

MONDAY – 6:00 P.M. JANUARY 12, 2004 JOINT CITY/COUNTY MEETING

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City and the County Commissioners of Pasquotank County met on the above date and time in the Pasquotank Agricultural Building on McPherson Street in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. Mayor J. H. Bell, Jr. and Commissioner William Trueblood co-chaired the meeting. Council members present were: C. C. Austin, J. M. Baker, L. A. Hummer, R. E. King, W. A. Lehmann, D. K. Stallings and J. B. Walton. E. K. Rivers arriving at 6:15 p.m. Others attending were: City Manager R. C. Olson, City Clerk D. S. Pierce, City Attorney W. H. Morgan, Commissioners J. Kitchen, C. Perry, H. Krebs, M. Stevenson, M. Wood, County Manager R. Keaton, County Clerk K. Jennings, Mike Cox, County Attorney, Assistant County Manager R. Bunch and Commissioner L. Griffin arriving at 6:20 p.m. Also attending were: Public Works Director C. Grant, III, Finance Director S. E. Blanchard, Police Chief W. J. Anderson, Electric Superintendent K. F. Clow, Human Resource Director K. W. Felton, Parks and Recreation Director J. D. Overman, Inspections Director S. E. Ward and Interim Planning Director S. L. Cox.

Mayor J. H. Bell, Jr. opened the meeting by welcoming those attending. He called upon Police Chief W. J. Anderson to give the invocation after which the group participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

Commissioner Chairman W. Trueblood gave welcome to the members of City Council and staff. He thanked the Council for agreeing to meet with the commissioners and encouraged everyone to work together to move the City and the County forward.

Mayor Bell also welcomed those here tonight. He stated that he would like to see both governing boards working together for the betterment of both units of government and the citizens. He further stated that tonight no official action would take place as this meeting is for dialog between the two groups.

The meeting was paused in order to allow those present to partake in dinner.

Commissioner Trueblood asked each person in attendance to introduce themselves. He stated that the first item on the agenda was the funding for the Albemarle Economic Development Commission. During the preparation of the FY 2003-2004 Budget, the City Council voted only to fund \$32,400 of the AEDC's request of \$60,000, while the County funded the requested \$60,000. The County subsequently approved an additional \$27,600 for FY 2003-2004 due to the City's failure to fund its equal share. The City Council has recently decided to amend their contribution to include the \$27,600. This will bring the City's contribution up to the requested \$60,000. The County Commissioners expressed their thanks and pledged continued support for the AEDC. It was noted that the new bylaws are being amended and will be presented to each unit of government soon.

Chairman Trueblood stated the next item for discussion is the funding for the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Airport Authority. County Manager R. Keaton explained how the Airport Authority was funded. He explained that it is also a jointly funded entity. It operates on the revenue from the profits that it generates and if the operating cost exceeds those figures that the two units of government would equally share the debts and other operating expenses. The Authority presents a budget to each unit of government each year showing their revenues and expenditures and the City/County would share the differences equally.

Chairman Trueblood asked for discussion on the opticom system. In March of 1996, Pasquotank County EMS started to install the Opticom Priority System at several key intersections throughout the City. The opticom system gives emergency vehicles the capability to move through traffic without unduly disrupting signal synchronization. Each vehicle is equipped with an emitter, which broadcasts encoded infrared communication containing both data and frequency information. The data is transmitted to a detector mounted on top of each traffic light which changes the traffic signal to green to allow the free flow of traffic through an intersection. Pasquotank County has installed 13 detectors throughout the City. Recently it was observed a fire truck trying to maneuver through the intersection at Ehringhaus and Halstead Boulevard and traffic literally came to a halt. He would encourage members who are not familiar with this process to ask questions. He asked that the City consider partnering with the Council on this system. It was the feelings of both boards that the managers should get together and work on this item first and then present it to each respective board for consideration.

Discussion ensued on the creation of a joint committee to promote the United States Coast Guard in Elizabeth City. Mayor Bell stated that he would like to see a committee established that would help in seeking to have Elizabeth City designated as a "Coast Guard City".

Commissioner H. Krebs stated that we will need congressional support to develop the base. He recently met with the four captains at the Elizabeth City Coast Guard Base and discussed the future base expansion projects. Five projects were identified that it was felt would be significant in regards to their impact on the Coast Guard as well as on our community.

Commissioner Kitchen stated that he was in favor of a Coast Guard Committee as we need somebody to lead us and work with EDC or whatever as the Captains at the base are not allowed to lobby. They need somebody between them and Washington.

Discussion continued regarding items on what we can do to promote our Coast Guard Base. It was suggested that consideration be given to members of the AEDC as members on this proposed committee.

The next item for discussion was establishment of structure for meetings between City/County staff. It was stated that at the present time, the City and County staff has an excellent working relationship. The managers discuss issues two or three times a week.

They feel that a formal structured meeting would serve both entities well. The managers have decided to hold a once-a-month formal meeting which will take place on the second Tuesday of the month at 10:00 A.M. The week prior to the scheduled meeting, it will be determined the issue to be addressed to assure that the appropriate staff persons are present. Members of both boards felt that this was a very good idea.

It was also discussed and established that the City and County would hold a joint meetings on March 8th and May 10th as the next two scheduled joint meetings. After May, we will discuss having meetings on a quarterly basis.

The following is a list of items that various members of member of both boards would like to see discussed in future meetings:

- 1} Hurricane shelters
- 2} Water management
- 3} Roanoke Avenue Drainage
- 4} Drainage
- 5} Whitehurst Street Intake
- 6} Sewer easement on north side of town
- 7} Possible extension of the ETJ
- 8} Increase occupancy tax, tourism promotion
- 9} Land Use Plan
- 10} Wastewater reserve capacity
- 11} Funding for Elizabeth City Downtown
- 12} Possible merging of services
- 13} City appointment to Albemarle District Jail

Chairman Trueblood stated that he was going around the table and ask for comments from each councilman and each commissioner.

Mayor Bell stated that he thinks everyone realizes how serious we are that these two boards work together for the betterment of the community.

Councilwoman L. A. Hummer stated that she has received numerous phone calls regarding the sheriff department's budget and how he can hire everyone that comes off the city's payroll.

Councilman J. B. Walton stated that he felt it was an honor to be here and he encouraged everyone to show up for the festivities planned for the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration.

Councilman R. E. King stated that he was very happy to be here and he pledged to work together.

Councilwoman C. C. Austin stated that she was very happy to see that the two units of government have made the first effort to work together and she sincerely hopes it continues.

Councilman W. A. Lehmann stated that he feels that this was a very productive meeting and that the two governments are off to a good start.

Councilwoman J. M. Baker stated that she agrees with everything that has been said and she feels that this meeting was the first of many to come and they are learning tool for her and some of the other members.

Councilman D. K. Stallings, Sr. stated that he feels it is an honor to be here and he is looking forward to working with the County in the future.

Councilman E. K. Rivers said that it is indeed an honor to be here and he, too, is looking forward to working with the County in the future. He also asked that at some future date that it is decided to change one or the other's date and time of the meetings in order to allow citizens and officials to attend each other's meetings.

Commissioner H. Krebs said that he would like to thank the City staff for attending. He also reminded everyone of the Martin Luther King, Jr. march planned for the 19th.

Commissioner J. Kitchen said that it was a pleasure to be here and he feels that the communication lines have been opened and he sincerely hopes that we can keep them open in the future. If a problem arises, let us know beforehand so we can work together in solving it.

Commissioner C. Perry thanked everyone for the opportunity to be here.

Commissioner M. Wood stated that he has taken this meeting very seriously and the courtesy that has been shown is excellent. He takes his job very seriously and he would like to see all past lines erased and start anew.

Commissioner M. Stevenson stated that he is usually very quiet in meetings but that doesn't mean he isn't listening and learning. A lot of good ideas have been put on the table tonight.

Commissioner L. E. Griffin, III stated that of the 16 members of both boards, 4 were sitting here five years ago. He gave thanks for the prepared agenda.

Commissioner W. Trueblood stated that he appreciated the attention that was given tonight. We need to address the issues with each other and then come to a solution and let's make it work.

Commission Trueblood adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Dianne S. Pierce, MMC
City Clerk

John H. Bell, Jr.
Mayor