

MINUTES
LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2006

The Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners met for a non-agenda community meeting on January 24, 2006, at the West Lincoln High School Cafeteria, 172 Shoal Road, Lincolnton, North Carolina, at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present:

Thomas R. Anderson, PE, Chairman
James Buddy Funderburk, Vice Chairman
Carrol Mitchem
Marie Moore
Alex E. Patton

Others Present:

Stan B. Kiser, County Manager
Jeffrey A. Taylor, County Attorney
Delores Alfaro, Assistant Clerk to the Board
House Representative Joe Kiser

Call to Order: *Chairman Anderson* called the January 24, 2006, meeting of the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners to order, which was recessed from January 23, 2006.

Invocation: *Commissioner Patton* gave the Invocation, after which *the ROTC Color Guard*, consisting of *Katie Brafford, Daniel Canipe, Benjamin Kahler and Jason Sanders*, directed by *Instructor James Barksdale, 1st Sgt. Naval Science Instructor*, led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Anderson stated that this was the last of three non-agenda meetings that were to take place in various sections of the county, the first being held in East Lincoln, and the second one in Lincolnton. Chairman Anderson stated that the purpose of the meeting was for the public to discuss any matter they so chose.

UPON MOTION by *Commissioner Funderburk*, the Board voted 4-1 to cancel the February 13, 2006, non-agenda meeting in East Lincoln and, instead, have the public approach the Board of Commissioners regarding incorporation.

AYES: Anderson – Funderburk – Mitchem – Patton
NOES: Moore

The motion rescinded the previous motion made by *Commissioner Moore* at the Board of Commissioners' Meeting held January 23, 2006.

Commissioner Mitchem stated that a non-agenda meeting should not specifically address incorporation.

Jim Hallman commended the Board of Commissioners and Economic Development Association on the success of the Industrial Park.

A. E. Dellinger asked when the western end of the county would get water for the entire area. *Chairman Anderson* stated that he understood the need for it, and expressed concern about arsenic poisoning in wells, but that a number of reasons were responsible for the delay, which included cost and the need for a sufficient amount of customers to make it cost effective. Chairman Anderson stated that the population is not dense enough in that area, and because homes are so spread out, it would take a lot of money to run lines, with much of that money being required up front. Mr. Dellinger stated that the neighboring county of Cleveland was covered throughout the entire county. Chairman Anderson explained that a lot of state and federal grants were available at one time, adding that Lincoln County has applied at least two times to run a line on Cat Square. Mr. Dellinger referred to the contamination of wells, stating that arsenic was a problem, and that something would have to be done. Chairman Anderson stated that we must be able to afford the infrastructure, adding that he would like to: 1) bring a line up Hwy. 182 and loop it, and, 2) bring a line up Cat Square and Reepsville Roads and tie it into the water plant on Reepsville Road. Chairman Anderson stated that he would like to tie into Hickory as back-up, and stressed that loops were imperative to the success of the project.

Mitch Sherrill, West Lincoln High School Principal, thanked the Board of Commissioners for their contribution to and support of Lincoln County Schools. Mr. Sherrill invited the Board to tour the newly renovated classrooms after the meeting. *Representative Kiser* stated that one of those classrooms was his original classroom when he taught at the school.

Sylvia Holmes stated that, although she and her husband live in the eastern end of the county, everyone should embrace and support the fact that we're all in the same county, and strive to work together.

A. E. Dellinger encouraged the Board to stop growth in western Lincoln County. *Chairman Anderson* stated that the Board could not stop a man from profiting from his land, nor could they prohibit a developer from developing. Chairman Anderson stated that the County is currently working on an APFO (Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance), which is a tool local government can use to control growth by setting limits if there are no adequate schools and water.

Chairman Anderson stated that Jim Hallman was instrumental in bringing the Industrial Park on line, and that the park is developing nicely. Chairman Anderson stated that industries that come into the County receive incentives which reduce their tax bases, and that their tax benefit is just now being realized. *A. E. Dellinger* asked where the jobs went, adding that they should benefit Lincoln County. Chairman Anderson stated that the County works with the ESC (Employment Security Commission) to hire and Gaston

College to train, and that they do try to hire locally. *Chairman Anderson* stated that 50% plus leaves Lincoln County daily to work. Chairman Anderson, who serves on the EDA Board, pointed out a recent highlight for Lincoln County, the acquirement of SABO, a Brazilian company. He stated that attracting new businesses is very competitive. *Commissioner Funderburk* stated that the quality of schools is scrutinized by potential businesses.

David Heafner stated that money used to be no object, but that prices are astronomical at present, and the tax base has changed considerably. Mr. Heafner stated that the new water/sewer plant lines will be a plus, and that the western end of the County might even attract a few industries.

Representative Kiser stated that the west Lincoln population is growing too. *Mitch Sherrill* stated that West Lincoln High School, with a population of 1,043 students as of today, is the most populated school.

Sylvia Holmes stated that, as a member of the County Recreation Commission, she has to be aware of the entire county's needs. *A. E. Dellinger* asked about the grading for the recreation field. *Ms. Holmes* stated that it had not yet been approved. *Commissioner Mitchem* stated that it would be done before the end of 2006, adding that the County has been applying for grants, but that it was time to proceed, with or without the grants, to show west Lincoln that the Board is committed. *David Heafner* stated that grants were the best thing that ever happened. *Commissioner Patton* stated that the Master Plan allows us a better chance. *Sylvia Holmes* stated that any money spent before the grant is awarded will not be matched dollar for dollar, and that timing was critical. *A. E. Dellinger* asked how the figure of \$40 million was arrived at. *Chairman Anderson* explained that it was based on a state average. *Commissioner Mitchem* stated that an aquatic center was recommended for west Lincoln. *Chairman Anderson* stated that determining how to provide funding and prioritizing various needs throughout the county were factors. *A. E. Dellinger* stated that a lot of what was recommended in the plan is not needed or wanted. *Sylvia Holmes* stated that there is a real inadequacy of facilities in the County. *Representative Kiser* stated that, tonight, he had heard a lot about spending money and keeping taxes at a minimum. *Stan Kiser, County Manager*, stated that the County's debt service is one-half million dollars, and will continue to increase as long as schools are built. *Representative Kiser* stated that there is a bill in place to remove the county's debt in increments within five years. *Commissioner Mitchem* stated that, with the projected lottery, the County is set to receive \$2-3 million dollars. *A. E. Dellinger* referred to the lottery's effect on Dillon County, SC. Mr. Dellinger also remarked about how extreme school officials were in designing the schools, North Lincoln High, in particular. *Commissioner Patton* stated that the school officials learned their lesson and are getting a better price on schools being built now. *Commissioner Mitchem* stated that other counties are now coming to view the newer schools being built in Lincoln County.

Jim Hallman asked if the passage of the ABC referendum had profited the County. *Chairman Anderson* stated that it had not, there has been no distribution, but they will retire the debt quicker than anticipated, and revenues are forthcoming. *Commissioner*

Funderburk stated that Lincoln County has had a 54¢ tax rate for the last two years. Mr. *Funderburk* stated that either the schools or Medicaid would have to be cut, which would lead to a reduction in service, based on need, and neither choice is palatable.

A. E. Dellinger asked why every policeman needs a car. *Representative Kiser* stated that a car with one individual will wear out two times faster, and that it is based on the quality of law enforcement you want. Mr. *Kiser* continued by stating that, in education and law enforcement, protection of families is a priority. *A. E. Dellinger* retorted by stating that why we can afford is key. *Commissioner Funderburk* stated that the mere sight of a police car serves as a deterrent to crime. *Mitch Sherrill* stated that the number of law enforcement officials who responded to last week's bomb threat at the high school made a huge difference, and was appreciated by parents, students and teachers.

Chairman Anderson referred to vision and planning farther ahead. He stated that his goal is to have adequate sources in place. *A. E. Dellinger* stated that two emergency buildings were housed nearby, and asked why not combine resources, and use only one. *Chairman Anderson* explained that they were two separate entities, funded separately. He stated that all fire departments are operated by volunteers. *Jim Hallman* stated that, by planning for the future, duplication could be eliminated.

A. E. Dellinger asked what the Board has done or plans to do for senior citizens. *Chairman Anderson* stated that the Senior Center is rapidly becoming inadequate. He stated that citizens 59 years of age and up are the fastest growing population. *Commissioner Funderburk* stated that there are lots of programs designed for senior citizens, but they have to go to Lincolnton to participate. *Commissioner Mitchem* suggested a senior citizen tax discount for those over the age of 65.

A. E. Dellinger and *David Heafner* expressed their disappointment over the small turnout for the meeting.

Being no more discussion, *Chairman Anderson* adjourned the meeting.