian--creating a 20 mile greenway. The costs are about \$1.2 million per mile for construction only in addition to land acquisition and engineering. They were looking for federal and state grant funds and would be reapplying for Tourism Development Authority funding approval.

Councilman Smith explained the affordable housing incentive grant that the City was working to implement.

Updates on Key Initiatives

- **Energy Innovation Task Force**

Julie Mayfield, City Councilwomen, explained how the Energy Innovation Task Force originated and their efforts to work with Duke Energy as they attempt to avoid or delay a third natural gas plant and find a plan that will reduce peak energy usage on cold winter mornings. She said that the City/County/Duke Energy partnership toward this effort is very unique across the country. Chairman Newman explained that according to Duke Energy the third

plant would sit idle except on the cold mornings but Duke would be required to have this extra serving ability available to the community when it was needed.

Jason Walls, District Manager with Duke Energy, said that the community and Duke have a real opportunity to find a solution to this challenge. He said he felt they would arrive at a national model.

Virginia Lacey with the Rocky Mountain Institute who was assisting the task force, outlined the goals to transition to a cleaner energy and avoid the natural gas peak plant planned for 2023. The working group information was open to the public and on the City's website. Their goal is to have a finished action plan in 2017. Jason Walls said that energy efficiency programs provided by Duke Energy were still available for saving money and would be considered to reach some of the energy goals.

The Chairman said that the County spends about \$2 million toward energy bills for low income citizens and being more energy efficient would help this expense as well.

Commissioner Fryar suggested cutting out the City's requirement for glass and windows in the new construction to cut energy costs. Commissioner Belcher suggested that building codes should be reviewed to find energy saving alternatives. He also said that some residents are paying more for their power bill than for their rent and he suggested all the aspects of energy efficiency be reviewed.

The Chairman said that once the strategies are finalized all the members of the committee would be asked to take the campaign to the communities.

- **East Asheville Library**

Wanda Greene, County Manager, updated the Board on the East Asheville Library renovation. The County staff had been meeting with the community to determine what they wanted in a new or renovated library and as a result of these meetings, drawings were being prepared for possible alternatives for the site. The community would be surveyed to get additional input from more of the community. When alternatives are presented the community will consider if the library could stay on the current location or move to another location in the community. They hope to begin construction or renovation in 2018 with completion in 2019. The Mayor said that the footprint of the existing library will limit expansion. The Chairman encouraged everyone to attend the next community meeting to consider some possible alternatives.

- **African America Heritage Commission**

The Mayor said that the African American Heritage Commission was a joint effort of the City and County to recognize African American history. The Commission would be holding a retreat to plan for a project to highlight the African American contribution to the community and to plan for future work of the commission as a whole. Commissioner Whitesides said that as a former member of this Commission, he felt the Commission was just window dressing with nothing really getting done. He said that he, speaking as an African American and taxpayer, felt the Commission was not representing the community but hoped that it would in the future.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara said that the County would be working to address equity in the community. The Mayor said that the City was also working on the equity issue. Commissioner Frost said that she had been meeting with the community and hearing their needs and on February 21 the Commissioners would hear a presentation of some possible remedies for this issue. The Mayor said that the African American Commission needs to be empowered to vision and move forward. Commissioner Frost said that the community was willing to work toward a solution.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

KATHY HUGHES, CLERK TO THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BROWNIE NEWMAN, CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS