

**RICHMOND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RICHMOND COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
REGULAR MID-MONTH MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2007, 6:00 P.M.**

The Richmond County Board of Commissioners met for the Regular Mid-Month Meeting on Monday, April 23, 2007 at 6:00 P.M. 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 6:00 P.M.

ITEM NO. 1 – INVOCATION

The invocation was delivered by Commissioner Thad Ussery.

ITEM NO. 2 – APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By a motion of Commissioner Maske, seconded by Commissioner Wilson and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Agenda as presented.

ITEM NO. 3– APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF REGULAR MID-MONTH NOON MEETING OF MARCH 20, 2007 AS SUBMITTED BY THE CLERK

By a motion of Commissioner Wilson, seconded by Commissioner Ussery and unanimously carried, the Board approved the minutes of the Regular Mid-Month Meeting of March 20, 2007 as submitted by the Clerk.

ITEM NO. 4– REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT RICK SAGO

Director of Development Rick Sago advised the Board that there has been increased client interest during the last two weeks. Mr. Sago made mention of the recent BST groundbreaking ceremony on April 12; he advised that the Hanes Building has been sold with a contract signed for a September closing date; Mr. Sago noted that 300,000 sq. ft. will be available for lease in the old portion of the Hanes Building; and work is progressing toward selection of a site and construction of a new shell building.

Mr. Sago expressed concern that funding by the Legislature of the regional partnerships could be in jeopardy. Mr. Sago emphasized the support that Richmond County has received by North Carolina's Southeast, and he urged the Board to express support of continuation of the level of funding for the regional partnerships.

Chairman Robinette suggested that a letter should be written in support of the Southeast and the job that they do so as to insure continued funding of the partnership.

A motion was offered by Commissioner Ussery to write a letter in support of continued funding and support of North Carolina's Southeast. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson and unanimously carried.

Commissioner Watkins commented on a Lumber River COG meeting at which a Department of Commerce representative spoke. Mr. Watkins advised that some in attendance of that meeting had been critical of the Department of Commerce and incentives that have been invested in recent projects in North Carolina to attract Dell and Google. Mr. Watkins commended the Department of Commerce and the support that they have rendered to Richmond County.

Mr. Sago concurred that the Department of Commerce has been good to Richmond County, and he advised that on May 2 a group from the Commerce Finance Division plans to tour the County to see how funds have been used to benefit our citizens.

Commissioner Maske asked about shell buildings, and Mr. Sago acknowledged that 40,000 sq. ft. buildings have worked well in Richmond County's shell building program. Mr. Sago further advised that Touchstone Energy has agreed to participate by loaning up to \$500,000.00 toward the next shell building project.

Commissioner Ussery commented on how hard Richmond County has worked during the past 10 years to prove ourselves to the Department of Commerce, and in recent years they have certainly been supportive of Richmond County.

Mr. Sago advised that he and County Manager Haynes had recently been invited to a Touchstone Board Meeting, and they had taken that opportunity to express the County's appreciation for their support.

Commissioner Garner noted that the County has not waived on any of our commitments.

Commissioner Maske noted the importance of the \$3,000,000.00 in industrial bonds that had been approved by the voters for Economic Development purposes.

Mr. Sago thanked the Board for their support and credited them with the success of the Economic Development Program.

Commissioner Watkins inquired about county incentives toward bringing new jobs to the County, and Mr. Sago advised that the County's investment is less than \$1,500.00 per job. Commissioner Watkins commented on the benefit of new industry in future terms of tax base, new jobs, etc. Mr. Sago advised that he is able to calculate in advance of a new industry location whether a project is a good deal for Richmond County by running a benefit analysis.

ITEM NO. 5- REPORT BY COUNTY MANAGER JAMES E. HAYNES

County Manager Haynes recognized Public Information Officer Crystal Cagle, who reported on National County Government Week activities planned in the County.

Ms. Cagle stated that this is the time to let people know how many lives are touched by county employees and county government. Crystal advised that first-graders in the County participated in Truck Day at RCC, at which time the Sheriff's Department provided demonstrations with canines and 911 services were explained to the students.

Ms. Cagle announced that a barbecue scheduled for April 27 at East Rockingham Fire Department will be sponsored by the Richmond County Sheriff's Department as a benefit for the families of two Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Officers recently killed in the line of duty.

In further discussion of school activities planned in observance of National County Government Week, Ms. Cagle advised that Mrs. Peacock's 4th grade classes at Ashley Chapel will conduct a mock county commission meeting of April 24 in the Commission Chambers and will also tour the Water Treatment Plant. Crystal also advised of an anti-litter program which will be presented to these same students later in the week on Thursday.

In discussion of other activities, Ms. Cagle advised that Wednesday, April 25, is Office Professionals Day, with a luncheon and Business Expo planned at the Cole Auditorium. Crystal advised that she will have a county exhibit and booth promoting county government services at the Business Expo, and she will also represent Richmond County during Kids Day activities on May 5 at FirstHealth.

County Manager Haynes reminded the Board of County Assembly Day scheduled by the N. C. Association of County Commissioners on May 2 as an opportunity for county officials to lobby the Legislature for Medicaid relief and other issues that are critical to counties in budget preparation.

ITEM NO. 6- ADJOURNMENT TO CONVENE AS BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW TO HEAR 2007 TAX APPEALS

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 P.M. by a motion of Commissioner Watkins, seconded by Commission Maske and unanimously carried.

The meeting was followed by the 2007 Equalization and Review Meeting.

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