

THE ANSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS convened for a recessed meeting on Tuesday, January 20, 2015 beginning at 6:00 P.M. in the board room, Suite 209 of the Anson County Government Center.

Commissioners present: Anna H. Baucom, Chair
Ross Streater, Vice Chair
Bobby Sikes
Vancine Sturdivant
Jarvis Woodburn

Staff members present: Bonnie M. Huntley, NCCCC Clerk to the Board
Rita James, Data Processing
Tiffany Randall, CPA, Finance Officer
Jeff Waisner, Parks & Rec/Building Maintenance
Mary Beck, Economic Development Director
Mike Sessions, Utilities Director

Other: Scott Forbes, County Attorney

Chairman Baucom called the recessed meeting to Order, welcoming those present. Chairman Baucom introduced David Nicholson and Neil Emory of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. Chairman Baucom then called for introductions, asking each person to say something about what they are looking for in County Manager.

Commissioner Sikes stated that he was looking for a good one. Commissioner Woodburn stated that he was looking for someone good in employer relations, must be fair, consistent and honest with all employees, open communications, equitable to all employees, hold people accountable for their actions, oversee and provide information for the best available affordable benefits package for all county employees, knowledgeable in regards to county operations and responsibilities of the county to other jurisdictions, municipalities, organizations, etc., ability to facilitate the budget completion and management of same, keep commissioners informed of issues and important items – no surprises, when information is request provide it to all commissioners. Commissioner Woodburn continued by listing work within budget constraints but maintain a satisfactory spending level and initiative to move Anson County forward. County Attorney Forbes stated that he would like to have someone that can work to move the county to the next level. County Attorney Forbes feels we are poised to spring forward and the right County Manager would really work with this group well. County Attorney Forbes added that this group had a lot of talent and the right County Manager would be a spark plug catalyst to allow them to facilitate. Tiffany Randall, CPA, Finance Officer, stated that she would like to see someone committed to

Anson County and small town or community minded. Jeff Waisner, Parks and Rec./Building Maintenance stated that he would like to see a County Manager that supports his department heads, communicates well with employees, does not micromanage and someone that will stay. The Clerk noted that sometimes it is not the manager's fault that they don't stay. The Clerk agreed that it would be nice to have someone that would stay a while. The Clerk stated that she would like to see someone with HR experience, someone with a planning background and she would like to see someone that values the employees and our citizens. Chairman Baucom introduced the clerk as Bonnie Huntley and she suspected she was one of the best clerks to the board in North Carolina. Chairman Baucom noted that she has been through a number of County Managers, some that were competent and some that were not. Commissioner Sturdivant shared that some of the things she would love to see in a County Manager is someone that is accessible and someone that has communication skills. Commissioner Sturdivant stated that they could be authoritative but they should be humble with it. Commissioner Sturdivant wants them to have budget skills and someone that relates to and respects employees. Commissioner Sturdivant added that she believes in hiring within and would love for our County Manager to be a person that is already in the county and a part of the county. Vice Chair Streater stated that he was like the clerk and had been through about as many County Managers and we've had some good ones and some that he was glad to see go. Vice Chair Streater agreed with what everyone around the table has said tonight that they need budget skills and treat people like they want to be treated. Chairman Baucom agreed that they were all thinking along the same lines and felt HR skills was important. Chairman Baucom felt this board could be no better than the county employees from the people who come around to clean up to the department heads to all of that. Chairman Baucom stated that she would like to see somebody with management skills and will keep us on budget. Chairman Baucom wants someone who will know the policies and give the board guidance when they get ready to go through one. Chairman Baucom wants someone with an eye to the future, someone that will do continuing education and someone that has skills needed for management. Chairman Baucom wants someone that knows the job or learns it very quickly. Chairman Baucom wants someone that will look to the future, amenable to change and growth. Chairman Baucom noted that we were a rural community and there are 85 of us and 15 urban communities and she doesn't think there was a single rural county in the last census or the last updates that did not lose population. Chairman Baucom noted that we need a critical mass of people here and we need those people to support business, industry and commerce. Chairman Baucom feels when we have that part we have a better opportunity to attract businesses. Chairman Baucom feels this is a difficult job and she thinks the board recognizes that. Mr. Nicholson then asked Sheriff Reid to share his qualities. Sheriff Reid thanked Commissioner Sturdivant for her suggestions but he already has a job. Sheriff Reid shared that he would like to see someone that is honest, fair and someone that can reach out with an empty hand and come back with a full hand. Mr. Nicholson stated that they appreciate the opportunity to be here this evening and feels this is very important.

Appearance:

Mr. Nicholson introduced Neil Emory saying they were both retired County Managers. Mr. Nicholson was the County Manager in Henderson County and in fact he spent his entire thirty year career with Henderson County. Mr. Nicholson shared that he was finance director, assistant County Manager and then County Manager. Mr. Nicholson stated that he retired eight or nine years ago and about six months later went to work with the Association. Mr. Nicholson noted that he and Mr. Emory work part time and they split the state and Anson County was about as far east as he went. Mr. Nicholson stated that he wanted Mr. Emory here because he thinks our search for a County Manager may reach some of his areas. Mr. Nicholson shared that he took the path of being a County Manager by working himself up.

Mr. Emory stated that he went through the Local Government Administration program at Appalachian and from there he had his first job as County Manager when he was twenty-four in Caswell County. Mr. Emory stated that he stayed there five years and then moved to Transylvania County for four years and from there to Caldwell for about two years. Mr. Emory stated that in Caldwell they elected a board that did not want him and he did not want them so he left for Harnett County and stayed sixteen years and retired.

Mr. Nicholson shared that he still lives in Hendersonville and Mr. Emory still lives in Dunn. Mr. Emory thanked the board for the opportunity and he feels this is the most important decision they will make as a board. Mr. Emory stated that the manager can set the tone and the future of the county. Mr. Emory encouraged board members to cast their net broad and don't ever box themselves in. Mr. Emory asked that they keep their mind wide open and look at all their options. Mr. Emory stated that if they find that right person when they put the Anson County cap on they are in and will give their heart and soul. Mr. Emory added that if they are professional they will give their heart and soul. Mr. Emory stated that if you trust that person to run the day to day sometimes you have to sit in the owner's box and let them coach. Mr. Emory felt the board needed to hire the person they have trust and faith in to work with them and run the day to day. Mr. Emory stated that he has seen boards where hiring the manager is let's just get someone in the chair and when you do this you are not living up to your responsibility and it can make your life painful. Mr. Emory noted that when you have a vacancy a lot of employees and citizens are looking to the board for leadership and wondering if they know how to proceed. Mr. Emory feels it is important that the board knows their role is to provide that strong leadership, to have a plan in place on how you will handle this and make sure everybody knows who is going to report to whom. Mr. Emory noted that if you let the process go too long you may lose the one you wanted to land because a lot of applicants get frustrated when the process drags out too long.

Mr. Nicholson stated that the Association was here to serve the board and their new Executive Director wants them to be more involved in working with county commissioners when there is a vacancy. Mr. Nicholson stated that they are not head

hunters but wanted the board to know that they are in county managers and assistant manager's offices every week and if they know what the board is looking for they can send people our way. Mr. Nicholson added that since he spoke with the clerk in mid-December he has been telling people who are experienced managers and those looking to start a career in county government about Anson County. Mr. Nicholson noted among the things they will do tonight is talk about the application process, relationship with the applicants, the interview process but at the end of the day it is how you feel about a candidate. Mr. Nicholson explained that it was important to get the ad out as soon as possible since they were talking about Anson County and trying to generate interest. Mr. Nicholson mentioned the ad for the position and encouraged board members to put the ad in the association's newspaper and their website. Mr. Nicholson also encouraged board members to place the ad with the League of Municipalities publication and their website and our regional COG. Mr. Emory noted one key component was confidentiality and stated that if the board desires them to be involved in the process of reviewing the applications they would ask the County Attorney to prepare a confidentiality agreement. Mr. Emory cautioned board members against making names of the applicant's public feeling this would limit the ability of some to apply. Mr. Emory added that some people can't risk their current employer knowing they applied. Mr. Emory stated that this was not hiding anything but the fact of respecting a person and their situation.

Mr. Nicholson asked if board members had thought about who would be collecting the applications with Vice Chair Streater feeling they should come to Chairman Baucom. Mr. Nicholson noted that people would be looking at us and we need to put our best foot forward in the process and encouraged having the Clerk draft a letter noting receipt of the application and we would be back in touch. Mr. Nicholson noted this was not making a commitment to interview or hire but it was being professional and upfront with those applying. Mr. Nicholson noted the board needed to decide how they want to screen the applicants stating it could be the entire board, a committee or he and Mr. Emory will be happy to help with the process. Vice Chair Streater commented that he liked that idea and asked if they would meet with the entire board to review the applications with Mr. Nicholson feeling every resume should be available to every board member. Mr. Emory suggested board members review the applications individually and rank their top 10 before meeting as a group to review. Commissioner Sturdivant stated that last time they went through this process each board member had a copy of all applications that they reviewed prior to meeting as a board to review. Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Emory offered to run interference for the board. Chairman Baucom voiced that she would like to have their perspective. Chairman Baucom shared that she was serving as Interim Manager and we have a four member management team consisting of Bonnie Huntley, Tiffany Randall, Jeff Waisner and Rita James. Chairman Baucom asked if we would send copies of the applications as they come in or would they come take a look. Mr. Nicholson stated that he would rather come here to look and if there is an issue with an applicant they want to be able

to tell board members in person. Mr. Nicholson felt that they should try to get it down plus or minus to five people to interview.

Mr. Emory encouraged board members to do some homework. Mr. Emory stated that when he was interviewing for a County Manager position, he always wanted to know what each commissioner did for a living, financially where the county stood and issues that were going on in the community. Mr. Emory asked board members to think about the questions they ask that would show if the applicant had done their homework and if they knew anything about us. Mr. Emory felt this was also a time for the board to shine with the applicants. Mr. Emory stated that this could be done with all applicants or just those you want to interview but he believes it is impressive if when someone applies you send them a packet of information about the county including information on board members, the organizational chart and information from the Chamber of Commerce. Commissioner Sturdivant felt the packet was a good idea noting that through questions you could determine who had read it and who had not. Mr. Emory stated that it was also important to plan for the interviews and not let candidates meet each other in the hall. Mr. Emory felt board members also needed to decide how they plan to deal with travel as some boards offer to pay mileage for those being interviewed or a night's stay. Mr. Nicholson noted that this might depend on how far they are traveling and if it would involve an overnight stay. Mr. Emory felt this question would get asked and it was better to resolve it up front. Chairman Baucom felt the board needed to develop a budget for this process to include postage and possibly mileage for the top five. Mr. Nicholson encouraged board members to decide who will ask the questions in the interview process and felt an hour was enough time for each interview. Mr. Nicholson shared that he and Mr. Emory would be glad to check references for the board. Mr. Emory stated that if they hire someone outside the community they will probably want a contract which offers some protection for that person. Mr. Emory added that if they find the right candidate they should be willing to invest in them with salary and willing to let them bring their longevity with them. Mr. Emory shared that right now a challenge with managers is how many can't sell their home. Mr. Emory encouraged board members to know up front what they are willing to negotiate on. Mr. Nicholson asked board members their time frame to start interviews with Vice Chair Streater feeling they were in no rush. Chairman Baucom voiced that she would like to kick it off, execute it and have someone in place in ninety days. Commissioner Woodburn felt ninety-days were a good target but lots of things come into play when you start moving along. Chairman Baucom did not expect to get someone on board in the office until June when school ends.

Mr. Nicholson then lead board members through a job profile exercise in order to understand what they were looking for in their next manager. Mr. Nicholson noted that sometimes applicants will ask if a job profile was done and if so they will ask to see a copy. Mr. Emory then shared a handout with all present with Mr. Nicholson noting this would become part of the record.

After the exercise board members took a short break.

After the break, Mr. Nicholson shared the following profile that board members wanted in their next County Manager:

- Bachelor's Degree
- Valuing experience – someone with more than 5 years' experience
- Oral Skills
- Finance/Budget
- Board relationship
- Administrative Ability
- Community Presence

Mr. Nicholson added that he was not surprised by the outcome. This shows we are looking for an experience manager, someone that brings good oral skills, someone with a finance/budget background, someone with strong administrative abilities and can be a presence in the community. Mr. Nicholson felt the board needed to base the ad on what we're looking for. Mr. Nicholson shared that he and Mr. Emory would take this and start spreading the word around on what we're looking for and they will start looking at interview questions based on these. Mr. Nicholson stated that this tells him we are looking for someone with a lot of administrative ability but this is just a start because at the end of the day it will be who the board feels comfortable hiring. Mr. Nicholson added that there are thirteen female County Manager's in the state.

Chairman Baucom felt that having them come back and assist in the process would increase our odds of being successful.

Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Emory left the meeting at this point.

Administrative Matters:

Contract with Hobbs Upchurch: Ms. Beck felt a closed session was needed for this issue. Motion by Commissioner Woodburn, seconded by Commissioner Sikes, to go into closed session for Economic Development pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes 143-318.11(a)(4). Motion carried unanimously.

In regular session, motion by Vice Chair Streater, seconded by Commissioner Woodburn, to terminate Hobbs Upchurch. Motion carried unanimously. Ms. Beck stated that they would write the letter. Chairman Baucom asked Ms. Beck if at some point it would be possible to find out if in all that stuff there is anything we can use towards this project. Ms. Beck felt that right now we have the edge because we paid \$149,900 for something we don't have. Ms. Beck stated that once we ask for the files and after the termination letter is mailed, if he is not willing to give it to us she will have to look at the files to see what we have and what we don't have. Mr. Sessions asked what happens if we can't use any of it with Ms. Beck wondering why we would pay him \$13,000 for something we can't use. Ms. Beck wants this to be released so we can get

another surveyor to take the survey plats and the descriptions that were signed and sealed in 2008 that we can't file but we can use the description. Ms. Beck shared that we could use the plat and redo it without reinventing the whole wheel. Ms. Beck noted it would be the same with the environmental assessment but she doesn't know what comments came back from DENRH without looking in the files. County Attorney Forbes voiced a concern for the cost of having another engineer stamp the same stuff that Mr. Kiker has already stamped and if we get them released Mr. Kiker could restamp it or reuse it. Ms. Beck stated that after we terminate them we can send out the request for proposals. Chairman Baucom felt the County Attorney and Ms. Beck should stay in touch with both agreeing.

Former Hospital Buildings: Chairman Baucom reported that she has been approached again about these buildings and as she recalls we have already declared them surplus. There was some question of whether or not the county actually owns the buildings at this time with Mr. Waisner saying he does not have the keys. Mr. Waisner reported that last week he met with Alex Sewell and Mark Sessions of the Town of Wadesboro at the building and found we have a problem with vagrants getting in the building. Mr. Waisner shared that Parks and Rec. now goes by the building every afternoon to make sure all bottom doors are locked. Mr. Waisner shared that vagrants have torn up the doors, punched holes in the walls and stole air conditioners. Mr. Waisner shared that Mr. Sewell and Mr. Sessions were concerned because the strobe lights go off at night and set off alarms and they wanted to know what we could do to secure the building. Mr. Waisner was of the impression the county did not own the building and felt we needed to contact CHS to see what they want to do with this. Vice Chair Streater asked if they were using the cafeteria with Commissioner Sturdivant saying that was how they were getting in the building. Chairman Baucom said she was talking about the red brick buildings with Mr. Waisner saying this was the big white brick building. Mr. Waisner felt the building had several thousand dollars' worth of metal inside that when we own the building we should remove and sell. Vice Chair Streater felt it would be to our advantage to let them put a security guard over there at night with Mr. Waisner saying they are supposed to provide security. County Attorney Forbes voiced that they could be held liable if someone were to get hurt in there and that is our best leverage to get them to provide the needed security. Commissioner Sturdivant shared that when SanStone asked to use the kitchen they became responsible for security of the building. Vice Chair Streater suggested the County Attorney call SanStone about providing security. County Attorney Forbes stated that he would review the contracts. Mr. Waisner shared that Mr. Gatewood has no trespassing signs that we were going to put up once we got the keys. Vice Chair Streater asked the County Attorney if he was going to suggest they put a security guard with the County Attorney saying he would suggest that but they may have a more valid option. County Attorney Forbes stated that they need to secure the premises because it is a liability for them and he will give them notice that in case something does go wrong they were on notice.

Motion by Commissioner Woodburn, seconded by Commissioner Sikes, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Bonnie M. Huntley, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board