

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2000, 11:00AM

PRESENT: Commissioner Breeden Blackwell
Commissioner Talmage Baggett
Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager
James Martin, Deputy County Manager
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney
Bob Stanger, County Engineer
Matt Rooney, Interim Planning Director
Jeff Reitzel, Planning Board
John Gillis, Planning Board
Marsha Fogle, Clerk to the Board

ABSENT: Commissioner Tom Bacote

INVOCATION: Commissioner Talmage Baggett

1. Approval of Minutes: December 16, 1999

MOTION: Commissioner Blackwell moved to approve.

SECOND: Commissioner Baggett

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

2. Discussion: Rural Water Service Feasibility Study

James Martin, Deputy County Manager, reviewed the history of this project. He noted that as a result of two joint meetings in 1999 between the Board of Commissioners and City Council, two members of the County Planning Board (Jeff Reitzel and John Gillis) along with two members of the City Planning Commission (Dave Averette and Fred Farmer), were constituted as the Joint Planning Committee on Water and Sewer Service. That Joint Planning committee approved a motion to recommend that the County and PWC split the cost for a feasibility study for providing water service for water and sanitary districts outside of the urban area. On December 7, 1999, the Cumberland County Joint Planning Board unanimously approved a motion to adopt a resolution requesting the County Commissioners to participate with City of Fayetteville and PWC in funding a consultant to perform a feasibility study to create water service districts in Cumberland County. On January 12, 2000, the PWC Board agreed in concept to split the cost of this study.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Recommend to the Board of Commissioners that the County move forward with PWC in selecting a consulting engineer and negotiating the cost of a feasibility study to create water service districts outside the urban area, for final approval by the County and PWC.

Jeff Reitzel, County Planning Board member, said the general concept is to have a water service district with the Board of Commissioners acting as the authority, as opposed to having multiple districts, multiple boards, etc.

Commissioner Talmage Baggett noted the importance of moving forward with this Study as quickly as possible. This study should focus on the extension of water, not sewer services. He said he did not believe the City of Fayetteville acting independent of PWC should be asked to contribute.

Grainger Barrett, County Attorney, addressing the legal aspects of setting up such a district told the Committee the district would be a County Water District, governed by Chapter 162A as opposed to a Sanitary District. This District would have many of the same powers as the Eastover Sanitary District with the exception of zoning authority. They would be able to issue bonds and levy taxes to repay the debt to extend water to the residents.

Bob Stanger, County Engineer, noted the County has already established that Water and Sewer District in 1992. A special bond referendum was held in November, 1992, upon the question of approving water and sewer bonds. The referendum failed. Mr. Stanger also noted the importance of developing a scope of services for this Feasibility Study.

Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager, noted the Feasibility Study done by Wilbur Smith and Associates in 1992 was probably not as detailed as this new study should be.

Commissioner Blackwell stated he felt this project should be put on the front burner.

MOTION: Commissioner Baggett moved to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that the County join with PWC to pay for the cost of a Feasibility Study, and that we use information from the study done in 1992, if pertinent to our current situation.

SECOND: Commissioner Blackwell

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Baggett said he hoped we would not get bogged down in the Study resulting in a delay in going forward with the extension of water into the County.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

3. Other Matters of Concern:

A. Election of Chairman

The Committee decided to hold off on election of a Chairman until all members could be present. Note: The regular meeting date of third Thursday of the month at 11:00AM also remains the same)

B. Discussion: Allowing businesses to come in and sell their product to county employees.

Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager, noted he has been contacted for a second time by a company who wishes to offer pre-paid legal services to county employees, as a payroll deduction. Mr. Strassenburg stated the Finance Committee considered this issue a while back and decided not to do this.

Mr. Strassenburg asked the Policy Committee for some direction in this matter. It appears the company wants permission to talk to employees at work regarding this issue.

Committee members Baggett and Blackwell noted they were not supportive of this request, noting once you open something like this up to one company, other businesses will ask for the same opportunities.

MOTION: Commissioner Baggett moved that the County not participate in any form of endorsement of any outside sales of any type, except those authorized by the County's benefit plan.

SECOND: Commissioner Blackwell

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

C. Bids submitted by local vendors

Commissioner Blackwell asked for clarification on bid items where local vendors' bids were within a few cents of the lowest out of town bidder. Grainger Barrett noted the County can not give preferential treatment just because a bidder is local; he said it would violate the Interstate Commerce Clause.

D. Fire Department Mutual Aid Agreements

Commissioner Baggett inquired about the matter of one of our fire departments withdrawing their mutual aid to the Town of Hope Mills.

It was noted staff will meet with appropriate authorities concerning this matter to try to bring about a mutual agreement that will be acceptable to everyone involved.

Although this is an issue that needs to be addressed, it was noted that in the instance of annexation, each annexing municipality has to hold affected Volunteer Fire Departments harmless from revenue loss for five years. It was noted this is not an *immediate* financial issue, but one the County will have to address.

MEETING ADJOURNED.