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CUMBERLAND COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE
NEW COURTHOUSE, 117 DICK STREET, 5TH FLOOR, ROOM 564
DECEMBER 7, 2009 – 10:30 AM
MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Jimmy Keefe, Chairman
Commissioner Billy R. King
Commissioner Ed Melvin

OTHERS PRESENT: Commissioner Kenneth Edge
Commissioner Jeannette Council
Commissioner Breeden Blackwell
James Martin, County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager
Amy Cannon, Assistant County Manager
Phyllis Jones, Interim County Attorney
Harvey Raynor, Deputy County Attorney
Bob Stanger, County Engineer
Sally Shutt, Communications Manager
Candice H. White, Deputy Clerk to the Board
Press

Commissioner Keefe called the meeting to order and recognized Commissioners Edge, Council and Blackwell who were also in attendance.

1. Approval of Minutes: November 10, 2009 Meeting

MOTION: Commissioner King moved to approve.
SECOND: Commissioner Melvin
VOTE: UNANIMOUS

2. Update Regarding Alternative for Relocation of County Administrative Offices

Commissioner Keefe called on James Martin, County Manager. Mr. Martin stated at the September 8, 2009 meeting of the Facilities Committee, discussion was held regarding alternatives for the relocation of county administrative offices and subsequent to that meeting, the board was requested to delay action on the matter for sixty to ninety days to allow staff the opportunity to evaluate additional properties of which management had become aware. Mr. Martin further stated staff attempted to explore other alternatives that never materialized and the matter was being brought back to the committee for further discussion and direction.

Commissioner King inquired regarding the amount of pressure from the court system for additional space in the new courthouse and the space needs of county departments within the facility. Mr. Martin stated there is a constant need for additional space for the Clerk

DRAFT

of Court office, the Guardian ad litem office, probation and parole, the judges office to include their staff and to some extent, there is a projected need for additional courtroom space within three to five years. Mr. Martin further stated one of the issues driving the court system's need for additional space is the anticipation the Base Realignment and Closing (BRAC) may have on the court system and the future staffing/spatial needs therein. Mr. Martin stated although there is not a pressing need for the county to vacate the new courthouse building, the county is at capacity for the departments housed within the facility and there is a continuing need for additional space for which there is none. Mr. Martin stated one consideration could be to move a single department or two and thereby free up space into which the other departments could move.

Mr. Martin stated management and staff recommended renovation of the health department because it is believed to be the low cost alternative, even though it is likely not the most desirable location. Mr. Martin called on Bob Stanger, County Engineer, who stated space on each floor of the health department would need to be reconfigured and new plumbing, electrical and a mechanical distribution system would be needed. Mr. Stanger further stated the major mechanical plant was in excellent shape as it was recently replaced.

Commissioner King inquired whether it would be feasible to renovate the health department one floor at a time. Mr. Stanger stated although it could be done, it would ultimately be more expensive to phase in construction and there would be a disruption to activities in the building while it was undergoing renovation. Mr. Stanger noted that once the health department vacated the building, it would be important for the board to make a decision regarding the disposition of the building so it would not remain vacant. Mr. Stanger stated the building would need to have some level of conditioned air to prevent mold related issues.

Commissioner Keefe inquired whether there would be a sense of urgency for the county to relocate after the first of the year if the health department was not a readily available option. Mr. Martin stated with or without the option of the health department, his response would be no. Mr. Martin stated, however, there is the continuous need for additional space by several county departments within the new courthouse.

Commissioner Melvin inquired regarding costs to renovate the health department building. Mr. Stanger responded \$9 million to \$10 million. Commissioner Melvin spoke to future uncertainties and inquired whether the county could satisfactorily withstand the renovations. Mr. Martin responded in the affirmative and stated the county had money that was targeted as reserves for the renovations and there may be additional funds derived from last year's financial operations.

Commissioner Blackwell inquired whether the architectural plans for renovation of the health department could be used as a means to save money. Mr. Stanger responded in the negative and stated plans for the actual renovation design did not get far because of the decision to construct a new health department.

DRAFT

Commissioner Council inquired when the Community Development department would need to vacate their current location. Mr. Martin stated he received a letter from John Meroski, President of the Fayetteville Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau (FACVB), and although they are clearly set on acquiring the space as soon as possible in order to expand their operations, he had advised them although there were plans to move the Community Development department, it would be some time away.

Commissioner Edge inquired regarding the number of parking spaces that would be freed up at the new courthouse if the county were to relocate its offices. Mr. Martin estimated one hundred fifty. Commissioner Melvin inquired regarding the parking capacity of the health department building. Mr. Martin estimated it would be over two hundred, which would be sufficient.

Mr. Martin reviewed the recommendations/proposed action as presented in the committee's agenda packet and spoke to initial plans for the legal aid building, which were no longer viable. Commissioner Keefe inquired whether the space for the legal aid building would be needed for parking if the relocation of county offices were to free up one hundred fifty spaces. Mr. Martin stated the legal aid building either needed to undergo major costly renovations or be demolished; were it to be demolished, it would yield approximately twenty-five parking spaces.

Commissioner Keefe inquired regarding cost projections for expansion of the jail facility. Mr. Martin stated a recent estimate he received from Major John McRainey, Detention Center Chief Jailer, was approximately \$12 million for construction costs and an additional \$1 to \$1.5 million for operating costs.

Commissioner Keefe opened the floor for discussion as to whether the county should move forward with renovations and relocate the county offices or remain in the courthouse. Commissioner King inquired whether the county had been notified by authorities that additional space was needed. Mr. Martin stated county administration has received vague requests by just about every agency in the new courthouse that they need additional space either in the present, mid term or long term. Commissioner King inquired whether it would be possible for the county to postpone their response. Mr. Martin responded if the county did not have the vacant health department building, that would likely be the recommendation.

Mr. Martin stated given the vacant building, the available parking and other associated issues, the health department building seemed to be a low cost alternative for providing additional administrative office space for the county. Mr. Martin further stated he did not foresee a mass directive from the court system for the county to relocate its offices as eminent. Mr. Martin emphasized that provisions do need to be made for freeing up space in the new courthouse and should the suspension of the health department building as an option be long term, then other facilities would need to be looked at for the relocation of some of the county departments in order to free up space for the expansion of other county departments and maybe even the court system. A brief discussion followed.

DRAFT

MOTION: Commissioner Melvin moved to recommend that staff further explore renovation of the public health center, the procurement of architectural services and more detailed cost estimates to bring back to the board for future consideration.

SECOND: Commissioner King

Commissioner Keefe inquired regarding the timeframe. Mr. Stanger stated the procurement process would take one to one and one half months and development of a building program would take six to eight weeks.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Mr. Stanger inquired regarding the disposition of the legal aid building.

MOTION: Commissioner King moved to demolish the building and pave the property.

SECOND: Commissioner Melvin

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

3. Other Matters of Concern

There were no other matters of concern.

MEETING ADJOURNED