



---

NORTH CAROLINA  
GRANVILLE COUNTY  
CITY OF OXFORD

Masonic Home for Children – Cobb Center  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2010 – 1:00 UNTIL 6:00 P.M.  
**OXFORD BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' RETREAT – SESSION ONE**

The Board of Commissioners for the City of Oxford met at the above-mentioned time and place for a retreat with all members of the Board and local news media being notified of the same as well as the purpose of the retreat.

Present were: Mayor Al Woodlief, Jr., Mayor Pro Tem Howard Herring, Sr., Commissioners Robert B. Williford, Sr., Walter Cantley, Jackie Sergent, Danny Currin, Ron Bullock, and Calvin Harris, Jr. Present also were City Manager Mark Donham, City Clerk Donna B. Hosch, and Department Heads Cheryl Hart, Carol Dorsey, Tanya Weary, Kenny Manning, Larry Thomas, Mary Caudle, Steve McNally, and John Wolford.

**INTRODUCTION BY CITY MANAGER MARK DONHAM**

CM Donham stated that the Board of Commissioners has asked for departmental information and a structured way to plan for goals and accomplishments. Due to the amount of information to be presented, the retreat would take two sessions to complete. This day's session would focus on department heads presenting information about themselves, their organizational chart, purpose and goals, budget, and problems and issues. There would not be much time for question and answer periods, so the Mayor encouraged the Board to speak with Mark if they had questions.

CM Donham stated the success of the organization depends upon employees understanding the Commissioners' goals. The team would meet to evaluate how the goals would be realized and by what procedures. The management team meets twice a month to discuss issues, the meetings also presenting team spirit. CM Donham stated it is critical to work as a team to gain insight and input.

Major issues have been worked on and studies have been prepared over the past year. Some examples are gang initiatives in the police department, a nuisance abatement ordinance, a new fire truck has been delivered, an interim management structure has been developed in the

Fire Department, and a safety study is underway. Parks and Recreation has provided a wide array of programs, Engineering has completed a water rate study and a comprehensive survey of the street system, Planning has done a vision study, and Buildings and Grounds has worked on the lighting of the greens and planter program. Human Resources implemented a random drug testing policy and negotiated a health insurance plan, Downtown Economic Development sponsored several downtown events and is continuing to draw new businesses, the City Clerk produced a Commissioners Handbook and improved the schedule for distributing the Agendas, and Finance continues to win the excellence in financial reporting award and is working on privilege tax rates.

#### **PRESENTATION BY KENNY MANNING, BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

Manning stated he's been in his position for 10 years, working previously for Duke as a supervisor. He has three employees who are all facilities maintenance workers.

*See attached handout for presentation.*

Manning additionally stated that shortly the State Energy Office will do an assessment for some of our buildings. A grant will be submitted to help upgrade some of the electrical, heating, and air systems. The DOEDC will take responsibility for funding the repotting of the planters downtown.

#### **PRESENTATION BY CHERYL HART, PLANNING DIRECTOR**

Hart stated she's been in her position for 17 years with the City.

*See attached handout for presentation.*

Hart added that she is the only person in her department and is in need of a planner or technical help. Hart sets permit fees and feels they should be increased. She will approach the Board with this in the near future. Only five permits for new residential structures were issued last year because of the economy. However, there are many areas available for residential growth such as 200+/- acres for Easton Farms, 50 lots at Lexington Park, 1,200+ lots in Oxford Park, 40 acres adjacent to Meadowbrook subdivision, and 15 lots and 5 additional acres for Rollingwood subdivision. Hart stated she wishes to involve herself more in community initiatives, particularly those promoting home ownership, since home ownership strengthens neighborhoods. Hart felt there is a need for more training.

### COMMENTS BY REPRESENTATIVE JIMMY CRAWFORD

Crawford stated he would be available for the needs of the City. He is in contact with a multitude of people, and the City should let him know if there is anything he can do to help. Crawford stated he is on the City's Zoning Board of Adjustment, as he has been since the late 1960's.

### PRESENTATION BY LARRY THOMAS, CITY ENGINEER

Thomas stated he has been with the City about 10 years. In addition to other staff members, he shares an administrative assistant, Chris Henderson, with the Recreation Department.

See attached handout for presentation.

Thomas added that a big problem will be not selling water and water costs going up. Projected sales estimated in the 30 year plan show an increase over the next 30 years that will cause us to run out of capacity – our share of Kerr Lake will not be large enough to handle the demand for water. Thomas stated he is surprised the City has not grown more since he's been here and made the assurance that we are, in fact, in a position to grow.

### PRESENTATION BY TANYA WEARY, ASSISTANT TO THE CITY MANAGER / DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Weary stated that she has been in her position since July of 2009. Prior to that, she was the City Clerk. She has received her Master's degree and believes it will allow her to be of help to the City and to herself.

See attached handout for presentation.

Mayor Pro Tem Herring stated the previous Board discussed upstairs residency and wished to know what progress has been made on this. CM Donham answered that there were some proposed incentives, but there was not a big enough budget to fund them. MPT Herring stated he hoped there would be a new interest in downtown and wanted to see the Board do what it could to make it easier for this to come to fruition. MPT Herring stated he wanted to see a policy in place on this as well having some type of plan in place in six months. A vision plan has been approved, but MPT Herring has seen nothing come to fruition.

## PRESENTATION BY STEVE McNALLY, FINANCE DIRECTOR

McNally stated he has been in his position for five years, previously working in the private sector as financial analyst, comptroller, and IT support administrator.

See attached handout for presentation.

It was questioned if we charge enough to turn water off and on since we are sending two men to do this job. Henderson, for example, charges twice as much as Oxford to perform this task. It was asked if we require businesses to have water, to which CM Donham replied that it is defined by building and sanitation codes. McNally stated there are, in fact, a handful of businesses that don't have water. In collecting miscellaneous item debts, Commissioner Sergent asked if some of this could be put under debt setoff. McNally answered that we would need to have social security numbers for this and that we don't have a lot of these cases. Additionally, the core costs and attorney's fees would most likely be greater than the amount we would be trying to collect.

## PRESENTATION BY MARY CAUDLE, PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR

Caudle stated that her employees are the organizational structure that makes things happen in her department and that volunteers run the projects.

See attached handout for presentation.

When asked what percent of her budget is fee collections, Caudle replied she would need to investigate this but that she would guess 20% or better. So far, there have been no complaints about the fees being too high and all families have been able to pay. There is a policy in place if payment cannot be made that would have the families perform volunteer work or be put on a payment plan.

Upgrades to the gym have been done previously, but no attention has been given to dead spaces, i.e., the locker rooms. Caudle would like to see air and heat placed in these areas to make them usable for such things as cultural arts activities. There is grant money to complete these types of projects, especially urban renewal for parks and recreational facilities only. Right now, however, those funds are stuck in Washington.

Caudle stated that she is in the process of negotiating with multiple organizations which do travel ball teams for baseball and softball. She has met with several hotels and motels to put packages together which will be attractive for people to stay in Oxford who attend these events. If tournaments can be landed, which it appears at least one will be, tournaments will be running March through November.

When asked about the concession stand at Oxford Park, Caudle stated it went “ok”. More vendors are now offering more money up front to run the stand, and the current contract ends this December. MPT Herring suggested that the concession contract run for more than a year. Last year things were haphazard because the program was just getting started.

Caudle stated that she did not have an accurate percentage comparison of county kids vs. city kids using the Park, but that she felt a high percentage were city. Participation is increasing from the southern end of the county.

#### **PRESENTATION BY CAROL DORSEY, HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR**

Dorsey stated she’s been with the City since February 2009. She has 20 years experience with such organizations as Mitsubishi Semiconductor, Marriott, and manufacturing organizations. She was the first woman to serve as a voting member of Mitsubishi America’s national benefits board that established benefits for all Mitsubishi America entities.

*See attached handout for presentation.*

Dorsey stated that her goal as the City’s HR professional is to alert and advise the City of potential risks in terms of benefit costs, work performance, workers compensation costs, etc. She wants to make the public more aware of the contributions of City employees. She was asked what became of the Employee of the Month Award, to which she replied she hopes to find a better way to recognize a larger number of employees and plans to revise the HR portion of the City’s website to include employee recognitions. It was stated that the City does need some type of recognition program. CM Donham answered there is currently a certificate awarded for outstanding work.

Dorsey noted that she eliminated the \$24,000 annual fee that the City historically paid to a Benefits Consultant by taking on that role herself. In so doing, she saved the City in excess of \$90,000 by negotiating a new health insurance plan that actually improved employee benefits and eliminated complicated, costly, and time-consuming components.

Dorsey stressed that rising employee health benefit costs and worker’s compensation costs are critical. She said that we must help employees to improve their overall health in order to curtail these costs. In doing so, we would also improve job performance. Dorsey discussed a pilot exercise class that she leads after work for a group of City Hall employees, and noted plans to continue a Wellness Initiative.

Commissioner Sergent wished to see the City invest in adopting a policy which would allow employees to be active on work time. Many organizations do this, and such a policy was adopted by the County a year ago. Such changes can decrease absenteeism and increase productivity and job satisfaction. Also, this would give immediate benefits without costing a lot of money. MPT Herring stated that the military now has such a policy where they allow the last 30 minutes of the work day to be devoted to some type of physical exercise. The result has been a tremendous increase in the passing of physical fitness activities.

#### **PRESENTATION BY JOHN WOLFORD, CHIEF OF POLICE**

Wolford stated he is the Chief of Police, Acting Fire Chief, and that he has been called upon to perform a variety of tasks for the City in his ten years with the City. He has been in law enforcement for 33 years.

Wolford stated fitness issues with PD have been discussed for years and some progress has been made. Fitness cannot be mandated, and there are a line of court cases going back to the 1970's. The nature of the business creates injuries. Most are leg and limb resulting from falls related to chases or arrests.

*See attached handout for presentation.*

In response to any advantages to combining our dispatcher with the County's 911 group, Wolford stated this has been looked at and it boils down to dollars and cents and what would it cost to get this done. Wolford's feeling is that the 911 group would not be able to handle the workload. Additionally, there would still need to be console positions at PD, adding to the cost of such a project. Oxford PD is dedicated to Oxford and the County is dedicated more to a scattered group or area. Also, there would no longer be a 24 hour shop. Wolford cited that in just the last year, they had 760-some walk ins after 7:00 p.m.

MPT Herring stated the Board can be proud of PD. Career development has been done and Herring wanted to see this continue. If vehicle rotation is not kept up with as outlined in Wolford's presentation, it will cost the City more down the road. Herring stated he wants to see those things which make public safety number one put into the budget.

#### **SUMMARY BY MARK DONHAM, CITY MANAGER**

Donham stated that a lot of good information had been presented and indicated there are funding needs. Some of these needs would require a lot of money. Revenues have not been increasing and this has a lot to do with the economy. Even though low, the fund balance is not

in bad shape. We cannot, however, keep pulling from it. Donham stated he has a talented staff, they do an outstanding job, and this is a very lean organization. Even so, we had to make cuts last year and the year before. Donham stated when you make cuts, you lose services. Such was the case with the leaf situation this year which hit the City hard.

Donham felt that his staff has made a commitment to continuing to do good things with limited dollars. The Board should keep in mind that even with succession plans, when key staff people like Cheryl do not have a support staff.

Donham stated the second part of the retreat will be set up to discuss goals for the City and their priority.