

Greg Edds, Chairman
Jim Greene, Vice- Chairman
Mike Caskey
Judy Klusman
Craig Pierce



Aaron Church, County Manager
Sarah Pack, Clerk to the Board
John W. Dees, II, County Attorney

Rowan County Board of Commissioners

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MINUTES OF ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT/WORK SESSION OF THE ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

February 5, 2024 – 10:00 AM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROWAN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Present:

Greg Edds, Chairman
Jim Greene, Vice-Chairman
Mike Caskey, Commissioner
Craig Pierce, Commissioner
Judy Klusman, Commissioner

County Manager Aaron Church, Clerk to the Board Sarah Pack, and Finance Director Anna Bumgarner were also present. County Attorney Jay Dees attended the meeting via teleconferencing software.

Call to Order

Chairman Edds convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. Chaplain Michael Taylor provided the invocation. Chairman Edds led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consider Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Edds requested that the Budget Updates be presented first, followed by the West End Plaza Update.

On motion of Pierce, seconded by Greene, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the agenda as amended.

This meeting summary, prepared by Facilitator Emily Wilson of FountainWorks, with minor edits by the Clerk to the Board, captures the key points of discussion during the retreat.

Budget Updates

County Manager Aaron Church presented updates on the County's budget.

- \$128M total fund balance - \$109M fund balance available - \$65M unrestricted funds available
- The annual cumulative sales tax is \$43M; we can't increase the projected amount much more as inflation has stabilized.
- The estimated budget for next year is up \$10M to ~\$208M.
 - o Only includes previously approved personnel additions (West End Plaza & SRO)
- \$10M increase in budget includes:

- School employee stipends
- Cost of living adjustment for county employees
- SRO Officer (via matching grant)
- West End Plaza personnel (4FT & 2 PT)
- Economic incentive offerings (e.g., Macy's)
- The County could pull \$20M from the fund balance to pay for some large capital improvements, such as:
 - Radio system upgrades
 - Duke Energy is building a tower in Cleveland; these radio upgrades would allow EMS to have more reliable and safer coverage
 - Health Department funds (\$8M of \$24M)
 - \$12M comes from ARPA
 - \$4M comes from Medicaid Cost Settlement funds
 - Crawford Building Renovations
 - Move some Sheriff personnel to the Crawford Building, which makes room for Courts
 - Detention Center Control Room Replacement
 - Bidding process has just begun so this is an estimate
 - The current system is ~15 years and repairs are becoming more difficult
 - Ideally, the control rooms between the main jail and the annexes would be on the same system for better safety and training efficiencies
- The current tax base is \$18.7B, which generates \$108M in property taxes.
 - The department is hesitant to project total property values as higher given recent trends.
- Community Growth:
 - 534 new homes built; 71 new commercial buildings; 607 new detached buildings
 - Many new subdivisions, including:
 - Lane Street development
 - Macy's building
 - Peeler Road
 - Old Beatty Ford Road development
 - Mid-South Industrial Park

West End Plaza Update

Next, Project Manager/Engineer Nick Aceves discussed the renovations for the agricultural center at West End Plaza and distributed a site rendering (Attachment A).

- Should the name stay West End Plaza?
- Should any room names change?
 - Yadkin may not be the best name for the large room as it is also the name of another county
 - Conference rooms E, F, and G could be changed.
- Should signage, wall art, or storefront art change?
 - Rowan County Events Center

- Changes to events space:
 - o Pricing and potential add-ons are to be determined in budget process
 - o Rental times can be similar to current space
 - o New space will have set business hours
 - o Provide high-touch customer service and amenities (e.g., set-up/breakdown, on- site hospitality staff)
- Staffing needs:
 - o One full-time Onsite Facility Manager
 - o One full-time (reclass) & two part-time Maintenance Staff
 - o One full-time & two part-time Events Center Support Staff
 - o Security staff
- Other expenditures to consider:
 - o Utilities, furniture upkeep, long-term interior maintenance, grounds maintenance, possible hospitality extras, A/V maintenance
- Upcoming on this project:
 - o Rental schedule options
 - o Fee structure
 - o Hospitality service level
 - o Current event center use

Questions

- What is the gray area on the map?
 - o Areas that have other plans (e.g., office renovations)
- What level of audio-visual will the new event center have?
 - o Digital signage, A/V in every room, microphones, etc.
 - o An ideal solution may be an A/V contractor clients can work with as needed.
- Is there a breakdown of what dining vs. conference seating would hold?
 - o Not yet but the architect will be able to provide estimates

Council Comments

- We could make space for Rowan County's Farmer of the Year and change it annually
- Do we dedicate space to industry (e.g., Macy's, Freightliner, colleges)
- Could the wall on the left of the main entrance be marked for Veteran's Services?
- Should the signage say, "Rowan County West End Plaza", so it is clear this is a county amenity, not city?
- Where can we make space for the Charges of Freedom display?

Rowan Economic Development Corporation Updates

Rod Crider, President and CEO, gave an overview of economic development in the county.

- Economic Growth:
 - o 342 new jobs
 - o \$197.6M in new capital investment

- \$29.17/hr. average wage
 - Average annual salary is ~\$52K
- Notable projects:
 - DHL
 - General
 - Chick-Fil-A Supply
- Project Activity:
 - Leads come from EDP&C (Economic Development Partnership & Commission), CRBA (Charlotte Regional Business Alliance), and our own efforts
 - 29 currently active projects
 - Potential for 5,338 jobs, \$3.6b in capex
- EDC is working with Enterprise to help provide access to transportation for jobs.
 - EDC also hears from employers about housing availability and childcare.
- Rowan County is a finalist in the State's Megasite Readiness Program.
 - The State has not finalized qualifications; once EDC understands requirements the EDC will move forward.
- I-85 Development Update:
 - Potential: 4.2M sq. ft.
 - Available: 1.6M sq. ft.
 - Under Construction: 6.4M sq. ft.
 - Proposed: 7.3M sq. ft.
- 68,050 persons in the labor force—highest since Great Recession
- Growth Challenges:
 - Planned infrastructure improvements for future growth, including water, sewer, schools, and transportation
 - Housing – availability and affordability
 - Business-friendly in planning, permitting, and incentives
 - Place Making & Branding – reinforce a positive image of the community and be deliberate in building the community reputation

Questions

- Where are companies coming from?
 - Some in the north and mid-west United States, some from London and other European areas
- Is the Exit 68 development intended to be behind Macy's?
 - This is a different one a bit farther down Highway 152
- How do we focus on recruiting white-collar employers?
 - The EDC doesn't get many leads from that sector currently. Those are typically office jobs and Rowan County does not have any Class A commercial spaces available. High quality of life should also be a greater focus; those who have the white-collar jobs with our current employers do not live in Rowan County.
 - The county may have more success in pursuing regional offices as opposed to large headquarters, though office space is still a challenge.
 - Education is another focus; Rowan County's competitive advantage used to

be cheap land and cheap labor. That has now shifted and educating residents on what jobs are out there can be helpful.

Council Comments

- We can incorporate feedback we get from employers, like those who were looking for a close engineering school. Rowan County did not have that but was able to build a partnership with UNC Charlotte.

Behavioral Health Urgent Care (BHUC) Updates

Rowan County United Way Executive Director Jenny Lee presented updates on the BHUC.

- BHUC is a 24/7/365 walk-in clinic that offers services for those who need it, up to a 23 hour stay.
- With a traditional adult services facility, we would serve 900 adults, 60% of whom would be Rowan County residents.
- The BHUC will allow us to serve ~3500, 85% of whom would be Rowan County residents
- Daymark Recovery Services was determined to be the best provider.
 - o Daymark currently serves 28 counties throughout the state
 - o Existing facility has space and is known to the community.
- The BHUC will cost the County approximately \$1.4M to get the Center up and started, with no recurring expenses.
 - o This may be provided through a grant, but that is to be determined.
 - o Daymark will be responsible for annual operating costs estimated at \$1.9M

Questions

- Would law enforcement dropping individuals off at the center be a reimbursable cost under that first year's transportation funding?
 - o There will be conversations with Daymark leadership to determine what the specifics of the transportation are, based on what has worked in other communities.

Council Comments

- We have worked with our state lobbyist and to identify three important projects and this is one of them.

Current Projects Under Construction

Director of Engineering and Environmental Services Craig Powers discussed current capital projects.

- 32 Capital Projects currently active
- **ADA Updates:** in the planning phase; updates needed across county sites
- **Landfill Phase 5:** originally estimated to complete November of 2023; now estimated to complete April 2024
- **Streamflow Rehabilitation:** STRAP and Tropical Storm Debris Removal grants

- **High Rock Dredging Study:** Davidson County has agreed to fund 50%
- **Drain Line Extensions:** Leonard Road is completed; Long Ferry Road will be bid soon
- **West End Plaza Renovations:** Ag. Center in progress; Health Department in design
- **Woodleaf Community Park:** Will complete when temperatures are warmer; PARTF grant
- **Dan Nicholas Park:** Sidewalk additions completed; rehabbed tennis courts and added eight pickleball courts
- **Red Wolf Enclosure:** Construction to begin February 5th, 2024
- **Transit Admin Office:** Estimated completion September 2024
- **Airport Taxiway Resurfacing:** Completed
- **Airport Corporate and Box Hangars:** Starting soon
- **Airport Localizer:** To start Summer 2024
- **Airport Glideslope:** On hold – to start summer 2025

EMS Base Station/Fire Department Support

Emergency Services Chief Allen Cress described the needs of his department and discussed county-wide fire department support.

- Increase in call volume, particularly in Southern Rowan and along the I-85 corridor
 - o Responded to over 23K calls in 2023
- A new station is needed around I-85 and Highway 29 area.
- New station needs:
 - o Four bays wide
 - Depth to hold up to three vehicles
 - o Living area, offices, and storage
 - o Estimated cost: \$5.25M-5.75M
- New station staffing:
 - o Initially, one additional ambulance
 - Eight FTEs
 - o One additional Quick Response Vehicle
- EMIRT Teams:
 - o Five teams of 16 members (one for each division and one central)
 - o First year start-up costs with one team in an outfitted pickup truck would be ~\$2.1M
 - o This is the first step towards a County-wide fire service
 - It would take 10 years to get to the County-wide fire service

Questions

- Is there value in doing one team and testing it?
 - o It could be done, but that one team is likely to be out a lot responding to calls
- Is there an ideal timeframe in mind for these changes? It would be good to meet with fire leadership across the County.
 - o Every Wednesday, 10 Chiefs meet; Allen will let Commissioners know when the Chiefs are ready to be approached.

- With the growth and thinking about water limitations, should we try to do this in conjunction with expanding the County water lines?
- Who owns the assets of the department?
 - o Most departments are 501(c)3s who own the land, trucks, etc.

Council Comments

- With the costs of these things, it may take a few budget cycles to get it all accounted for. With the rising cost of land, we need to move forward on the land for the new station.
- Consolidation is going to have to happen with some of these departments.

Animal Services

Commissioner Craig Pierce discussed needs at Animal Services.

- We currently have a veterinarian who does some spay and neuter, though some corporate partners require a full-time program to receive donations.
- The need: full time veterinarian and veterinary technician to staff the County's spay and neuter program
- Potential to partner with veterans

Questions

- The County hadn't spayed and neutered all animals before in case they were reclaimed; would that be written into the County policy?
 - o Yes, the County would like all animals that come through the facility to be spayed or neutered

Employee Mental Health

County Manager Aaron Church presented a mental health support program that could be beneficial for employees.

- First responders (particularly police) have a higher incidence of mental health crises.
- Employees who feel their employers care about mental health are:
 - o 69% less likely to search for a new job
 - o Three times more engaged at work
- Starting the process:
 - o Week 1: Start the conversation □ Week 2: Mental Wellness □ Week 3: Mental Health Conditions □ Week 4: Support
- After Week 4:
 - o Annual guest speakers
 - o Mental health page in Employee Newsletter OPEN sharing
 - o Peer support program (NC certified Peer Support Specialist Program)
 - Encourage certified specialists in Sheriff's Office, HR, and Health Department

Council Comments

- It is important to reach law enforcement officers before retirement.

Litter Report

Craig Powers, Director of Engineering and Environmental Services, distributed a litter report (Attachment B) and discussed the findings.

- 76.18 total tons of debris collected
- NCDOT Efforts:
 - o 49.96 tons of debris removed by NCDOT Interstate Sweeping Contractor
 - o 1,524.54 tons of debris removed by NCDOR Primary Pickup Contractor
 - o 598.32 tons of debris removed by NCDOT employees
- City of Salisbury Efforts:
 - o 520 lbs. collected on 5 volunteer sweeps
 - o 2304 gallons of litter removed from waterways
 - o 30-40 tons of debris moved by City employees

Questions

- Do we have an adopt-a-street program?
 - o It is administered by NCDOT
- pick up litter?
 - o County departments have partnered on some smaller projects, but there are not any efforts that stand out

Other

- Rowan County Sheriff's Office is working with other counties to see what is being done and will present to Commissioners in April.

Capital Improvement Plan

Siobhan Allen, Assistant to the County Manager/Management Analyst, and Anna Bumgarner, Finance Director, presented the Capital Improvement Plan with Department Directors discussing needs on a case by case basis.

- There are many proposed Capital Improvement projects. Some projects include:
 - o Upgrading Thelma's to a cold-storage facility for meat producers
 - o West End Plaza agricultural storage
 - o South Central EMS station
 - o Landfill expansion
 - o Rowan County Sheriff's Office building
 - o Dan Nichols Park new restroom
 - o Rowan Public Library East Branch expansion
 - o DSS facility expansion

Questions

- How large would the cold storage be?
 - o Undetermined-the County is talking with others to see what has worked

for them.

- Is there an area being looked at for Dan Nichols property purchase?
 - o Not specifically, though the County is looking at land swaps.
- What is the plan for Southern Rowan Park?
 - o This was identified in our Master Plan as a general area; a specific plot of land has not been pursued.
- Are there recreational offerings at these parks?
 - o County parks have historically been trails, open space, some shelter, etc. while municipality parks have more of the recreation amenities.
- Are the water and soil grants expected to recur?
 - o The need has been established—hopefully legislature allows it to continue.
- Would the East Branch Library expansion be two stories?
 - o Ideally, though architectural and budgetary considerations could have an effect.
- Does the DSS expansion include additional staff?
 - o No, this is just the capital needs.

Council Comments

- One stipulation for the Cube relicensing agreement was providing a recreational site in Rowan County. The site that was selected is not ideal and we have been talking to Cube to identify new spots, potentially Scout Road.
- If the water and sewer grant funds are going to continue, Rowan County should be prepared with potential projects.
 - o The Water and Soil department currently has a list of ranked/prioritized projects.
- With the different construction coming in, a redistricting study could help ensure schools and other infrastructure are added in the correct place.

Other

- Some of these projects (e.g., airport, Water and Soil) have grant funding attached

During this presentation, Chairman Edds recessed the meeting at 2:49 p.m.

The meeting was resumed at 3:55 p.m.

Capital Improvement Plan Prioritization

After hearing the departmental requests for capital improvements, Facilitator Emily Wilson conducted an exercise with the Board in which they noted their top priorities for the coming year. The chart below shows the results of the exercise with priorities sorted by total number of Commissioner requests.

Project	Requests
BHUC	10
Health Department	9

South Rowan EMS Station	8
Rowan-Cabarrus Community College	6
Animal Services	5
East Rowan Library	5
West Side Parallel Runway	5
Airport	4
West End Plaza	4
Ag. Storage & Kitchen	3
Landfill Expansion	3
Sheriff storage	3
Dan Nichols Park bathroom	2
Knox Middle School	2
Magistrate office relocation	2
South Rowan Park	1

Adjournment

At 5:13 p.m. on motion of Klusman, seconded by Greene, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn.

This meeting summary, prepared by Facilitator Emily Wilson, with minor edits by the Clerk to the Board, are hereby submitted as the minutes of the Planning Retreat/Work Session.

Sarah Pack, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board

1. West End Plaza - Corner of building

2. WEP Unfinished Belk Entrance

3. No sign needed at this time

4. WEP sign here

5. WEP sign here, main entrance

6. Yadkin Room

7. Rowan County Events Center

8. Rowan County Agricultural Center

9. Room A

10. Room B

13. Room E

14. Room F

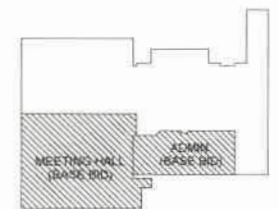
11. Room C

12. Room D

15. Room G

GRAY AREA - SEE OTHER SHEETS FOR APPLICABLE WORK SCOPE

adw architects
environments life
architecture planning interiors
2815 COLISEUM CENTRE DRIVE
SUITE 500
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA 28217
P704.379.1919
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WEST END PLAZA - AGRICULTURAL CENTER RENOVATIONS

1935 JAKE ALEXANDER BLVD.
SALISBURY, NC 28147

BID DOCUMENTS

OVERALL FLOOR PLAN (BASE BID)

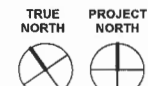
DATE: 12-05-2022
PROJECT NO: 19006

REVISIONS
NO: 1 DATE: 10-28-2022 DESCRIPTION: Rowan County Review Comments

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SHEET NUMBER 10-28-2022





W. Craig Powers, P.E.
Director of Engineering and
Environmental Services

ATTACHMENT B

Rowan County Engineering and Environmental Services Department

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Rowan County Litter Mitigation Update - FY 2023

Litter mitigation in Rowan County is an effort between multiple agencies that all work to improve the appearance and livability of our community. Below are some statistics for the 2023 year:

Rowan County:

- 76.18 tons of debris of roadside litter removed by Rowan County Litter Mitigation employees.
- From Environmental Crimes Special Deputy with RCSO:

2023 Environmental Stats			
Cases Assigned	75	Littering Complaints	123
Reports Taken	75	Victim Contacts	40
Supplements	72	Landfill Hours	97.5
Cases Cleared by Arrest	5	Dumpsites Located	116
Cases Cleared Other	62	Lbs Collected	7172
Citations Issued	36	Tires Collected	269
Interviews	178	Court Hours	3
Dispatched Calls	109	Training Hours	39

Provided by NCDOT:

- 49.96 tons of debris removed by NCDOT Interstate Sweeping Contractor.
- 1,524.54 Tons of debris removed by NCDOT Primary Pickup Contractor.
- 598.32 Tons of debris removed by NCDOT employees.

Provided by City of Salisbury:

- 520 lbs. collected on 5 volunteer litter sweeps.
- 2,304 gallons of litter removed from waterways (measured by number of trash bags needed).
- 30-40 Tons of debris removed by City employees.

These are just a few community partners that work to reduce litter and other efforts are done throughout the County as well. Rowan County will continue to mitigate illegal dumping of solid waste and litter through collaborative efforts across agencies and work to educate the public of best practices of waste management.

Respectfully,

W. Craig Powers, P.E.
Director of Engineering and Environmental Services