

**PENDER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AND
COUNTY MANAGER RETREAT
MARCH 10, 11, & 12, 2008**

The Pender County Board of Commissioners began its three-day Annual Retreat on Monday, March 10, 2008, at 2:30 p.m., at the Surf City Community Center, 201 Community Center Drive, Surf City, North Carolina. On Wednesday, March 12, 2008, the Board convened at the Pender County Public Assembly Room, 805 South Walker Street, Burgaw, North Carolina.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman David Williams, presiding; Vice Chairman Jimmy Tate; and Commissioners Norwood Blanchard, George Brown, and F.D. Rivenbark.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Al Greene, Interim County Manager; David McCole, Finance Officer; Chris May (Facilitator), Cape Fear Council of Governments; Glenda Pridgen, Deputy Clerk to the Board; other staff, and members of the Press and public.

Chairman Williams called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. and made opening remarks. He said this is his first Retreat sitting as Chairman, that there are some controversies but as a whole the Board wants us to all move forward, and said this is an informal meeting. Mr. Williams introduced Mr. May.

Mr. May opened up discussion on the importance of roles and goals of key players in County Government and Board members participated in listing what good characteristics the Chairman, other Commissioners and the County Manager should possess. The results were as follows:

CHAIRMAN

Disagree without being disagreeable
Impartial/fair/unbiased
Assertive leader, take initiative
Represent the entire county equally

Keep All Board members equally informed-no favorites
Advocate and be as salesman for innovative ideas
Be a patient-calm-cool headed moderator
Be persistent, always seeking high ground

ALL COMMISSIONERS

Respect and promote the Chain of Command
Be a good listener – hear out citizens, and seek all sides before acting on an issue
Possess good communication skills (verbal & written)
Be trustworthy, honest, and have integrity
Do your homework before meetings – research issues fully
Be dedicated and tenacious in your duty to serve all
Mirror the attributes listed under Chairman
Debate – vote-then move on accepting the majority decision

COUNTY MANAGER

Non political
Non-Biased
Trustworthy, honest, have integrity
Be patient
Always keep ALL Board members informed equally and in a timely fashion so they are not caught by surprise on issues

Be a local government professional consultant to the Board who is on the cutting edge of the profession
Be a strong people person
Strong communicator
Understand limitations and work within them
Delegate, trust, follow up, get the job done within the resources allotted. Don't try to do it all yourself
Understand and support position authority. You can respect the position even if you do not like the person filling it.
Demonstrate strong leadership
Strong financial and strategic planning skills
Show finesse, grace, and tact in performing duties
Strong advocate (cheerleader) for Pender County
Do your job
Be responsive

Mr. Tate asked if a Board of Commissioners can require a Manager to live in a certain place and Mr. May responded the manager should live in the county but not be required to live in a certain area.

DEPARTMENTAL/AGENCY REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION

All Departments/Agencies made their presentations/requests as follows; a full set of these documents are on file in the permanent records in the County Manager's Office.

Public Works – Jimmy Fields, Public Buildings Supervisor
Update on Projects – Warren Wilson, Architect. Also present was Ms. Mary Ann Briley, Clerk of Court
Sheriff's Department – Carson Smith, Sheriff
Health Department – Dr. Jack Griffith, Health Department Director
Town of Topsail Beach – Steve Bostic, Manager
Pender County Board of Education-Chairman Tom Roper, Superintendent Allison Sholar, Auxiliary Services Director David Smith. Also present were other staff and other members of the Board of Education.
Veteran's Services – Roy Horne, Veteran's Services Officer
Social Services – Dr. Reta Shiver, Social Services Director
Planning/Inspections –Ken Vafier, Interim Planning Director; Charlotte Buckley, Central Permitting Admin.
Cooperative Extension – Wayne Batten, Cooperative Extension Director
Board of Elections – Dennis Boyles, Elections Director
Housing – Angela Keith, Housing Director
Tourism – Pam Batten, Tourism Director
Information Technology – Erik Harvey, Information (IT) Director
Library – Mike Taylor, Library Director
Parks & Recreation – Dee Turner, Parks & Recreation Director
Tax Department – Coby Heath, Tax Assessor, & Barbara Murray, Tax Collector
Emergency Management – Eddie King, Emergency Management Director
Utilities/Infrastructure/Solid Waste – Melinda Knoerzer, Administrative Assistant
Town of Surf City – Michael Moore, Manager
Financial Overview – David McCole, Finance Officer

With respect to Public Works, Mr. Tate asked how their Beaver Program works in conjunction with Bob Murray's. Mr. Fields said they do GPS readings on Burgaw Creek and give them to Mr. Murray. Mr. Tate asked why they only do Burgaw Creek and Mr. Fields said that's where it started long ago and that was the only one being done at the time. Mr. Tate said there is a problem throughout the County and they shouldn't be monitoring only Burgaw Creek.

Mr. Rivenbark was concerned about the termites Mr. Fields said were at the Probation and Parole Building and asked why nobody saw the swarms. Mr. Brown asked if they have a contract for termites and Mr. Fields responded affirmatively.

Mr. Wilson distributed the floor plan for the Administration Building and updated the Board on it, said the Jail Kitchen renovations are complete and gave an update on the Courthouse renovations. Mr. Tate asked if there is a fire escape at the Courthouse and Mr. Wilson said no, but they are working with the Fire Marshal to address this. He said they are also working on security at the Courthouse. Ms. Briley said she appreciates what the Board does to help them out and said that if they add more deputies in the Sheriff's budget, this would help the Courts out even more because now that they have more judges, they need more Bailiffs, etc.

With respect to the Sheriff's items, Mr. Tate asked is there a need for a holding cell on a daily basis on the east side and Sheriff Smith said not at this time. Mr. Tate asked about communication problems and Sheriff Smith said that is what the new VIPER system will cover.

With respect to the Health Department, Mr. Blanchard said he is concerned about people that can't afford septic systems and septic system repairs. There was also discussion of the dentist at the Mobile Dental Clinic – Dr. Griffith said he is very pleased with the dentist; Mr. Blanchard agreed.

Topsail Beach Mayor Howard Braxton introduced his Council members and Ex-Mayor Butch Parrish spoke concerning beach nourishment and the Turtle Hospital. Mr. Parrish thanked the Board for the \$100,000 a year they contribute for beach nourishment.

The Board took a dinner break to receive a full presentation from the Town of Topsail Beach.

With respect to the Schools, Mr. Tate asked if technology will be established in each school, how does existing technology compare in western Pender to the east side and if they have high speed internet in the schools. Mr. Roper said their 300+ personal computers will be distributed all over the County, that they have a good ratio of computers school-to-school, that West Pender is probably the most technical school they have and that yes, they have high speed internet. Mr. Roper said the Schools get e-rate funds but these funds don't include the pc's themselves. Mr. Brown asked that in the Topsail School transition will there be a need for trailers and Mr. Roper said there will be a need to retain some of them but most will be sold out; they will keep the ones on permanent foundations. Mr. Brown asked if the trailers are included in the figures they are presenting and Mr. Roper responded "no." Mr. Williams said some people are saying the new Topsail School is too big for current enrollment and Mr. Roper said they are allowing for a five-year growth window. Mr. Rivenbark asked about the fire at Pender High and was anyone ever apprehended. Mr. Roper said someone was apprehended but the Schools still had to bear some costs such as insurance deductibles. Mr. Tate asked about Huskins courses and Mr. Roper said it is difficult to offer them because we don't have a community college residing in the County. Mr. Tate said this is important for students and asked the School Board to work with Dr. McKeithan of Cape Fear Community College on this. There was more discussion of Schools' issues, including Early College, safety and security in the Schools, and School Nurses.

With respect to Veterans Services, Mr. Williams said he gets positive feed back all the time from people not having to drive to Burgaw for VA Services because Mr. Horne goes to Hampstead on Wednesday mornings. Mr. Brown said he wants to publicly thank Mr. Horne for helping his family when his father passed.

With respect to Social Services, Dr. Shiver said she came to offer a plan that will save the County money – her proposal to having an old County building renovated (by volunteers) to make into a Shared Parenting Training Site. Mr. Brown and Mr. Tate apologized to Dr. Shiver because the previously discussed safety

partition had never been put in the DSS Building; they said they thought it had been taken care of. Staff was instructed to make sure this project gets done. Mr. Tate asked why DSS moved from the building originally built for them. Dr. Shiver said Managers changed, and plans changed.

With respect to Planning, Mr. Brown asked where we are with the part-time Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Vafier said it is still being advertised but they will be asking the Board to make it a full-time position. Mr. Rivenbark said we should advertise it for a full-time position and Mr. Brown agreed. Mr. Greene said he will bring budget information to the Board in April to show what a full-time person would cost. Mr. Brown thanked Mr. Vafier for "stepping up to the plate" to be Interim Planning Director and Mr. Williams said he echoes Mr. Brown. Ms. Buckley gave a presentation on permitting.

With respect to Cooperative Extension, Mr. Batten made his presentation; there were no questions or discussion.

With respect to Elections, Mr. Blanchard was concerned about an extra one-stop voting machine in Maple Hill and Mr. Boyles was instructed to look into it for the general election, not the primary. Mr. Tate asked about the water and sewer bond on the ballot for November and Mr. Boyles said Mr. Thurman is "keeping him in the loop" on it.

With respect to Housing, Mr. Tate asked what is their client base and Ms. Keith said 152 people are on the waiting list.

With respect to Tourism, Representative Carolyn Justice, Chairman of the Tourism Development Authority (TDA), addressed the Board; she spoke on the formation and structure of the TDA. Ms. Justice made a proposal to ask the Commissioner Representative on the TDA to step down and let them appoint an at-large person, so they can get representation from the western side of the County. No action was taken. Mr. Rivenbark told Ms. Justice that the Board will be sending a resolution to legislators regarding support in cleaning outfall ditches. Mr. Tate asked if they have any information on Agritourism grant dollars and Ms. Justice responded "yes." She said they are working on funding for Agritourism and said that she submits a bill every year trying to get funding for the Murray Farm Project. She said this bill puts Agritourism under Agriculture and Agriculture can't be touched by Pender County Zoning rules. Ms. Justice and Mr. Tate agreed that Agritourism is very important and said a plan needs to be put in place and a resolution brought to the Board for approval. Mr. Tate thanked Ms. Justice for her support.

Mr. Tate noted that there is a small rodeo in the Montague area and asked Ms. Batten to check into it.

With respect to Information Technology, Mr. Tate asked if we have a Business Continuity Technology Plan and Mr. Harvey said we don't but he will do everything he can to get a plan in place.

With respect to the Library, Mr. Taylor recognized some Friends of the Library volunteers and Marsha Dees of the Hampstead Branch. Mr. Taylor said he and his staff appreciate the Board's action for employee compensation and for beginning to start the pay study. Mr. Tate thanked Mr. Taylor for the Reading Program held in February. Mr. Williams added that he gets good feedback on the Library as a whole - Burgaw and Hampstead Branches. Mr. Taylor said his staff does an excellent job.

With respect to Parks & Recreation, there was discussion about a boat ramp for Black River, the Pender Memorial Park expansion, Phase II of the Kiwanis Park, the Willard Walking Trail, and the Prison farm land. Mr. Rivenbark suggested we go back to the State and ask to get the Prison farm land back.

With respect to the Tax Office, the Board congratulated them for having a 97.08% collection rate for the year ending June 30, 2007.

With respect to Emergency Management, Mr. Tate asked if there is an outbreak of fires in one area more than others and Mr. King said he doesn't see any one area as being a standout and said that most of the fires are residential. Mr. Tate asked about a Homeland Security Grant and Mr. King said Homeland Security Grants fund only areas that are regional based but he is looking into every grant he can possibly find.

With respect to Utilities, Mr. Williams introduced the new Utilities Director, Michael Mack. Ms. Knoerzer welcomed Mr. Mack and noted that Engineer Greg Thompson is also here to answer any questions concerning water and sewer. Mr. Tate asked if we have to sign the agreement with New Hanover County again since they've formed an Authority and Ms. Knoerzer responded we may be asked to execute a new agreement with the Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority.

With respect to the Financial Overview, discussions included: the Schools Board's request to raise property taxes by \$.035 cents this fiscal year instead of the original planned 09-10 year; using a 96% collection rate instead of 95% to make projections; Appropriated Fund Balance; Medicaid savings; Financial Goals & Financial Threats; Bond Debt; County Insurance; the cost of new schools construction; building industrial parks; the water plant bringing new industry to the County; and the upcoming FY08-09 budget preparation.

Mr. Williams asked Mr. McCole to compare the 95% collection rate to 96% and see how things shape up. Mr. Williams also said the voters approved the \$.035 cents tax rate for .09-10, not 08-09.

Referring to health insurance, Mr. Rivenbark instructed staff to continue the fitness program for employees.

Mr. Tate commended Mr. McCole on his financial presentation and the other Board members agreed. Mr. McCole said Mr. Heath did a good job on the tax part of the presentation and said all the departments are very fiscally responsible.

RECAP/REVIEWS

Using the process of brainstorm, list, and prioritize, the Pender Commissioners agreed upon the following list of important issues to be addressed for FY 2008-09. Each Commissioner was only given five (5) votes. The ranking came as a result of polling the Commissioners as they voted for their top five. ALL of the below issues are priorities, and five of them are top priorities:

- 1. Education – funding for school capital needs (5 votes)**
- 2. Water and Sewer infrastructure funding (Residential/Commercial/ Industrial) (5 Votes)**
- 3. Beach Re-nourishment and protection match (3 votes)**
- 4. Public Salt Water Access facility (3)**
- 5. Storm water drainage (3)**
- 6. Fully fund Capital Improvement Plan (2)**
- 7. NC HYW 53 Burgaw By-pass/US HYW 17 Hampstead By-pass (1)**
- 8. Funding support for Safe Haven (1)**
- 9. Support Community College training and re-training programs (1)**
- 10. Ongoing strategic planning for capital needs/ infrastructure to ensure cost benefit financing is in place**
- 11. Support Parks and Recreation capital projects to include multi-use community buildings for youth, events, etc.**

- 12. Pave all convenience sites
- 13. Landscape and beautification of County Buildings
- 14. Improved quality of life

Mr. Greene said that with respect to a C.I.P. update, a good plan you can follow should be put together which would include everything – Schools, County, buildings, etc. He said that with respect to water and sewer, we need a financial model so we'll know where we are going financially, long-term.

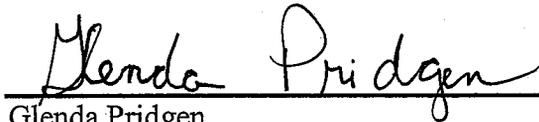
Mr. Rivenbark commended Mr. Greene on the new signs in the Administration Building; it was noted that other individuals in the building were responsible for the signs. Mr. Rivenbark said employees are beginning to take ownership in the County and Mr. Williams agreed with him.

Mr. Brown said staff did a good job of putting the retreat together.

ADJOURNMENT

The retreat adjourned at 10:30 a.m. March 12, 2008.

Respectfully Submitted,



Glenda Pridgen
Deputy Clerk to the Board

Reviewed By:



Melinda Knoerzer
Deputy Clerk to the Board