

April 23, 2001
5:15 p.m - Recessed Meeting Reconvened

The Johnston County Board of Commissioners met in recessed session in the Emergency Operations Center, Johnston County Courthouse Law Enforcement Center, Smithfield, North Carolina. Due to the presenter being late, the meeting began at 5:30 p.m. with the following members:

Present: James H. Langdon, Jr., Chairman, Cookie Pope, Vice-Chairman, Thomas M. Moore, Allen L. Mims, Wade M. Stewart, Fred Smith and W. Ray Woodall
 Absent: None
 Also Present: Rick J. Hester, County Manager, Joyce H. Ennis, Clerk to the Board, J. Mark Payne, County Attorney, and John R. Massey, Finance Officer

The Chairman called the recessed meeting to order and the following business was transacted:

1. Resolution Accepting the Letter of Conditions for USDA Rural Development Loan for the Brogden Water District

Upon a motion by Commissioner Cookie Pope, seconded by Commissioner W. Ray Woodall and carried by unanimous vote, the Board recessed regular session to meet as the Brogden Water District Board.

Barbara Beard Hinton with USDA Rural Development, reviewed with the Board the letter of conditions for the grant and loan on the Brogden Water District. She noted this district did qualify for a grant in the amount not to exceed \$1,535,000 and a loan not to exceed \$3,347,000. The loan is for 40 years at no greater than 4.75 % interest. A General Obligation Bond is the security for the loan. The final plans and specifications will be submitted by staff and need to be approved by the Board.

Following discussion, Commissioner Wade M. Stewart moved the Board adopt the following resolution accepting the conditions of the USDA Rural Development Loan for Brogden Water District. Commissioner Cookie Pope seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

RESOLUTION - BROGDEN WATER DISTRICT

BE IT RESOLVED

That the Board of Commissioners of the Brogden Water District accepts the conditions set forth in the Letter of Conditions dated April 23, 2001, and RUS Bulletin 1780-27, Loan Resolution;

That the Board of Commissioners approves as shown on Form RD 442-7, Operating Budget, the proposed budget;

That the Chairman and Clerk be authorized to execute all forms necessary to obtain a loan and grant from the Rural Utility Service (RUS), including, but not limited to the following forms:

RUS Bulletin 1780-27	Loan Resolution
RUS Bulletin 1780-12	Water and Waste System Grant Agreement
Form RD 442-46	Letter of Intent to Meet Conditions
Form RD 442-7	Operating Budget
Form RD 400-1	Equal Opportunity Agreement
Form RD 400-4	Assurance Agreement
Form RD 1940-1	Request for Obligations of Funds
Form RD 1910-11	Applicant Certification Federal Collection Policies
Form AD-1047	Certification Regarding Debarment
Form AD 1049	Certification Regarding Drug Free Workplace

That if the interest rate charged by USDA Rural Development should change between this date and the date of actual loan approval, the Chairman and Clerk be authorized to execute new forms reflecting the current interest rate and revised payments as required by USDA Rural Development;
 The proposed rate schedule for residential water use is as follows:

Minimum \$19.00 per 1,000 gallons of water usage
 All over 1,000 gallons - \$2.70 per 1,000 gallons

That the resolution is to become a part of the official minutes of the Board of Commissioners meeting of the Brogden Water District meeting held April 23, 2001.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Cookie Pope, seconded by W. Ray Woodall and carried by unanimous vote, the Board adjourned the Brogden Water District Board and resumed regular session.

April 23, 2001
5:30 p.m - Special Called Meeting

The Johnston County Board of Commissioners met in special session in the Emergency Operations Center, Johnston County Courthouse Law Enforcement Center, Smithfield, North Carolina beginning at 5:35 p.m. with the following members:

Present: James H. Langdon, Jr., Chairman, Cookie Pope, Vice-Chairman, Thomas M. Moore,
 Allen L. Mims, Jr., Wade M. Stewart, Fred Smith and W. Ray Woodall.
 Absent: None (Commissioner Mims was excused at 7:00 p.m.)
 Also Present: Rick J. Hester, County Manager, Joyce H. Ennis, Clerk to the Board, and John R.
 Massey, Finance Officer

The Chairman called the meeting to order and the following business was transacted:

1. Presentations - County Departments & Agencies

The following County Departments or Agencies made presentations to the Board:

A) Sheriff's Department/Jail

Sheriff Steve Bizzell stated his department, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, consists of 159 employees. He noted he is committed to having the most professional Sheriff's office in the State, and hopes to accomplish this by raising the bar on professionalism. With the growing population, calls for service continue to increase dramatically and providing for public safety has become an even greater challenge. Since becoming Sheriff, he has reorganized the department and now has twice the number of deputies on duty at night and on weekends.

Sheriff Bizzell noted that recently his department has lost several trained employees to higher paying jobs in the area. He stressed that the County does not need to be a training ground for employees to move on to other positions, and in order to keep people, the County must keep salaries and benefits competitive. He noted at least two of the local police departments start their officers at a higher salary than he can offer.

Concerning the various divisions under his department, he noted that hiring an Animal Shelter Manager last year has put the Animal Control Division in the best shape it has ever been. The adoption and spay/neuter programs have helped tremendously. His department also administers the State funded juvenile restitution program, which has one non-sworn officer.

Sheriff Bizzell asked Frank Gunter, Jail Administrator, to update the Board on the jail. He noted both he and Mr. Gunter feel the jail is operating better than it ever has before; however, overcrowding continues to be a major concern.

Mr. Gunter stated his primary challenge is to continue to operate a "constitutional" detention center. The problem is simply that the facility was designed to house 189 prisoners, and the average population in calendar year 2000 was over 191. This year the average is continuing to rise and has reached as high as 266, which puts a considerable strain on security and critical support services. He noted he is in the process of implementing a study commission to review all facets of the local criminal justice system to

determine what steps can be taken to make the system more efficient and have a positive impact on detention center population.

In reference to a comment by Sheriff Bizzell that the jail budget will be decreased for 2001-2002, Mr. Gunter noted this is possible due to increased revenue for housing Federal inmates. The County has an agreement with the US Marshall to take up to 60 Federal detainees; and even though the actual number has been very low in the past, this has recently increased significantly. The reimbursements for Federal prisoners is \$45.00 per inmate per day.

In response to questions from the Board, Sheriff Bizzell stated he now has a deputy at Cleveland day and night, and the County continues to provide law enforcement for several of the smaller municipalities, especially at night after their police go off duty. He noted that although he has not asked for additional deputies in this budget, he will soon have to have additional help.

B) Mental Health

Dr. Dan Searcy, Mental Health Director, stated he has a total budget of 9.3 million dollars; 37% of which comes from the State, 4% from the Federal Government, 25% from the County, with the remainder from fees. His department delivers between 275 to 300 services per day for over 3,186 clients. Last year the agency received national accreditation.

Dr. Searcy stated that one of the biggest problems facing Mental Health is funding. The General Assembly is currently studying the structure and operation of mental health services throughout the State, and much will depend on this report when it is released. He noted in the last eight years his agency has been able to continue an acceptable level of service because of the reimbursements from Medicaid. Unfortunately, many patients are indigents with no coverage at all. So far, the State has been unwilling to pay for indigent substance abuse care.

In answer to questions from Commissioner Wade M. Stewart, Dr. Searcy stated that all mental health patients that come to the agency are treated unless the patient is extremely violent or their case is too severe to be treated by the resources available in the inpatient facility. When appropriate, his staff sends patients to Day by Day or other facilities for specialized treatment. When patients come in, their situation is assessed and if not an emergency, they are scheduled for a later appointment. He stated he shares the concern that the waiting list is growing and it is taking longer for some to get treatment. He noted the inpatient portion of Mental Health is run cooperatively between the hospital and the mental health clinic, with mental health providing therapist and psychiatrist and the hospital providing nurses and other personnel.

C) Geographic Information Systems (GIS)/Mapping Department

GIS Director Terry Ellis stated the County's Geographic Information System is a computerized mapping system that allows the display of any information that can be mapped. The system displays all parcels in the County with tax information, water-sewer lines, voting districts, town boundaries and ETJ's, fire-rescue districts, soil data, zoning and a number of other items, all of which may be added to the map at will. He noted that his department focuses on service to county agencies as well as to the public. Presently he has a staff of 7, but will lose two of his map review officers to the new joint operation at the Belks building when the Planning, Inspections, Utilities and Environmental Health Departments move.

The system is used for tracking zoning, voter precincts and taxable property. It assigns fire tax codes for all properties, supports E911 for enhanced display of streets and address locations on dispatch screens, is used for emergency management response and pre-planning efforts, supports water district development planning, is the center for aerial photography, and is used extensively by county agencies and the private sector for multiple tasks. There are more than 90 unique users on the County network, and the system is also available on the internet. The internet version is currently being upgraded to provide unlimited access for all users.

Mr. Ellis noted that Johnston County GIS is recognized Nationally and Internationally as a leader in technology application in local government. He serves on a number of committee's and is especially honored to serve as the Chairman of the Statewide Mapping Advisory Committee (SMAC) as the first local government person to hold that position. One of the greatest challenges is assisting the municipalities in the County to become more efficient in data use and the software use of GIS.

D) Health Department

Dr. Leonard S. Woodall, Health Director, stated the Health Department offers primary health care with a focus on treating those who are ill and teaching them how to prevent further problems. A number of health services and educational programs are provided for both children and adults, most of which are funded by either the State or Federal government. Around 4500 County residents come through the Health Department each month, and one of the biggest challenges is recruiting adequate help to meet the demands for services.

In addition to primary health care services, the Department also includes the Environmental Health Division. In addition to inspecting and permitting all wells and septic systems, Environmental Health personnel inspect the more than 350 restaurants in the County on a quarterly basis. They also inspect all public swimming pools. In 1999, Johnston County Environmental Health inspected more wells and septic tanks than any other county in the state, and with the growing population, the number of inspections is increasing each year.

E) Job Training

Robert Davis, Job Link Center Coordinator, stated the Johnston County Job Training Office is a County department funded by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The department has two major areas of responsibilities: 1) to administer WIA adults and dislocated worker programs in the County, and 2) to serve as the lead institute and provide day to day management of the Job Link Career Center.

Under WIA, a number of programs provide activities that increase employment, job retention, earnings and occupational training. Staff provides in-depth assessments and counseling, helps develop individual career plans, assists in job searches and gives follow up services to aid in job retention.

The Job Link Career Center provides core services to all citizen with no eligibility requirements. In the first quarter of 2001, the center provided services to 1030 customers. One of the greatest challenges will be to continue to provide the level of services currently offered with limited funding and staff.

F) Inspections

C. P. Thompson, Chief Building Inspector, stated his department consists of 17 inspectors, 3 office personnel, a director and 1 vacant position at the present time. His inspectors are cross-trained and have the highest level of certification allowing them to inspect for all five trades. The office has set four primary goals: 1) to show concern for others, 2) foster teamwork, 3) listen and keep others informed and 4) anticipate and respond to customer's needs.

Mr. Thompson reviewed with the Board several statistics about the permits his office has issued over the past 20 years, and pointed out the rapid growth especially since 1995. He noted that in addition to residential and commercial building inspections, his office is also required to provide fire inspections for commercial and public buildings throughout the County, with the exception of the town of Clayton which does its own. With the existing fee structure, the office generates enough revenue to cover its expenses, which includes the free inspections for public buildings. He pointed out his budget request for training will be increased because of the new International Building Code books he is required to have for all inspectors, which will cost approximately \$700 per set. He noted he also mandates continuing education for his employees, however, most of this is through Johnston Community College at no cost to the County.

Commissioner Ray Woodall asked Mr. Thompson whether he would need to fill the vacant position since inspections were off about 1/3 in 2000. Mr. Thompson responded he needs the position because even though inspections were down last year, the first quarter of 2001 shows a significant increase in activity, and also the department is now doing inspections for the towns of Smithfield and Selma. In discussion, it was also pointed out the need to keep the inspections done in a timely manner.

In conclusion, Mr. Thompson complimented his employees and reminded the Board that in order to retain them, the County needs to keep salaries and benefits at a competitive level. He also pointed out that with the high cost of gasoline, those who drive their own vehicles are at a disadvantage, and asked the Board to remember these employees.

G) Maintenance

Jerry Burton, Facilities Superintendent, stated that he has 29 employees in the Building, Grounds, Maintenance and Housekeeping Department. His employees service 15 buildings with approximately 361,804 square feet, as well as care for approximately 15 acres of grounds in 17 locations across the County. His office provides services ranging from changing light bulbs in an office to cutting an opening through a solid 10" concrete wall for the jail. They also provide maintenance on four emergency generators.

Mr. Burton noted that one of his goals is to find ways to provide the same high level of service and at the same time save money for the County. He noted the new Health Department until recently contracted with the hospital for maintenance. His department has now taken over this responsibility at a considerable savings. In addition, the old Farmer's Market was converted for storage, eliminating the need for rental storage space. His staff will be doing the renovations on the old Health building and helping complete the move to the Belks Building in the coming year.

H) Soil Conservation

James Massey, Soil Conservation Supervisor, stated that his agency is in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide technical and financial assistance through various natural resource programs. Their mission is to coordinate assistance from all available sources, (public & private), including local, state, and federal agencies to develop locally driven solutions to natural resource concerns. The basic functions of SWCD are to provide technical and financial assistance to citizens in identifying and solving issues relating to Natural Resources Conservation, administer various State and Federal Natural Resource Programs, and provide conservation education to the public in the form of workshops, classroom presentations, field days and environmental competitions.

Soil & Water Conservation has seven full-time positions: 2 County employees, 2 Federal, 2 that are paid from part County and part State funds, and a Neuse River Technician, which is 50% Federal and 50% State. The agency administers a number of programs including nutrient management, soil preservation, and best practice methods for farmers. Recently the stream debris removal program initiated due to Hurricanes Fran and Floyd was completed. The biggest challenges for his department are: 1) to help citizens cope with the changes brought about with the increasing urbanization of the County; 2) help farmers meet the Neuse River Regulations; 3) continue the same level of State and Federal programs, especially with the State's budget shortfall, and 4) expand the conservation education programs.

I) Veterans

Ricky Byrd, Veterans Service Officer, stated his department consists of 2 full-time and 1 part-time employee, whose function is to assist veterans and their dependents in obtaining government benefits such as compensation, pension, medical care, education, home loans, insurance and burial insurance. The department is fully funded by the County except for a \$2,000 appropriation from the State. One of the greatest challenges he is facing is finding drivers for the DAV Vans which carry veterans to the VA hospitals in the area.

J) Child Support

Jim Henderson, Child Support Director, informed the Board the Child Support Enforcement Program in Johnston County is County operated, State supervised, and audited by both the State and Federal governments. For every \$1.00 spent by his department, \$6.00 is collected. The program currently has 6500 active cases representing 45% non welfare clients, 42% medicaid and 13% taniff and foster care.

Child Support Enforcement offers four major services with mandatory federal time frames for completion: 1) location of absent parents; 2) establishment of paternity for children born out of marriage; 3) establishment of child support services and 4) enforcement of the child support order. Last year, his office instituted 699 new child support orders, established paternity for 271 illegitimate children, filed 3594 enforcement actions, completed 3163 wage withholdings and collected \$6,884,520.00, a 12% increase over the previous year. Over the last five years more than \$27 million has been collected for the children of Johnston County.

The greatest challenges facing the Child Support Department is keeping up with the growing caseloads and complying with federal regulations.

K) Human Resources

Pat LaCarter, Human Resources Director, stated his department serves both the employees of the County and the general public. In addition to the traditional personnel matters, Human Resources evaluates programs and researches ways to insure that the vision of the Commissioners is fulfilled.

He outlined the function of his department and noted his staff administers the Personnel Ordinance, maintains files on all County employees, designs and develops personnel forms, processes job verifications, coordinates training programs and guides departments on organizational and employee development. They recruit employees, administer benefit plans, address employee relations issues, administer the position classification plan, provide training opportunities for employees and assure that all State and Federal regulations such as ADA and Fair Labor Standards are met.

Recently a Safety Officer was added to the staff to develop a safety program for all County departments/agencies that will meet OSHA and other Federal guidelines.

L) Housing Assistance Payments Program (HAPP)

Anne Eason, HAPP Director, stated the function of her agency is to administer the HUD federally funded tenant based Section 8 program. The Board of Commissioners serve as the Board of Directors for the agency.

The Section 8 program is considered by most people to be the preferred assistance program as it allows the tenant to find his own unit, and in theory, only the family, the agency and the landlord know the family is receiving help. Once tenants apply for assistance, they are placed on a waiting list until a unit is available. They may find a unit anywhere in the County as long as the landlord agrees to participate, sign a contract with the agency, and allow the unit to be inspected using HUD Housing Quality Standards. Once that is accomplished, a lease is signed between the landlord and the tenant. Rents are based on fair market rents set by HUD and comparability studies done by the agency. The tenant pays, directly to the landlord, a portion of the rent based on income, and the agency pays the remainder.

Currently HAPP serves 560 families throughout the County with 72% being elderly or disabled. Efforts are being made to encourage landlords to build or rehab three bedroom units for larger families, and move rental units away from poverty and high crime areas. HAPP also works with other programs such as Habitat for Humanity, and home buyers assistance programs when possible.

The major concern for Johnston County HAPP is financial because the waiting list continues to grow faster than the increases in annual contributions by HUD. Ms. Eason voiced hope that HUD will eventually acknowledge the rising costs in our area and adjust their contributions accordingly. HAPP projects that a total of \$2,250,000 will be spent on assistance payments in the next fiscal year.

There being no further business, Commissioner Cookie Pope moved the Board adjourn. Commissioner W. Ray Woodall seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

James H. Langdon, Jr., Chairman

Joyce H. Ennis, Clerk