

The Washington City Council met in a joint session with the Beaufort County Board of Commissioners on Monday, February 19, 2007 at 4:30 p.m. at Beaufort County Community College in Building #10. Present were: Judy Jennette, Mayor; Darwin Woolard, Mayor Pro tem; Richard Brooks, Councilman; Ed Gibson, Councilman; Archie Jennings, Councilman; Mickey Gahagan, Councilman; James C. Smith, City Manager; Rita A. Thompson, City Clerk; and Franz Holscher, City Attorney.

Also present were: Carol Williams, Finance Director; Allen Lewis, Public Works Director; Jimmy Davis, Fire Chief; Gerald Galloway, Interim Police Chief; Susan Hodges, Human Resources Director; Gloria Moore, Brown Library Director; and Mike Voss, of the Washington Daily News.

Present from the Beaufort County Board of Commissioners were: Jay McRoy, Chairman; Jerry Langlely, Vice Chairman; Robert Cayton, Ed Booth, Al Klemm; Hood Richardson; Stan Deatherage, Paul Spruill, County Manager; Sharon Singleton, County Clerk; and William P. Mayo, County Attorney.

Mayor Jennette called the Washington City Council to order.

Chairman Jay McRoy declared the Beaufort County Board of Commissioners in session.

The Invocation was given by Commissioner Robert Cayton.

GIS (GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM) AND E911 ADDRESSING

Eddie Davis and Bryant Buck of the Mid-East Commission gave an informative presentation on the Geographic Information System (GIS) and Addressing Issues.

Mr. Davis gave some background information on what GIS addressing is. He said GIS is a collection of computer hardware, software, and geographic data for capturing managing, analyzing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information. He said GIS can assist in various governmental functions and provide one source for storage and display of the data.

The presentation included information on Geographic Information System (GIS) Layers, Utilities that will show the sewer line replacement schedule and property mapping. He reviewed a map noting it is recorded by parcel numbers. It is very similar to a tax land records map type data. He spoke on Emergency/Service Routing. Currently the County has a form of GIS located in the Tax Mapping Department that is basically used for tax mapping, billing and determination of property values.

The City of Washington Utilities Mapping is using CAD Software with a County GIS as base layer. The City Planning Department currently receives semi-annual updates from the County Tax Mapping Department.

Mr. Davis addressed the Enhanced (E) 911 Addressing, an addressing system where a call to the 911 Emergency Dispatch Center is located by an address or a location (GPS Capable Cell Phone). Current addressing issues include inconsistent addresses, road/street names not consistent between various agencies, the block system and distance system and off set road locations.

Updated GIS Benefits include Seamless GIS for entire county, the accuracy of physical location, district recognition i.e. fire/law enforcement/rescue, utilities, voting, etc. All agencies are using compatible software. Mr. Davis spoke on timely updates for all accessible users, and real time storage/retrieval of data. He said there may be some items that City and County will not want to share. He also addressed multiple users of data and public access.

Some solutions Mid-East Commission can offer are:

- Implement updated GIS for entire County
- Develop/Implement Consistent E-911 Addressing system for City/County
- Work with emergency responders, City/County staff, elected officials, the public, USPS, etc. to assure as smooth a transition as possible

Mr. Davis said the GIS system is not broken but can be better. One current disadvantage with addressing is to call 911 and cannot complete the call. After perfecting a good addressing system, the address will pop up with a full message. Automatic attributes are programmed within the system. He said an upgraded GIS system could make the 911 operation transition easier.

County Manager Paul Spruill asked Eddy Davis to speak about Pitt County and their experience as a whole with the addressing system around 1997 versus what it is like now. Mr. Davis stated that when Pitt County started their enhancement they were using the old route and box number system and the block system as well. They developed the enhanced E911 system based on distance. They looked at the County which already had GIS in place. The City of Greenville continues to do their own fire and police dispatch with no assistance from Pitt County. In certain areas they choose to keep addressing in place unless there was a specific issue.

Paul Spruill, County Manager, asked how the process got started and where did direction begin. Mr. Davis said they had some experience with readdressing to mitigate issues. First they got permission from all the elected officials. They worked with emergency responders...fire, rescue, and law enforcement personnel. They went to the County first because they had GIS in place. Once the County was updated and completed, they started working with the Towns in Pitt County.

Commissioner Deatherage asked if it was imperative the County have fly over maps (aerial photography). Mr. Davis said it was not imperative, but it sure does help. He said whomever is doing the flyover should know what you are going to use information for. Once you have the fly over information then you can sit at computer and have corner lines and you are tracing realities.

Councilman Gibson reiterated that Greenville operated on one system. Mr. Davis said all of Pitt County is on one system with the exception of inside city limits and ETJ and they are using the county system or using the old block system in places.

Jim Smith, City Manager, stated that there are distinct advantages to GIS and the enhanced E911 system as well as the fly over mapping because you can do topo as well as flat earth. Mr. Davis said with the aerial maps you get the location and size of the buildings. Some seem three dimensional showing doors and windows. This certainly would be a helpful tool in a hostage situation.

Commissioner Klemm asked about the work hours, time of completion and the cost to Pitt County. Mr. Davis said the cost was around \$300,000 but that was ten years ago. It took about two years to complete the project.

Mayor Jennette stated that the Washington City Council had discussed giving the County back the full 911 work, but to keep their city dispatching system.

Councilman Gibson asked how county aerial maps could help within the city. Mr. Davis said if the system was set up that way there would be a pop up that would zoom in and out with a default zone. This is determined if the call is made on a cell phone or a land line based on latitude and longitude.

Mr. Spruill stated that step one would be a snap shot of the County system to ask about fixing the system, and what kind and amount of errors it would entail. We would

have to contract out and correct the problems. Some things cannot be improved as of yet. We are not ready to convert areas like Bath, Belhaven, Cypress Landing, etc. We could also fix the errors and continue to live with what we have.

Commissioner Richardson asked why this conversation was taking place. Mr. Spruill answered that is a question for the City and County Manager, but as County Manager, he is an advocate for a consistent countywide addressing system. Secondly, we continue to have problems with GIS work. If we were being graded we would probably get a "D". The reason is the lack of resources and investment that are needed. The purpose is to educate what the GIS can be if you want it. He believes the City's addressing is as bad as that of the County. There is an opportunity given that both entities may want to improve. Should we look at it together or separately?

Commissioner Richardson asked what was the great benefit to Beaufort County if we improve this system as he does not see all these problems with it...is it because everybody else is doing it? Every city has a system of maps and when he has a City located problem he simply views their maps. He said newer is not necessarily better and he can't see that it is going to do a lot of good to rework the systems. He said he could not see the cost benefit.

Mr. Smith stated that was not true, that that you can go through loads of paper. Paper maps versus GIS, you can call it up a lot quicker and easier with the GIS system. It can be called up on a home computer. You can hang your building system on the GIS system; that's the basis for water, sewer, stormwater, etc. Every property has a place on the GIS. He noted that the City does not have all the layers for GIS now. He said he could not estimate the number of lots without a study. If a subdivision comes in digitized and we don't have a GIS system, a consultant would have to be hired.

Commissioner Richardson stated that this sounds good, but not many home bodies are doing this. You are not providing a real service to the public. When working with GIS you have to know what you are doing. He said that was fine if the City wanted to do that, but the County "doesn't have a dog in this fight" as the County is so sparsely populated. Mr. Smith stated that's how you do a pressure analysis. Mr. Richardson stated that the question is whether you have a need for it. You can spend too much money to show a cost benefit.

Mayor Jennette said that enhanced E911 is the reason for the combination of City and County.

Mr. Spruill stated that the City has interest in the combination of City and County addressing. He wrestles with the lack of responsibility that City and County have taken in accuracy of addresses. There is also a space issue. This has to be fixed before overseeing a GIS and will have to be in place before the merge can happen.

Commissioner Richardson said he doesn't see why you have to combine the two systems and he doesn't see the advantage of re-inventing the wheel. You will still have problems.

Mr. Spruill stated that the advantage is the ability of a good GIS technician making the boundaries accurate to begin with and keeping the system accurate.

Councilman Jennings said it is the responsibility of the County for enhanced E911, that they used to cover the whole county. The City Council is merely putting the task back where it originally was. There is nothing to prevent sending it back to the County.

Mayor Jennette asked with the given data, is there any dramatic impact if the City totally gives the E911 back to the County.

Mr. Davis said the learning curve for someone currently working at the County level to make the proper call to dispatchers requires two sets of data, two sets of maps, etc.

There is not the relationship of inside/outside. As calls come in there is a lot of information dispatchers will have to know off the top of their head. There won't be time to think about the answer for the person on the other end of the line. He said you have to also consider where is the City limits line. The County GIS is consistent for getting the addressing. The GIS system is to a certain percentage is ok, but not compatible with each other. There is going to be a sharp learning curve to properly dispatch calls coming in. If the incoming call is inside the City limits the City makes the call. If the call is outside the City it goes to the County. If the City annexes, there has to be a manual process to change it. When the GIS annexation is made, the line is electronically moved so a dispatcher will know the city/county location.

Mr. Smith asked how do you know whether to send a tanker or a regular fire truck to a rural area? Mr. Davis said you don't know, you grab a paper map, but fire hydrants are marked on the GIS.

Councilman Gibson wanted to stick closer to the agenda item of E911 and addressing, not fire stations or sewer and water lines. He said the real question is can the City and County merge together as there is a space problem.

Commissioner Langley said E911 and dispatching are two different items.

Mayor Jennette said at the last City Planning Session, the City decided to turn E911 over to the County, but the City would continue to answer non-emergency calls.

Mr. Spruill stated that they do not have the space now to take it on. Technically, yes they can do it, but not right now. He feels there are too many inaccuracies in both current E911 systems to make a decision tonight. The existing problems are upmost priority, and then tackle the space needs.

Commissioner Richardson suggested we let the telephone company continue to separate the City from the County as they currently do this now. Let them continue to flash either City or County lines. He asked why should taxpayers take on the responsibility of some citizens that use cell phones without land lines.

Mayor Jennette said the City is getting out of the E911 business. We are sending it back to the County.

Commissioner Ed Booth asked when the City planned to give E911 back to the County. Mayor Jennette replied they had planned on the beginning of the fiscal year which is July 1, 2007.

Councilman Gibson said he could not see it happening that fast; perhaps by September or October.

Mayor Jennette said the space problem is not a City problem.

Commissioner Deatherage said at some point we are going to have to take this back over, it is the County's responsibility. Securing space will take two years. We can lease space if the City wants out. After all it is the County's responsibility.

Commissioner Richardson said within the E911 system there is a tax on every phone. Currently the City gets its share for city oriented phones. Mayor Jennette said the \$60,000 will go to the County when they take over the system.

Mr. Spruill cautioned that the County has its own problem right now, but it can be fixed by September or October if you are willing to fix it. We must have addressing accuracy. He said he could not support a joint E911 when he knows that the addressing layer is not good on the County's part, and he has concerns about the City's.

Councilman Jennings said he had not heard anyone say that it is a bad idea for the County to take on the whole 911 system. He said the features and capabilities are up to the County. The City wants to know when the County will take over the enhanced E911.

Commissioner Klemm asked the County Manager what would have to be done before the County to take over the E911 from the City. The County Manager stated that he is not concerned about GIS, but we need to get the addressing cleaned up so we can flick the switch. He sees a time frame of about ten to twelve months. The County must solve some space issues. If they accept a proposal for this clean up from Mid-East or other firms, they can do the work in short order.

Mr. Smith stated the City is barely able to digest with current staff. The County is in the same situation. How many people will it take to handle it and you have a software issue. There is a number of steps to be taken.

Mr. Spruill stated that once we know what system to attack, it will be interesting for this group to know what percentage of calls are handled inside the City.

Councilman Gibson asked about a merger of personnel; if dispatchers from the City could join the County it would be go faster.

Commissioner Deatherage said the Sheriff is in charge of Communications and will handle hiring personnel. We will have to talk and work with the Sheriff on the space issue.

Commissioner Richardson said communications does not have to be kept as it is, that it could be separate from the Sheriff. It can be set up with a new department and new department head. He thinks the Commissioners should talk with the Sheriff and the Chief of Police. Mayor Jennette said they thought of putting it under the jurisdiction of Emergency Management.

In conclusion of the 911 topic Mayor Jennette said the City will work with you but we want to get out of the business.

Mr. Spruill stated if there is some consensus on this change, he and Mr. Smith will come back to the boards with a proposal to cleanup the data. He also noted they could use accumulated E911 costs.

Councilman Jennings pointed out that it was the Council's consensus that the County should take it over by the end of the fiscal year.

SR 264 CORRIDOR PROTECTION

Mayor Jennette stated she was invited to attend a meeting in Pitt County regarding the 264 Corridor. Currently it is a fast and efficient way to get to Greenville, North Carolina. She asked if the County would like to send a representative.

It was the consensus of the County Board that Commissioner Cayton will attend and represent Beaufort County.

Mr. Smith stated that DOT said it would be cost effective to have a new corridor. Commissioner Richardson said we should protect the existing corridor because it is adequate. Mayor Jennette stated that we need to stand firm.

BROWN LIBRARY FUNDING

Mayor Jennette stated that funding of Brown Library has become an issue. There are more County users than City users at the library. The Washington City Council has decided to begin charging a user fee at the beginning of the next fiscal year. Mayor Jennette stated that Council has talked about merging the Brown Library with the BHM (Tri-County Library). The amount of \$12,000 of State funding would go to BHM to help

run Brown Library. The merging does not mean that Brown would close. She admitted that merging was not an attractive offer. The City of Washington wants a high quality library in Washington. The State has agreed to fund a study of what the possibilities of a merger would be.

MJ Carbo, current director of the BHM Library, will write the grant and get a consultant by the end of the year for a study. Ms. Carbo said she was treading on new ground and thought the study would take about four months to complete. More information is needed in order for the Boards to make a decision on the libraries.

Commissioner Richardson suggested the Council and Commissioners request Representative Arthur Williams to present a blank bill asking the Legislature for funds to assist with the library situation. Ms. Carbo said if a merger decision is made it will be made by the City Council and the BHM Regional Library Board. We don't know if we want to do it yet.

Councilman Jennings stated that studies come up all the time. We can do all kinds of studies. It sounds like the County is willing to stand with the City when we go to Raleigh. A merger won't happen soon.

Commissioner Cayton explained that the Brown Library will not cease to exist but would come in as a branch of the BHM Library, which is different than a merger. Beaufort, Martin and Hyde counties have representatives on the BHM Board and will help make the decision. It is not a Beaufort County issue. He stated he is not opposed to going to Raleigh, but we also have to trace the history back, and we have to be prepared to fight.

Commissioner Richardson stated the presumption is that all the libraries in the County may still exist. He said this is the time to make a change, that this may be a total new entity. We may have to abandon the present system. Commissioner noted that the State funds forty-nine percent of the county's total budget.

Councilman Jennings said that the City could do without two percent of funds for the Brown Library. Currently the City and County contribute the same amount of funding to each other. That helps the libraries receive more state funding. Councilman Jennings also noted that sixty-six percent of Brown Library users are outside city limits and 100% can go to the BHM. If we think outside the box, maybe someone can come up with some money somewhere.

Commissioner Cayton stated there are three public libraries in Washington; Brown, BHM and the Community College. He pointed out that Bath, Belhaven and Chocowinity deserve and need a branch library. If we lose out of the State funding system, someone will have to provide the lost funding. Councilman Gibson said nothing from nothing is still nothing.

MJ Carbo said she had done some research on funding for fees and services. The impact of \$7,800 from BHM and Brown is a wash, but it did help qualify Brown Library for State Aid. There are several impacts. By not receiving the \$7,800, the City could justify charging users outside the City limits a fee. She is concerned about federal grants being affected. Losing funding would impact the amount of State Aid for both the BHM and Brown Libraries.

Commissioner Cayton reminded the group that this will affect Martin and Hyde counties as it will Beaufort County.

Councilman Jennings stated there is more to be gained for the County than City. He said they risk less than two percent of their overall budget (\$300).

Commissioner Cayton stated we can each keep the \$7,800 and maintain what we have. We can bring other ideas to table if we are not going to use political capital by Representative Arthur Williams to solve an isolated issue. It is inner related in the County

and City population. The BHM is eligible as well. It is only a few blocks from the Brown Library and welcomes dual users. He is advocating that all be cool and calm and realize we are dealing with the NC General Assembly, State Librarian and three other counties with municipalities that will be affected. He suggested the City and County work together in a civilized manner and use political capital to do so.

Commissioner Cayton stated it sounded like the City needs help right now not three or four years down the road. We are not looking for a partial answer. We need more than two libraries in the County.

Mr. Smith stated that a County Library System needs to be looked into.

Commissioner Deatherage stated if Beaufort County took over Brown Library we may not need the State funding.

Commissioner Cayton said Beaufort County only owns the BHM Library. Municipalities own their library buildings. If you change the rules they will be county wide. All libraries should be treated the same.

Councilman Gibson stated his opinion is that the City is running a Cadillac on a "Model A" budget of \$380,000 which is costing the tax payer. The City will be glad to relieve itself.

Chairman McRoy agreed with Commissioner Richardson that the Board should request a blank bill be introduced into the General Assembly. By the time that happens, the County should have a plan in place.

Commissioner Cayton reminded the Boards that if you change the funding structure you lose all State funding for a year.

MJ Carbo stated that Beaufort County, plus the municipal libraries and book mobile, get \$194,000 from the State. She estimates that the County gets more than half. Whatever the plan is all libraries in Beaufort County must benefit.

Councilman Gibson called for a consensus of what the two Boards intends to do.

Commissioner Booth said introducing the bill is fine but what will the City do for now with the funding crunch.

Mayor Jennette said they will implement the user fee.

Councilman Jennings stated that with the cooperation of the Commissioners, the City will deal with their budget problems.

PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCH

The public safety topic was discussed within the GIS presentation.

CITY/COUNTY COOPERATION ON WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS

Mayor Jennette stated the City Planning Board is looking at some height ordinance changes. Their highest is ninety six feet and they are thinking about dropping it down to eighty feet.

Commissioner Deatherage stated there are only a few areas in Beaufort County outside the ETJs that will accommodate this without county wide sewer. Chairman McRoy stated that sewer is nonexistent outside ETJ's.

Councilman Gahagan asked the City Attorney if the City could say no to a developer, regarding building heights. City Attorney Franz Holscher said they could say no. Commissioner Richardson said he wanted the income from the developer.

Chairman McRoy asked why would anyone want a building three or four times as long and one fourth high. It is blocking more of your view if it is wider than taller. Commissioner Richardson said that is simply a matter of opinion.

Mr. Smith stated height is visual pollution only. The inverse impact will be on the people living here now. Beaufort County residents won't be able to keep their homes due to not being able to pay the taxes. Building more condos with more units equates the property value. Chairman McRoy stated it is not 80 feet tall buildings, its what the price of property is selling for.

Councilman Jennings concluded that it was a rare opportunity to meet jointly and talk about issues. He suggested the Council take that eighty foot limit off the table.

**DISCUSSION – OF THE NEED TO RENEGOTIATE THE
CONDITIONS OF TRANSFER OF COUNTY WATER CUSTOMERS
TO CITY CUSTOMERS WHEN OBTAINING CITY SEWER**

Chairman McRoy stated that the County now has seven water districts that it has taken years to create. The systems were built and some of them are financially struggling. We have to make sure they will not go under. In the past, policy dictated that if the City provides sewer they get the customer as a water customer as well, even if they are on County water. We need a better financial arrangement. We have some huge loans and we have to service and maintain these districts. We need to be sure whenever County water customers are affected by City sewer that it does not put the County back in a bigger hole than where we are.

Allen Lewis, Public Works Director, referred to a Water Agreement between the City and County dated in the year 2000. If a customer received sewer service from the City it became a City Water customer as well. In good faith the agreement negotiated a one time purchase price of \$750 per customer if they change from County to City water customers.

Mr. Spruill asked if that was currently an adequate amount. Chairman McRoy said if this transfer is going to occur, then the County and City need to look at the numbers again.

Mr. Spruill stated that when there are projects where the City provides sewer and set rates stand alone, he questions the amount of funding if the County is to keep water customers. Mr. Lewis said the sewer is a separate fund for the City.

Chairman McRoy stated that some municipalities have a sewer fund that is being supplemented by water or property tax. If its not, then it really don't affect the sewer if the water is somebody else's customer. If it stands alone it does not affect sewer rate. Water Districts do not have all the same rates. There are different rates on some water districts that touch on the city limits of Washington.

Mr. Spruill stated that high density district are subsidizing low density districts, such as Market Street Extension.

Mr. Smith suggested the City and County come up with a proposal to address the higher rates and subsidy.

Mayor Pro-Tem Woolard made a motion to adjourn the meeting until Monday, February 26, 2007 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Councilman Jennings, seconded the motion. Before vote was taken, Councilman Gibson said the group had not discussed the library and recreation fee issues and he would like to do so.

Mayor Pro-Tem Darwin Woolard said the Council should consider Councilman Gibson's request.

Mayor Jennette said the City Council had already decided at their January Meeting to implement a user fee for the patrons of Brown Library as of July 1, 2007.

Councilman Gahagan called the question for the motion on the floor.

Ayes: Mayor Pro tem Woolard
Councilman Brooks
Councilman Gahagan
Councilman Jennings

Nays: Councilman Gibson

-Motion carried by majority vote.

The Commissioners remained for another business item.

**Rita A. Thompson, CMC
City Clerk**