

## **MINUTES FROM A SPECIAL MEETING HELD BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THE COUNTY OF WARREN IN THE ARMORY CIVIC CENTER MEETING ROOM ON TUESDAY, APRIL 3, 2012 AT 6:00 PM.**

The Special Meeting of the Warren County Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman Ulysses S. Ross. Other Commissioners present: Bertadean Baker, Ruby Downey, Jennifer Jordan and Barry Richardson. Moderator: County Manager Linda T. Worth.

A moment of silence was observed followed by introductions. Special guests present: Senator Edward Jones, Senator Doug Berger and Representative Michael Wray.

### **Issue # 1: State Budget: Increase County Lottery Funds and Restore Mental Health Funding**

**County Impact:** Avoid unfunded mandates, keep current funding levels or increase dollars for education; give counties flexibility. What about ADM funds?

**Legislator Feedback:** Bipartisanship is not taken into account when decisions are made, Lottery distribution is being reviewed, Mental Health is in shambles, director resigned. Legislators are looking at giving counties flexibility to merge human services. Need bill to make constitutional amendment that lottery funds remain for education. Majority want to end ¼% sales tax which will effect education. There are deficits in several state departments. Cuts have been suggested in Community College System and DOT. There's an aggressive effort to destroy public education.

### **Issue # 2: Allow Human Services Administrative Flexibility**

**County Impact:** Flexibility and options for counties would be appreciated to help streamline service provision and increase efficiencies across human service departments.

**Legislator Feedback:** Counties have DSS Boards that add protection against political influence, proposed changes will take away separate/independent control from Boards of Commissioners. Employee protections need to remain, bill introduced wants to strip away social workers due process. Current bill has been extensively amended, it will probably go back to the Senate since it's been changed. Consolidating cuts down on duplicating services and job duties. May lose areas of expertise. Senator Berger indicated he voted against the bill in the Senate. Senator Jones voted for the bill. Rep. Wray indicated at least two of his counties, Vance and Warren, are in favor of the legislation; however, Northampton County is against it.

### **Issue # 3: Authorize County Broadband Public/Private Partnerships**

**County Impact:** Counties would like the authority to form public/private partnerships with broadband providers. Wish only to be able to provide incentives (grants, etc.) to broadband providers to encourage them to deploy infrastructure in under-served areas, do not want to operate broadband systems. Some citizens still have dial up service, and others have no service.

**Legislator Feedback:** Warren County is 85% covered, but the remaining 15% deserves availability also. There were federal funds, but very limited state funds. Warren County benefited by lobbying of former County Commissioners and their legislative delegation that helped allocate funding through the eNC Authority. Senator Berger inquired who could possibly be against authorizing counties to enter into such public/private partnerships?

## Other Issues:

**County Concerns:** What is the atmosphere in Raleigh, what are we possibly going to lose?

**Legislator Feedback:** It depends, cities and town will be limited in their ability to annex.

**Board Chairman:** NC Highway 158 from Warrenton to Littleton needs to be resurfaced.

**Legislator Feedback:** \$600 billion is needed for state budget; we are aggressively attending to the main highways. County should talk to your regional DOT Engineer and DOT Board members. I-95 is looking at toll roads, people will avoid that highway in order not to pay the toll, therefore, impacting communities that depend on the highway to bring traffic into their areas.

Senator Berger and Representative Wray left the meeting.

**Economic Development Director:** Education and roads are needed. If there has to be a choice, education needs are critical, but both are important. Identify sources to make appropriate investments in local economic development, particularly in rural economically distressed areas.

**Berger:** 30 year commitment to this community, was here as a college student demonstrating against the PCB dump. He will always be available for Warren County and endorses Senator Ed Jones who will succeed him as our State Senator.

## Q&A

Ron Skow – Inquired of the legislators how they felt about the KIPP School in Gaston, NC.

David Irvin – Commented on the diverse high school system in Warren County

David Duxbury – Support the KIPP school, a public charter school. Four of Warren County's eight schools did not meet state requirements. Cut school administration rather than funds for students.

Brady Martin – Endorsed Senator Jones, Halifax Electric appreciates his support of business. Need funds and less burden from government to develop entrepreneurial programs.

Cathy Alston-Kearney – Put in a plug for non-profits. They are feeling the state/federal budget cuts; feel how people in the community are hurting; challenged to be efficient, there is an increased demand to aid people. Warren County has a strong non-profit community.

Andy Smith, Health Director – Warren County Health Department went from 97<sup>th</sup> to 88<sup>th</sup>/87<sup>th</sup> in improvement statewide. This is representative of a tremendous improvement in health program provision for our citizens.

Meeting was adjourned on motion of Commissioner Richardson, which was second by Commissioner Baker and duly carried.

\_\_\_\_\_/s/ Angelena Kearney-Dunap\_\_\_\_\_  
Angelena Kearney-Dunlap, Clerk to the Board