

**2009 Columbus County Retreat
March 5, 2009**

The Columbus County Commissioners met in Special Work Session on Thursday February 5, 2009 at the Southeastern Community College, Whiteville, North Carolina. Present were Commissioners James Prevatte, Amon McKenzie, Lynwood Norris, Edwin Russ, and Giles Byrd. Commissioners Ronald Gore and Ricky Bullard were unable to attend. County Manager Bill Clark recorded the minutes. Chris May, Executive Director for the Cape Fear Council of Governments facilitated.

Chairman Prevatte called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM and after welcome and introductions, turned the meeting over to Mr. May who conducted the retreat.

Mr. May reviewed the 2008 retreat summary, outlined the process for the 2009 retreat.

Next, May led the Commissioners in a brainstorm, list, prioritization exercise to identify the most pressing emerging issues facing the county. The list follows below, not in prioritized order, but in the order listed. Numbers were assigned for later prioritization votes.

1. Competitive jobs - college & HS enhanced education
2. Teach workplace ethics
3. Lower – eliminate water dist. Tax
4. County wide water
5. Expand public infrastructure throughout county. Roads, water, sewer, internet.
6. Decent & affordable housing.
7. Establish & maintain health fund balance.
8. Reduce crime rate.
9. Streamline dept. efficiency reduce unnecessary spending.
10. Reduce drop-out rate.
11. Dress code schools.
12. Community pride what to live & work.
13. Voluntary recycling, Reduce waste stream.
14. Encourage use of County vendors.
15. Encourage in County purchase by residents & government.
16. New CT HSE / renovate existing.
17. Incentives for existing local business (State/Federal/Local).
- 17a. Consider 5 yr. waiver of tax as incentive for local business starts.
18. Sustain or increase education funding (to ensure State match).
19. Build or purchase vacant industrial buildings to lease using grant funds made available at low cost to prospective new business. Use lease to repeat process.
20. Encourage more inter-dept. co-operations, understanding of big picture, share ideas, be informed.
21. Long range plan to address replacing old school facilities.
22. Long range CIP for all County buildings M/R & replacement.
23. Hire grant writer.
24. “Reasonable” Land Use Plans.
25. Encourage industries on east end of County.
26. Roads/Transportation to prepare for future.
27. Consider consolidation of school systems.

Each Commissioner was given five votes, then the lower numbers were re-voted top achieve a majority...thus arriving at ten top priorities. (One commissioner had to leave early)

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| # 17 – 5 votes | Incentives for existing local business (NC, Fed., Co.) |
| # 1 – 4 votes | Competitive jobs - college & HS enhanced education |
| # 4 – 4 votes | County wide water |
| # 7 – 4 votes | Establish & maintain health fund balance |
| # 8 – 4 votes | Reduce crime rate. |
| # 9 – 3 votes | Streamline dept. efficiency reduce unnecessary spending |
| # 5 – 3 votes | Expand public infrastructure throughout county. Roads, water, sewer, internet. |
| # 3 – 3 votes | Lower – eliminate water dist. Tax |
| # 21 – 3 votes | Long range plan to address replacing old school facilities |
| # 24 – 3 votes | “Reasonable” Land Use Plans. |

Next, the Commissioners created an action plan assigning tasks to specific persons or departments with a time line for updates or completion. (See attached Columbus Co. Action Plan 2009)

There being no more business, the Commissioners adjourned by acclamation at 12:00 PM.

Chris May, Facilitator _____

Bill Clark, County Manager _____

Columbus Co. Action Plan 2009

WHO	LIST #	WHAT	BY WHEN
Mgr./ED Dir.	17	Suggested incentives legalities	June 2009 report
ED/COG/WFD SECC/Commerce	1	Competitive jobs - college & HS enhanced education	Ongoing policy goal for recruitment
Mgr./Pub Utilities Dr.	4	County wide water	Ongoing monthly reports to BOC
BOC/Mgr.	7	Establish & maintain health fund balance	Ongoing each FY budget contribute each year
CCSP	8	Reduce crime rate	Innovative prog. Grants, etc. eval. each year
Mgr./Pl. Bd./COG	24	Recommend regulations holding hearings, etc.	Feb 2010
Dept. Heads	9	Evaluate and suggest savings to Mgr.	May 09
Mgr./Pub Utilities Dir.	4	Water Dist. Apply stimulus to this	Ongoing Mo. Report
Manager/Depts	5	Expand public infrastructure throughout co. Roads, water, sewer, internet.	Annual Infrastructure Assessment
Board of Commissioners	3	Lower - eliminate water dist. tax by encouraging new taps, expanding service, reducing costs	Each year
BOC w/two School Bds.	21	Long range plan to address replacing old school facilities	Annual School Facilities updates review and budget priority
Mgr., Pl. Bd./CFCOG	24	“Reasonable Land Use Plans”	Establish process 2009 with hearings and workshops throughout County
Mgr./Maint. Dir.	22	Adequate facilities M/R plan CIP budget	Each budget 4 year starting May 2009

APPROVED:

WILLIAM S. CLARK, County Manager

JAMES E. PREVATTE, Chairman