

DRAFT

MINUTES

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF HENDERSON

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2011

The Henderson County Board of Commissioners met for a Special Called Meeting at 1:00 p.m. in the Commissioner's Meeting Room of the Henderson County Historic Courthouse on Main Street, Hendersonville.

Those present were: Chairman Tommy Thompson, Vice-Chairman Bill O'Connor, Commissioner Charlie Messer, Commissioner Larry Young, Commissioner Mike Edney, County Manager Steve Wyatt, Interim Assistant County Manager David Whitson, County Attorney Russ Burrell, and Deputy Clerk to the Board/Budget Analyst Amy Brantley.

Also present were: PIO Christina DeStefano, Internal Auditor Darlene Burgess, and J. P. Jones, Staff Accountant with Martin Starnes and Associates.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice-Chairman Bill O'Connor.

INVOCATION

County Manager Steve Wyatt gave the invocation.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Messer made the motion for the Board to go into closed session as allowed pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11 for the following reasons:

1. Pursuant to N.C. General Statute §143-318.11(a)(6), to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee, or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge or grievance against an individual public officer or employee.
2. Pursuant to N.C. General Statute §143-318.11(a)(7), to plan, conduct or hear reports concerning investigations of alleged misconduct.

All voted in favor and the motion carried.

DISCUSSION

The Board returned to open session at 2:45 p.m.

County Manager Wyatt requested the Board consider retaining Martin Starnes and Associates to conduct an audit of the Sheriff's Department, with the objective of ensuring compliance, and confidence.

Commissioner Young made the motion that the County employ the auditing firm of Martin Starnes and Associates as suggested by the County Manager, and that the County Manager be authorized and directed to negotiate and execute a contract with the auditing firm.

All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Chairman Thompson then read the following statement:

“The Board’s thoughts are with Sheriff Davis and his family. We regret the events that have led to this result. We understand from the document given by Sheriff Davis to the media that he will not be able to perform his duties as Sheriff.

On behalf of every member of this Board, we are confident in the high quality of law enforcement provided by the Henderson County Sheriff’s Department. But we have heard questions from the public – of the rumors that are evidently running rampant – and though we are aware of no problems with the handling of public money, we want to take every step we can to ensure the full faith of the people of Henderson County in their Sheriff’s Department. So we are continuing on with our plans to have an outside auditor examine the Sheriff’s Department’s handling of funds.

You should understand that we expect the audit to find no problems. But, frankly, we’d rather learn of a problem because of this audit than be surprised some other way. But we need to know, and the people need to know and have confidence in their Sheriff’s Office.

We continue to call upon Sheriff Davis to release to the citizens of Henderson County all information regarding allegations of misconduct.

If we have not received confirmation of the Sheriff’s medical retirement by the end of January we will again review this matter.”

ADJOURN

Chairman Thompson adjourned the meeting at 2:53 p.m.

Attest:

Amy R. Brantley, Deputy Clerk to the Board

Tommy Thompson, Chairman