

THE RECESSED SESSION OF APRIL 22, 2004 RECONVENED AT 7:00 P.M. ON APRIL 28, 2004 IN JOINT SESSION WITH THE CITY OF NEW BERN BOARD OF ALDERMEN AT THE SHERATON GRAND IN NEW BERN. THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:15 AND COMMISSIONER SAMPSON WAS CALLED UPON TO GIVE THE INVOCATION.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman George N. Brown, Jr.
Vice Chairman Leon C. Staton
Commissioner Lee Kyle Allen
Commissioner Bill Harper
Commissioner Perry Morris
Commissioner Johnnie Sampson, Jr.
Commissioner M. Renée Sisk

STAFF PRESENT:

Harold Blizzard, County Manager
George B. Sawyer, Assistant County Manager
Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board

REPRESENTING CITY OF NEW BERN:

Robert G. Raynor, Mayor Pro Tem
Alderman William Ballenger
Alderman Joe Mattingly
Alderman Max Freeze
William Hartman, City Manager
Vickie Johnson, City Clerk
Scott Davis, City Attorney

Alderman Raynor announced that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues with Craven County's legislative delegation. Legislative representatives present were:

Senator Scott Thomas
Representative Michael Gorman
Representative Charles Johnson
Representative William Wainwright

Mr. Hartman opened the meeting with the expression of concerns relative to unfunded mandates. He stated that the water rate for the City of New Bern customers will need to be increased another 62% to achieve the construction of a new water plant, and he stated that a 25% increase has already been effected. He appealed to the legislative delegation to form a block for seeking funding at any level possible. He stated that the plant must be operational by 2007 because the Black Creek Aquifer is down 25%. Fifteen million dollars is needed to start the operation. He stated that the City is appealing for the legislative delegation to seek any relief possible for the mandates relative to water usage reduction, including grants and low interest loans.

Mr. Hartman continued stating that the City has begun consideration of providing low cost internet service with new technologies available which allow electric utilities to carry the broad band signal. He stated that this option presents more far ranging potential than DSL through Cox or Sprint, and that the City is interested in considering either providing such service or contracting someone to use the City's lines to provide the service. However, because of the Dillon Rule, a local bill or statewide bill would be needed to authorize the provision of service. Representative Wainwright commended that an Electri-cities consortium should approach this issue as a block to seek a statewide bill, or at the least to conduct a survey. Representative Wainwright also inquired if the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and the North Carolina League of Municipalities are addressing the concerns raised relative to the water usage reduction mandates. Mr. Hartman responded that the League of Municipalities has not shown much interest in the issue because it is perceived as a regional issue. Representative

Wainwright suggested that a position paper be developed relative to the status and financial need relative to the mandate. He stated that if the money is not available the legislature could possibly consider an extension of the deadline for achieving the mandated reduction. Mr. Hartman stated that New Bern would be willing to conduct a survey in collaboration with the League of Municipalities and develop such a position paper. He stated that he would coordinate the information for the County also. Mr. Wainwright asked that potential funding sources be identified in the document. Mayor Pro Tem, Robert Raynor, stated that extended deadlines would also be very helpful.

Alderman Mattingly expressed concern about the widening of Hwy 17 from Williamston to Jacksonville and stressed the need for this to be addressed as soon as possible.

At 9:15 p.m. Commissioner Morris moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Staton and unanimously carried.

Chairman George N. Brown, Jr.
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board