

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021 – 9:00 AM
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
1225 RAMSEY STREET, 1ST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES / GOALS & PRIORITIES SESSION

PRESENT: Commissioner Charles Evans, Chairman
Commissioner Glenn Adams, Vice Chairman
Commissioner Michael Boose (arrived at 10:40 a.m.)
Commissioner Jeannette Council (arrived at 9:15 a.m.)
Commissioner Jimmy Keefe
Commissioner Larry Lancaster
Commissioner Toni Stewart
Amy Cannon, County Manager
Duane Holder, Deputy County Manager
Tracy Jackson, Assistant County Manager
Sally Shutt, Assistant County Manager
Angel Wright-Lanier, Assistant County Manager
Rick Moorefield, County Attorney
Vicki Evans, Finance Director
Clinton McRae, Facilitator – District Extension Director,
South Central District
Robert Furr, Facilitator – County Extension Director,
Cabarrus County
Lori Ivey, Facilitator – County Extension Director,
Stanly County
Candice H. White, Clerk to the Board
Press

Chairman Charles Evans welcomed everyone in attendance and introduced the facilitators for the goals and priorities session: Clinton McRae, District Extension Director – South Central District, Robert Furr, County Extension Director - Cabarrus County and Lori Ivey, County Extension Director, Stanly County.

Mr. McRae, Mr. Furr and Ms. Ivey provided a brief description of their backgrounds. Mr. Furr asked County Commissioners and staff to introduce themselves and asked County Commissioners to state why they chose to run for office as a county commissioner.

Mr. Furr reviewed the following agenda for the session:

9:00 AM	Welcome & Introductions Review Agenda and Roles Cumberland County Mission, Vision and Core Values Review Ground Rules
9:30 AM	FY 2021 Goals and Budget Priorities Update (Completed, In-Progress, Not Started)
10:00 AM	FY 2022 Goals – Review Online Questionnaire Input Clarify, Additions, Discussion Priority Voting Designate Short Term and Long Term Review and Discuss Key Indicators of Success
11:30 AM	Budget Priorities Discussion Wrap-Up and Next Steps
12:00 PM	Adjourn

Mr. Furr reviewed the Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Core Values for Cumberland County Government followed by ground rules for the session. Mr. Furr stated the role of the facilitators will be to help guide the Commissioners through healthy discussion to determine the Board's FY22 priorities.

Commissioner Council arrived at 9:10 a.m.

Amy Cannon, County Manager, reviewed the following short-term and long-term goals the board established February 13, 2020 as well as the FY 2021 budget priorities:

Goals: Short-Term

- Public Water Expansion in Gray’s Creek
Ms. Cannon stated work on Gray’s Creek water expansion is in progress and the county will continue moving forward with this priority.
- Completion of Emergency Services Center
Ms. Cannon stated in January 2021, the Board approved a construction bid, contracts have been executed and the contractor is currently mobilizing so the project is moving forward.
- Performing Arts Center Study
Ms. Cannon stated the study for the Performing Arts Center (PAC) is essentially complete except for one critical step which is additional feedback from the community that has been delayed due to COVID-19; the study is set to be completed sometime this fall.
- Discussion on a New High School (Cumberland County Schools & Fort Bragg)
Ms. Cannon stated discussion of a new high school began last winter with the Cumberland County Board of Education, Fort Bragg, City of Fayetteville officials and Cumberland County officials but due to COVID-19, there has been no further discussion. Ms. Cannon stated there will be additional discussion regarding a new high school in the future.
- Feasibility Study for a New County Governmental Services Complex
Ms. Cannon stated the feasibility study has not been started but staff are working to have the feasibility study launched this spring.

Goals: Long-Term

- Countywide Water Expansion
Ms. Cannon stated there has been some minor discussion regarding a long-term plan for county wide water expansion.
- Construction of a County Governmental Services Complex
Ms. Cannon stated this is tied to a short-term goal and staff are working to have the feasibility study launched this spring.

Budget Priorities: FY 2021

- School Funding
Ms. Cannon stated the county used the previous school funding formula for the FY 2021 budget and discussion about a funding agreement did not materialize due to COVID-19.
- Mental Health
Ms. Cannon stated there were no significant increases in mental health funding.
- Public Health
Ms. Cannon stated public health staffing was added in the FY 21 budget.
- County Employee Recruitment and Retention
Ms. Cannon stated the county is still working on the three-year implementation and looking at market salaries from the recruitment and retention study.

Mr. Furr reviewed the priority areas listed below taken from the survey that went to all commissioners that also asked commissioners for key indicators of what success would look like.

Priority Area	Key Indicator of Success
Broadband Internet	Announcement of funding source.
County Emergency Services Center	Announcement of funding source.
Homelessness	Accessible resources available to those who need it.

Food Insecurity	Grocery Stores, Farmers’ Markets, Fresh Food
Performing Arts Center	Public/Private partnership identified and facility construction underway.
Grays Creek & Cedar Creek Water Access	Supply fresh water to schools that have water contamination.
Economic Development	Lower unemployment.
International Farmers’ Market	Collaborate with Cooperative Extension and Public Health Dept. Market provides authentic, international foods, spices, produce, meats.
Drinking Water Quality	DEQ, PWC and Chemours work together to provide safe, accessible water to all county residents.
County Employee Wages	Increase county wages.
Government Communication	Use technology to clearly communicate to public and internally with staff.
Audit/Review of Health Dept., Social Services & Alliance Mental Health	Review departments/agencies for organizational structure, responsibility, and operations. Cumberland County has more oversight over Human Services. Alliance is audited every 5 years.
Local Tax Review	Food & Beverage tax is extended past 2024. Provide capital entertainment projects outside the footprint of the Crown Coliseum Complex.
County Facility Asset Inventory & Audit	Better utilization of county owned space.

Mr. Furr asked the Board to review and provide input on each of the priority areas.

Broadband Internet

Commissioner Keefe stated broadband internet has been a discussion for many years and now with kids accessing school online due to COVID-19, it is shown to be a devastating issue for some communities. Ms. Cannon stated in prior years, the county was not eligible for grant funding to provide broadband internet due to certain census tracks in Cumberland County where the income levels negated the county’s ability to apply for grant funding. Commissioner Keefe stated when the county is not eligible to apply for grant funding, the county should come up with alternative ways to secure funds. Commissioner Adams asked if Metronet would cover all of Cumberland County. Ms. Cannon stated Metronet covers a good part of the county, but there are some areas that will not be able to be addressed and staff will check on those areas and any alternative solutions. Commissioner Adams stated the county needs to gather area location data from Metronet because all county residents should have access to broadband internet. Ms. Cannon stated she agrees with the discussion and wrote down the task to get further information from Metronet.

County Emergency Service Center

Commissioner Lancaster stated he feels good about the County Emergency Services Center status and appreciates all the work staff has done on this project.

Homelessness

Chairman Evans stated homelessness is an issue that has come up a lot over the years and he believes it should be kept on the top of the list of Board priorities. Commissioner Stewart stated Cumberland County only has sixteen (16) beds for homeless individuals and while there are resources in place to prevent homelessness, there is nothing in place for those that are already homeless. Commissioner Keefe stated he believes the county should be the lead on homelessness because it is a countywide issue. Commissioner Adams stated he suggests approaching homelessness by finding housing for the homeless, including wrap around services to work on solving the initial problem that led the individual to become homeless. Commissioner Adams stated there is a bigger and broader discussion that needs to happen to determine how the county plans to address it. Chairman Evans stated the county has been good at providing long term housing for families that are homeless. Chairman Evans also stated \$30,000 has been allocated through Community Development for a study on how Cumberland County should handle the homeless issue. Chairman Evans stated some homeless individuals just need a temporary place to stay until they can get themselves in a better direction. Commissioner Keefe stated he does not want to see Cumberland County become a mecca for the homeless population on the east coast and economic homelessness is easier to address than substance abuse and/or mental health related

homelessness. Commissioner Adams stated since homelessness is so broad, it may be best to compartmentalize the issue and work in sections.

Food Insecurity

Commissioner Lancaster stated he understands the concern of food insecurity but does not know how the county can get involved in food supply. Commissioner Adams stated this is one of his priorities because there are areas in Cumberland County where it is very difficult for citizens to get to a grocery store to access to healthy food, so these citizens rely on McDonalds or food from Family Dollar because it is closer to their home. Commissioner Adams stated if something is not done to change that, this community will always be considered unhealthy. Commissioner Adams stated food insecurity is a human and health need and impacts the Public Health Department, Social Services and Cape Fear Valley Hospital. Duane Holder, Deputy County Manager, stated in September 2020, the Public Health Department joined with Fort Bragg Public Health and UNC-G on the Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge which specifically targeted food insecurity in Cumberland County, so there is a multi-agency effort that just started to attack this problem. Chairman Evans stated he has always been an advocate of countywide transportation which would be helpful for this priority.

Performing Arts Center (PAC)

Mr. Furr stated the Performing Arts Center study has not yet been completed due to COVID-19. Chairman Evans stated a Performing Arts Center would be a strong economic benefit for the county and he is excited about continuing to move forward to get this project done. Commissioner Keefe stated the PAC has been a moving target for many years and Cumberland County is the only county with over 300,000 citizens that does not have this kind of facility.

Gray's Creek and Cedar Creek Water Access

Commissioner Keefe stated two years ago the county had hoped it could identify PWC as the countywide water supplier but at that time, PWC personnel were not interested in negotiating. Commissioner Keefe stated new leadership at PWC has a different outlook and is interested in PWC becoming the water provider. Commissioner Keefe stated the Gray's Creek water situation is being addressed by the county manager, but there also needs to be a comprehensive plan for countywide water. Ms. Cannon stated she believes the county is in a much better position now to develop a long-term plan to address water throughout the county and she believes PWC is willing to be a partner. Ms. Cannon stated the county also has a funding mechanism through the capital investment fund the board set up several years ago. Ms. Cannon stated the Gray's Creek district water issue was on the short-term goal list last year and there has been some recent movement developing the longer-term plan. Commissioner Adams stated he believes when the county talks to PWC about water, sewer issues should also be discussed because subdivisions are still being built in that area with septic tanks and the issues will come back to the county one day.

Drinking Water Quality

Following a brief discussion about whether to combine the "Drinking Water Quality" and the "Gray's Creek and Cedar Creek Water Access" priorities, there was consensus to consider the two priorities separately.

Economic Development

Commissioner Keefe stated many of the problems in our community are the result of either low paying jobs or people not being able to access jobs due to transportation or other issues. Commissioner Keefe stated he thinks this is where Cumberland County fails and hopes as a Board there is a culture of supporting businesses that come into the community with good paying jobs. Commissioner Adams stated this is one of his priorities and he listed lower unemployment as an indicator of success. Commissioner Adams stated while it is great to bring new companies into the community, it is also beneficial for small existing businesses to grow from within and the county needs to determine whether it is putting resources into existing businesses so they can stay in the community.

Commissioner Adams stated the Board needs to review and discuss what the expectation is for economic development in this community because it is possible to lower unemployment without bringing in new businesses. Commissioner Adams stated every year a different commissioner attends the FCEDC meetings, and this does not give much time to provide input on the expectations the Board has regarding economic development moving forward. Chairman Evans stated elected officials should take more of a part in the economic development process and a Commissioner liaison should be present when the FCEDC meets with potential businesses coming to this area.

Commissioner Adams stated the Board should discuss expectations as far as wages and give the FCEDC Board and CEO/President direction on potential economic development projects.

Commissioner Boose arrived at 10:40 a.m.

Mr. Furr asked Commissioner Council and Commissioner Boose to introduce themselves and share why they decided to run for office as a county commissioner.

International Farmers Market

Commissioner Keefe stated this was his priority because it has been a long time since quality-of-life things have been added to our community. Commissioner Keefe stated farmers markets are not only where people get local produce, but other communities have embraced the social aspect of their markets. Commissioner Keefe stated most of the larger communities in North Carolina have farmers markets and with Fort Bragg, there are many cultures already living in Cumberland County.

County Employee Wages

Commissioner Adams stated this was his priority because there are too many individuals in Cumberland County that must work 2-3 jobs to make ends meet because they do not make a living wage. Commissioner Adams stated Cumberland County should set an example and keep county employee wages a priority. Chairman Evans stated to keep good employees and continue to provide the quality of services that Cumberland County provides, there should be adjustments to wages. Commissioner Adams also stated wages and retention of employees go hand in hand. There was consensus to combine retention of employees and employee wages as a priority. Mr. Furr noted county employee recruitment and retention is also a budget priority for this fiscal year.

Government Communication

Commissioner Keefe stated Cumberland County has come a long way with government communication, but it still has a way to go. Commissioner Keefe stated the City of Fayetteville has 2-3 apps for citizens to use on their mobile phones to access city services and the county needs to work on getting apps so citizens can find out information about county services and easily communicate with their elected officials. Commissioner Keefe stated the county website is also difficult to navigate. Commissioner Adams stated the lack of a county TV station has been a detriment to the community and he also thinks navigating the county website has been challenging for some citizens. Commissioner Boose stated it is too difficult for citizens to find the Board of Commissioners' meeting agendas or how to contact a commissioner. Commissioner Boose stated there needs to be less Animal Services information on the screens in the courthouse and more focus on highlighting employees and county departments. Commissioner Boose stated the county has the ability but needs to focus as a group on what is needed to improve government communication.

Audit/Review of Health Department, Social Services, Alliance Mental Health

Commissioner Keefe stated he did not include Alliance Health as a priority because it is state mandated. Commissioner Adams stated he listed Alliance Health as a priority because the Board needs to learn more about what Alliance Health does for mental health in the community in order to determine whether the county is properly funding mental health services.

Commissioner Keefe stated there was discussion a few years back about commissioners being more involved in the Public Health Department and Department of Social Services, but it was decided by a close vote of the Board to keep things the same. Commissioner Keefe stated when issues arise in those departments, the Board must go through the Social Services Board and the Public Health Board to suggest ways to improve services in those departments. Commissioner Keefe stated he believes if there were better lines of communication between those departments, their respective boards and county commissioners, many issues could be dealt with internally and concerns could be resolved in a better manner. Commissioner Keefe asked Ms. Cannon what authority she had over the Public Health Director and the Board of Health, and what the Board of Commissioners' authority or responsibility is to the Board of Health. Commissioner Keefe also asked whether this was based on best practices or legally determined. Ms. Cannon stated commissioners have responsibility for funding the Department of Social Services and Public Health, but the Board of Health and Social Services Board are the hiring authority. Commissioner Keefe asked how to ensure that the Social Services Board and the Board of Health understand the Board's priorities. Ms. Cannon stated the commissioners have a commissioner-liaison to the Board of Health and the Social Services Board and from a management perspective, Deputy County Manager Duane Holder attends the Board of Health and Social Services Board meetings. Ms. Cannon stated if the Board chooses to develop goals and priorities for those departments, they

need to be communicated directly with the Board of Health and Social Services Board. Ms. Cannon stated management works closely with the Public Health Director and Social Services Director but does not provide guidance to their department heads. Mr. Holder stated county management does not have supervisor authority over the Public Health Director and Social Services Director.

Local Tax Review

Commissioner Boose stated he believes the Local Tax Review priority ties in with the joint resolution of the Board of Commissioners and the Fayetteville City Council to eliminate the sunset clause of 2024 in the Food and Beverage Tax and allow the current Crown Complex not be the mandated place for education, entertainment, arts and museums.

County Facility Asset Inventory & Audit

Commissioner Adams stated discussion of space in the courthouse comes up frequently and there is no more space. Commissioner Boose stated some of the lease agreements for county-owned buildings include electricity, maintenance and yard work, and the lease amounts too low. Commissioner Boose stated the county should shoot for at least fair market value. Commissioner Keefe added there are a few instances in which the county leases its property to nonprofits or other organizations for a very low amount, while at the same time the county rents other facilities at prime real estate pricing. Commissioner Keefe stated that does not seem like good use of county funds.

Mr. Furr asked the board whether there were other priorities they would like to add.

Affordable Housing

Commissioner Adams stated he feels rental rates in Cumberland County are outrageous and because Community Development funds are income restrictive, people above the income threshold who still need affordable housing are left out. Commissioner Adams stated people who do not qualify under the current Community Development requirements also need affordable housing.

Countywide Transportation

Chairman Evans stated even if countywide transportation does not make the top priority list, he believes this is something the Board needs to continue to think about because it encompasses so many of the county's issues and needs.

Mr. Furr reviewed the following Cumberland County Citizen Challenges:

- Employment
- Clean Drinking Water
- Countywide Transportation
- High Cost of Rent
- Healthcare
- Education
- Low Wages
- Covid-19

Mr. Furr reviewed the following Commissioner Identified Budget Priority Areas:

- Countywide Water
- Attracting & Retaining County Employees
- Broadband for Unincorporated Areas
- Public Health
- Homelessness
- Education
- County Administrative Building
- New High School
- Affordable Housing
- Food Desserts
- Sheriff Office Cameras

Mr. Furr asked the board whether there any challenges they would like to add to the top priority list.

Commissioner Keefe stated the county has a littering/illegal dumping problem and he hopes this will be a short-term goal. Chairman Evans stated he believes the littering issue is something staff

can work on now. Ms. Cannon stated management is engaging in discussions with the Solid Waste Director to identify barriers and possible operational changes to reduce the illegal dumping issue and encourage proper disposal. Commissioner Adams stated it may be a good time to review the ordinance because the ordinance should give the Solid Waste Director the authority and power needed to address the issue.

Mr. Furr conducted an exercise with the Board to identify their top seven priorities outlined below:

- Grays Creek and Cedar Creek Water Access (6 votes)
- Performing Arts Center (7 votes)
- County Wide Water (Drinking Water Quality) (5 votes)
- Homelessness (4 votes)
- Government Communication (4 votes)
- Economic Development (4 votes)
- County Facility Asset Inventory & Audit (4 votes)

Ms. Cannon stated the list of the Board's seven priorities will be helpful with allocating financial resources. Mr. Holder stated the Board should expect management to take these priorities and develop objectives/measurement indicators so the Board can determine how well management is progressing. Commissioner Boose stated he believes the Government Communication priority will resolve itself quickly and will not take longer than June 30, 2022.

Mr. Furr asked for volunteers following which a commissioner-liaison was assigned to each of the seven priorities to ensure that work is underway on each priority and to help management understand what the Board is looking for on each of the priorities.

- Commissioner Adams was assigned to County Facility Asset Inventory and Audit.
- Commissioner Keefe was assigned to Government Communication.
- Commissioner Boose was assigned to the Performing Arts Center.
- Commissioner Lancaster was assigned to Grays Creek Water.
- Commissioner Stewart was assigned to Homelessness.
- Commissioner Council was assigned to Economic Development.
- Chairman Evans was assigned to County Wide Water.

Commissioner Keefe asked whether a budget amount should be assigned to each priority at this time. Ms. Cannon stated before allocating a dollar amount, staff needs to sit down with each priority and develop goals with measurable objectives. Ms. Cannon stated management needs approximately 60 days to prioritize funding as part of this year's budget process.

Chairman Evans thanked Mr. McRae, Mr. Furr and Ms. Ivey for helping the Board develop its goals and priorities.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Approved with/without revision:

Respectfully submitted,

Kellie Beam
Deputy Clerk to the Board