

**RICHMOND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RICHMOND COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
REGULAR MID-MONTH MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2007, 12:00 NOON**

The Richmond County Board of Commissioners met for the Regular Mid-Month Noon Meeting on Tuesday, February 20, 2007 with the following present: Chairman Kenneth R. Robinette; Vice-Chairman John B. Garner; Commissioners Pamela N. Dillman, Jimmy L. Maske, Thad Ussery, J. C. Watkins, and Paul Wilson, Jr.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robinette at 12:00 Noon.

ITEM NO. 1 – INVOCATION

The invocation was delivered by Commissioner Thad Ussery.

ITEM NO. 2 – APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was offered by Commissioner Maske, seconded by Commissioner Dillman and unanimously carried to approve the Agenda as presented.

ITEM NO. 3 – PUBLIC HEARING TO ALLOW CITIZEN INPUT ON PROPOSED INCENTIVE PACKAGE FOR NARRICOT/BST

At 12:02 P.M. Chairman Robinette declared the advertised Public Hearing to receive citizen input on the proposed incentive package for the Narricot/BST project.

Director of Development Rick Sago referred to a copy of the proposed agreement with BST Safety Textiles, advising that this facility will occupy a portion of the local Burlington Industries Plant. Mr. Sago described the grant funds for this project and the terms of the proposed agreement: total potential \$200,000.00 performance based deal with \$1,000.00 per job paid after creation of the first 50 jobs; Economic Development Grant Program that would allow for an annual financial grant based on actual value schedule and payment of local property taxes for a period up to 5 consecutive years.

There was further discussion of the recent Google announcement in Caldwell County and the tremendous incentives committed by the County.

Mr. Sago discussed the formula used to compare the cost of incentives offered to industries versus the value of the number of jobs created by the new industry. Mr. Sago noted that BST plans to pay \$14.00 per hour, which is higher than the median hourly wage in Richmond County. In further discussion, Mr. Sago advised of statistics that indicate that 72% of the workers will own homes; \$59,300.00 is the median home price in Richmond County; thus, additional taxes will be generated from each job created.

Commissioner Watkins asked if the same formula is used for all industries, and Mr. Sago advised that the same formula is used and Richmond County's incentives are conservative.

Commissioner Garner noted that a job cannot be bought for \$1,000.00 and that the agreement is well written.

Mr. Sago advised that state incentives for the BST project total more than \$9,000,000.00 and the County's incentives total \$1.3 million.

There were no other speakers, and Chairman Robinette declared the public hearing closed at 12:10 P.M.

A motion was offered by Commissioner Watkins, seconded by Commissioner Wilson and unanimously carried to approve the incentives agreement between Richmond County and BST Safety Textiles as presented.

ITEM NO. 4 – REQUEST FOR BOARD APPROVAL TO PURCHASE PROPERTY FOR NEW ELEVATED WATER TANK SITE

Director of Community Services B. K. Jones advised that 4 acres of property on Hwy. 220 North currently owned by the Humane Society is to be purchased as a site for an elevated water tank for the Viking/Trinity Project. Mr. Jones advised that the purchase price for the property is \$18,000.00.

Commissioner Ussery confirmed that the property is the location of the former cat shelter.

Commissioner Maske asked what effect the new tank would have on the Crestview tank. Mr. Jones advised that the tanks would be the same height, but more volume would be provided. Mr. Sago added that there should not be as much fluctuation in tank levels with this additional tank.

Commissioner Watkins confirmed that this is an investment that will benefit the entire water system while supplying water to Viking and Trinity.

Mr. Jones stated that the new tank would enhance the overall quality of the water system and provide a quick payback.

Mr. Sago noted that the new tank will result in 60 pounds of pressure.

Mr. Jones advised that a 300,000 gallon tank will be constructed in Hamlet for the Ritz Craft Project, and this tank will also improve pressure and enhance service east of Hamlet.

Mr. Jones advised that the Hwy. 220 tank is designed for 750,000 gallon capacity, and bids will be opened on March 1.

Commissioner Maske confirmed that the Board is being asked to approve purchase of the 4-acre site on Hwy. 220.

A motion was then offered by Commissioner Ussery to approve purchase of the 4-acre site on Hwy. 220 as a site for an elevated tank. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Maske and unanimously carried.

ITEM NO. 5 – REQUEST FOR BOARD APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT TO APPROPRIATE FUND BALANCE TO PAY FOR LAND LOCATED ON HWY. 220 AS WATER TANK SITE FOR TRINITY/VIKING POOLS WATER IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

A motion was offered by Commissioner Garner, seconded by Commissioner Wilson and unanimously carried to approve the following budget amendment to appropriate funds for purchase of the elevated tank site on Hwy. 220:

Expenditures

<u>Account Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
617110-5125	Land	\$18,000.00	

Revenues

<u>Account Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
617110-399002	Fund Balance Appropriated	\$18,000.00	

ITEM NO. 6 – REQUEST FOR BOARD APPROVAL TO ACCEPT OFFER FROM STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION AT HOFFMAN COMPACTOR SITE

Director of Community Services B. K. Jones advised that 9 years remain in the lease agreement that the County has with James Moore for the Hoffman box site property. Mr. Jones further advised that Hwy. 1 is being widened, and the Department of Transportation has offered to reimburse the County for the cost of moving the box site fence and sign back 10 to 12 ft. to accommodate the widening project. It was noted that the D.O.T. offer also includes loss of use of this strip of land, for a total offer of \$23,350.00, less a \$500.00 retention offer for the County to keep the fence. Mr. Jones recommended acceptance of the offer. Mr. Jones assured the Board that there would be very little interruption of service and would not affect the way that we do business.

Commissioner Watkins confirmed that the County would have access to the site after the highway is widened.

A motion was offered by Commissioner Maske, seconded by Commissioner Ussery and unanimously carried to accept the D.O.T. offer for right-of-way acquisition at the Hoffman box site.

ITEM NO. 7 – CONSIDERATION OF BRAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

County Manager Haynes advised that BRAC has to do with the relocation of Atlanta based military personnel who move into the area. Mr. Haynes advised that 7 counties are involved, with Cumberland County and Fort Bragg area being the most impacted. Richmond County is included due to proximity to Fort Bragg and to Camp Mackall, so Mr. Haynes felt that we must participate in the process and stay informed. Mr. Haynes advised that Chairman Robinette represents the County on the BRAC Committee.

It was recommended that County Manager Haynes serve as a BRAC Committee member and Director of Development Rick Sago serve as an alternate member.

Commissioner Ussery inquired about estimated growth from BRAC, and County Manager Haynes advised that numbers indicate 100 or less growth in Richmond County over the next 10 years.

A motion was offered by Commissioner Ussery to appoint County Manager Haynes as a member of the BRAC Executive Committee and Director of Development Rick Sago as an alternate member. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watkins and unanimously carried.

ITEM NO. 8 – REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT RICK SAGO

Director of Development Rick Sago advised that the Sara Lee Plant has announced plans to close the local plant by September. Mr. Sago advised that 320 workers would be affected locally, but there should be some job opportunities in Laurinburg at the Sara Lee Champion Plant, and some workers would remain at the Rockingham warehouse.

Commissioner Dillman asked if there is a packet to assist these employees. Mr. Sago advised that the Employment Security Commission Rapid Response Team will meet with employees to discuss options and opportunities.

Commissioner Ussery noted that Sara Lee has two nice buildings that might be easily marketed. Mr. Sago confirmed that 80% of industries are looking for existing buildings.

Mr. Sago further stated that Richmond County has 6 remaining textile industries, and that the new BST Plant will help to stabilize the Burlington Plant.

Commissioner Dillman noted that Sara Lee also has a food division, and perhaps they might consider locating in Richmond County.

Mr. Sago referred to a client list of 11 active projects.

Mr. Sago reported that he attended a trade show last week with high end vendors centered around distribution and transportation. Mr. Sago advised that he made a lot of valuable contacts at the show.

There was discussion of the value of the port at Wilmington, which has been of great benefit in marketing the Southeast Region. Mr. Sago advised that there may be plans to develop a new port at Southport.

Mr. Sago provided an overview of changes in state tax credit incentives, noting that the William S. Lee Act is now referred to as Article 3J. Changes include increasing from 5 tiers to 3 tiers, with Cumberland County now being ranked as a Tier 1 County and being in direct competition to Richmond County. Mr. Sago explained that under the old Lee Act all 3 of Richmond County's industrial parks were in development zones that qualify for extra incentives, but now under Article 3J the parks are classified as Urban Development Zones and no longer qualify for the \$3,000.00 per job incentive.

Mr. Sago concluded his presentation by providing copies of a recent article in U.S. News and World Report featuring the ethanol industry.

ITEM NO. 9 – OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Watkins commented on North Carolina Southeast and Lumber River Council of Governments and the value of the services that they provide to the region. Commissioner Watkins went on to elaborate about a meeting he attended to hear the Ports Authority Director speak positively about the development of a port at Southport. Commissioner Watkins noted that Richmond County is fortunate to be located so close to ports and distribution centers in Greensboro and Charlotte.

There being no further business for discussion, a motion was offered by Commissioner Garner, seconded by Commissioner Ussery and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 12:45 P.M.

*Marian S. Savage, CMC
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners*