

COUNTY POLICY COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 12, 1995, 2:00PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Keefe, Chairman
Commissioner Rollin Shaw
Commissioner Tom Bacote

OTHERS PRESENT: Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager
James Martin, Deputy County Manager
Bob Stanger, County Engineer
Steve Blanchard, Manager, PWC
Mick Noland, PWC
Brenda Foreman, Sr. Staff Attorney
Marsha Fogle, Clerk
Lacy Williams, Supervisor, Environmental Health
Press

Chairman Keefe called the meeting to order.

1. Discussion: Water/Sewer Extension Policy

Chairman Keefe said our extensions should be based on the following:

1. Demonstrated need because of health problems;
2. Participation by citizens requesting extensions;
3. Economically sound
4. Other funding sources available

Mr. Strassenburg noted the County appropriated \$500,000 for water/sewer extensions in the FY96 budget. He indicated we need to adopt a policy of how to determine which projects to fund. A consideration is whether or not the city is scheduled to annex said area in the next couple of years.

Mr. Lacy Williams noted some water quality problems in the eastern portion of the county, i.e., iron and other excess minerals in the water.

The Committee discussed briefly the request coming to the Board reference an Eastover Water Utility. Mr. Strassenburg noted the following concerns: (1) the water district would not be a private district, but would be operated by the Board of Commissioners who would set the rates; (2) the feasibility study assumes 100% of the people will sign on for the water, percentage estimate may be too high; (3) concerned that other areas may want to do the same and pretty soon the Board of Commissioners will be operating many water utilities within the county; (4) feasibility of project is based on Farmers Home Funding which is predicated for projects in rural areas, does not address any industry need, etc.; (5) project will not meet PWC standards; (6) the project goes no where, it dead-ends. Mr. Strassenburg said it would be the recommendation of staff to refer this particular item to the Policy Committee for review and recommendations.

Chairman Keefe noted there needs to be a greater infusion of money into our Water and Sewer fund in order to meet our needs. Commissioner Shaw said she thought

we should go back and look at our county-wide plan.

Mr. Mick Noland, PWC, noted that PWC is in the process of developing a Water System Master Plan. He stated that PWC is expending 18 million dollars of revenue bond fund projects into the county, 8 million refunding projects and will expend 8 million for Phase I annexation. Mr. Noland said the greatest challenge is determining "where is the greatest need". Do you just extend to areas with health problems or do you extend the infrastructure to accommodate future growth. Commissioner Shaw suggested we should do both.

Mr. Steve Blanchard, Manager of PWC, told the Committee that a Rate Workshop is being planned to help address issues of concern about water/sewer extensions. He said he planned to invite the City Council and the Board of Commissioners to this workshop. He noted the importance of both the county and city buying into the overall plan. One of the issues that may be addressed is "availability fee." Mr. Blanchard noted the importance of striking a balance in the extension of services, i.e., helping those areas who are having health related problems and making extensions when there is a sharing of the cost, i.e., for instance 1/3 to be paid by the developer, 1/3 to be paid by the city and 1/3 to be paid by PWC. Mr. Blanchard said their goal is to try to get ahead of development if possible. Mr. Blanchard also noted the importance of similar assessment fees inside and outside of the city limits. He said he hoped this workshop will address some of these issues.

Chairman Keefe asked Mr. Lacy Williams to submit a list to the Committee indicating the real trouble areas in the county. Mr. Strassenburg indicated that our top 10 priority areas are the areas that will be annexed by the City and if the County were to move on these projects, they would not be finished any sooner than when the City annexes and takes care of the problems.

Commissioner Shaw said that even though our priority is to address areas with health related problems, our greater focus should be on working on our infrastructure and getting ahead of development.

The Committee will discuss this item further at their next meeting.

2. Discussion: Increase in ABC Board Stipends

At the April 25, 1995, Commissioners meeting the ABC Board requested an increase to the monthly stipend for Board members. They wish to increase the Chairman's stipend from \$150 per month to \$250 per month. Also they want to increase the other board members' stipends from \$125 to \$200 per month.

MOTION: Commissioner Bacote offered a motion that the Committee recommend approval of the increase.

SECOND: Commissioner Shaw

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Shaw noted that the money for the increase comes out of the ABC Board profits. It was also noted that this Board is different from our other Boards/Committees in that it operates to make a profit, i.e., it is a business. Commissioner Keefe indicated his concern about the fact that the ABC Board has not increased its appropriations to the county, i.e., they have been giving us \$500,000 since 1975. He said he could not vote to increase their monthly stipends. Commissioner Shaw said because this is a "business" she could see the merits of the increase.

VOTE: FAVOR: Commissioners Bacote and Shaw
OPPOSED: Commissioner Keefe

Commissioner Shaw asked the Senior Staff Attorney to research what would have to be done to decrease the size of the ABC Board from five members to three members.

3. Discussion: Subdivision Review Committee's Subcommittees' report on Schools and Fort Bragg

Commissioner Shaw asked what the Policy Committee's role is in this issue. Mr. Strassenburg noted the Committee should look at the report and recommendations and determine if they are feasible and if so, what needs to be done for implementation. The Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners reference the Sub-Committees report and recommendations. He indicated he is working on a matrix that may be helpful to this Committee in looking at all of the recommendations.

The committee will address this issue once Mr. Strassenburg completes his matrix.

This Committee will meet again on Wednesday, September 27, 1995, 3:00PM in Room 564, Cumberland County Courthouse.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 3:45PM