

605

JANUARY 9, 1995

The Board of Commissioners of Franklin County, North Carolina reconvened meeting recessed from January 3, 1995, at 6:00 P. M. in the Conference Room of the Franklin County Office Building with the following Commissioners present: Chairman James T. Moss, Jr., Vice Chairman Robert L. Swanson, Commissioner Harry L. Foy, Jr., Commissioner James G. Hardy and Commissioner George T. Wynne.

606

Minutes of meeting of January 9, 1995 --- Continued

The Board observed a moment of silence in memory of former Town of Bunn Mayor, Wayne Winstead, who recently passed away.

Upon motion by Commissioner Wynne, seconded by Commissioner Swanson, voting "AYE" Commissioner Wynne, Commissioner Swanson, Commissioner Hardy and Commissioner Moss; voting "NO" Commissioner Foy, the Board went into Closed Session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(6) to discuss specific personnel performance.

The Board reconvened into regular session and the following action taken as a result of the Closed Session:

Upon motion by Commissioner Wynne, seconded by Commissioner Swanson with all present voting "AYE" duly carried the following statment approved by the Board regarding job performance of the county manager:

PUBLIC STATEMENT OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

For the past few weeks this Board has closely evaluated the performance of our County Manager. The Press has recently brought to the forefront certain short-comings of the Manager and this Board is of the opinion that the mistakes made were brought on by the Manager's intense workload, and specifically considering the error in the budget, at a time when he served in the dual role as Manager and Finance Officer. Recognizing the position of County Manager is complex and is becoming increasingly so, this Board continues to believe David Hodgkins has the ability and skill to perform the job well. We are proud of the accomplishments of our County during the Manager's tenure such as school merger, moving forward with capital projects for schools, the jail and the Courthouse annex. Our needs continue to mount with growth as we face a crucial period in our County's future in dealing with County water and sewer distribution systems, long-term solid waste disposal, specifically with landfill requirements and financing school construction needs.

David Hodgkins, in our opinion, is highly intelligent, has good work ethic and most importantly possesses qualities of honesty, integrity, and has a strong moral character. He has stated a sincere desire to continue to live and be an important part in our County's future. However, most important in evaluating the Manager's future role in Franklin County Government, we believe we should look beyond simply the Manager's personal and professional abilities and consider the ramifications of our ultimate decision on the County as a whole. We are of the strong opinion that stability of staff in local government is critical to maintain continuity and efficiency. Unnecessary turnover in general diminishes the County' effectiveness in accomplishing its varied objectives.

However, his actions deserve public comment. This Board is of the opinion, specifically relating to the budget error, that the Manager should have been more prompt to personally accept responsibility for the mistake made. We believe the budget error was serious and has a significant effect upon County

operations and finances. Further, the Board believe the landfill closure project should have been more closely monitored and the Board advised of the cost's overrun. Nevertheless, making mistakes should not, without regard to all attendant circumstances, automatically result in dismissal and it is our determination that the Manager should retain employment as Manager and he has our absolute and full support. However, this Board will reevaluate the Manager's performance at frequent and periodic intervals as the Manager has in the past requested. Upon a determination by this Board that the Manager's performance is unsatisfactory or for any reason otherwise decides to terminate his employment, the Manager has told the Board it may terminate his employment in the future with or without cause and without entitlement to severance pay as outlined in his initial employment contract. The Manager made it clear to the Board that he did not want the severance pay provision of the contract to be a factor in the decision to retain him.

Finally, it is the desire of each Commissioners that the Manger's tenure in Franklin County be such so as to be beneficial to both the County and the Manager. It is our hope that this matter shall be put behind us and that we, together, may go about the business of effective County government.

There being n further business to come before the Board, adjournment recorded at 7:20 P. M.