

**LUMPKIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RETREAT NOTES**

February 18, 2016

This retreat began at 9:00 a.m. at the Union County Community Center in Blairsville, Georgia. The retreat was conducted by Facilitator Gordon Manor, Senior Public Service Associate at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. The purpose of the retreat was to discuss commissioner-staff roles and expectations, review of the last retreat's vision, priorities, and to modify the goals, if and as needed. Present at the retreat, in addition to Gordon Manor, were Board Members Chris Dockery, Doug Sherrill, Steve Shaw, Rhett Stringer, Bob Pullen, County Manager Stan Kelley, and County Clerk Kathleen Walker. Also present were the following staff members: Community & Employee Services Director Alicia Davis, Finance Director Allison Martin, EMA Director David Wimpy and Planning & Public Works Director Larry Reiter.

Welcome, Overview and Introductions

Facilitator Manor explained his role and ground rules for a successful retreat. Mr. Manor then reviewed roles of each team (BOC, Staff, and BOC-Staff) as well as our responsibilities towards and expectations of one another.

Commissioner Pullen commented that he finds decision-making difficult because of the limited opportunities the board has to have discussion with one another and to get other board members' ideas. This led to a discussion among board members of this matter. Gordon suggested that the board may want to have a Work Session in the hour before the Regular Monthly Meeting for crosstalk among the commissioners. This would provide additional time for the board to discuss questions they may have concerning items on the upcoming meeting agenda.

The board then discussed the Budget Committee Meetings and whether they want to change staff attendance during meetings with elected or other officials. The first meeting may occur without staff with a second meeting scheduled to include staff, if any budget changes are being discussed.

Lumpkin County Financial Update

Finance Director Allison Martin spoke of compliance audits which she followed by a PowerPoint Presentation on county finances. Fund balance, the budget, SPLOST and C.I.P. were included. Allison explained various funding options centered around one mil so that all needed items could/would be covered. There was then discussion among board members on how to provide for needed items, including salary increases over the next few years. Our fund balance is 27 – 29%.

Review of Vision & Strategic Priorities

The board was then asked to consider what progress has been made towards realizing the vision and priorities set forth in the BOC Retreat of January 2015. Discussion focused on what had been accomplished and how the board could proceed this year. Facilitator Manor asked the board which items had seen progress and which the board wanted to carry forward. The statement was made that the board's vision and strategic priorities should be included in the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Chairman Dockery said he wants an independent analysis of fire protection in Lumpkin County as a whole. He wants the board to know "what we really need to do". He asked, do we need fire stations, staff, or hydrants? He stated that this type of assessment is important to help the board make decisions. Commissioner Sherrill said he also wants to take a serious look at a Fire District.

Following the lunch break the discussion ranged from a discussion of a trash compactor, then shifted to a Water Shuttle and its effect on the ISO rating. EMA Director David Wimpy pointed out that ISO certifiers will want to look at all of our capabilities and not just one item. He said staffing levels are his main concern. David said to be adequately staffed for runs the County needs twelve (12) new firefighters. He did comment that a new SAFER grant is available that could help us transition and that dry hydrants would be very beneficial.

Community & Employee Services Director Alicia Davis gave an A.D.A. update which was followed by an update from Chairman Dockery on a number of possible joint ventures with the City as well as UNG. A.D.A. issues with the present Lumpkin County Library were mentioned which led to a discussion of a possible change of location for the library. Chris mentioned the trip he and General O'Lecky had made to the library in Blairsville.

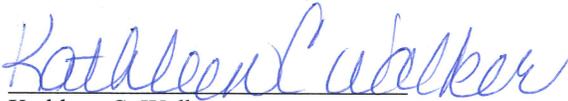
Chairman Dockery then suggested a City/County Joint Retreat. Facilitator Manor said this is a good idea and he will talk with the Chairman, Mayor, County and City Managers to determine a good day for that retreat. He said it will be the Board, Council, County and City Managers, and the County and City Clerks.

Commission Sherrill commented that recreational facilities are related to economic development and gave the financial impact of travelling sports teams as an example. He said this investment needs to be made. Discussion on this matter will continue as will planning.

In Summation

Each participant gave their view of what they found most beneficial at the retreat. Gordon said he is pleased about the second Work Session and the joint sessions with other organizations.

The retreat ended at 2:30 p.m.



Kathleen C. Walker
Clerk, Lumpkin County