

The Beaufort County Police Force Committee met on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 10:00 AM, in conference room in the Financial Services Building located at 136 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Washington, NC with the following present:

**Committee Members:**

Chairman Hood Richardson  
Commissioner Stan Deatherage  
Commissioner Randy Walker

**Staff Present:**

Brain Alligood, County Manager  
Katie Mosher, Clerk to the Board

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Commissioner Deatherage opened the meeting and asked for nominations for Chairman.

**Motion:** Commissioner Walker motioned to nominate Commissioner Richardson as chairman of the committee. Commissioner Deatherage seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Chairman Richardson said thank you for that vote of confidence, the next thing to do, you have an agenda in front of you and I think we pretty much published this agenda to the public. He said the next thing needed is to approve the agenda.

**Motion:** Commissioner Deatherage motioned to approve the agenda. Chairman Richardson seconded. The vote was unanimous.

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Commissioner Walker offered the prayer. Commissioner Deatherage led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Richardson asked if there were any public comments.

No one asked to speak.

Chairman Richardson said we will have public comments at all of our meetings and the public is invited to all of our meetings. He said the next item on the agenda, #6, is discussion about goals and procedures, review draft minutes creating police committee. He said I will say this starting off with, this is a daunting task, it's a complex task, not very many people have done it before. He said I just saw the item we were given from the Association of County Commissioners, there's only two counties in the State that have this. He said this is a daunting task and this committee is probably going to ramble around among ourself a little bit this morning while we decide what to do because we, individually, have had very little discussion about what we're doing so what are our goals.

Commissioner Deatherage said is that a rhetorical question.

Chairman Richardson said no, it's a discussion question.

Commissioner Deatherage said I'll start. He said I think the idea of a police committee, the idea of a police committee is for us to investigate the options that we would have if we had a police force rather than a sheriff that does everything. He said we're always going to have a sheriff, the sheriff has specific

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duties, per general statute, that he has to do and every county needs a sheriff but we can, and should, at least investigate what would be the feasibility of having a police department working directly under maybe a police commission that we would set up and then the County Commissioners would be above the police commission. He said juts a thought. He said there would be a lot of calls at night for us, but we get some of that now, already.

Commissioner Walker said I think we start by looking at these two counties that have it and see what mistakes they've made and see what positives they are enjoying, that's important to.

Chairman Richardson said I think as both of you say, at this point we're a fact-finding committee. He said we're not ready to recommend anything to anybody and the only place we can go for facts at this point are the people that have the experience and that's Gaston and Mecklenburg County, here in North Carolina so one of the things that we'll do later on is talk about when we might be able to set up some visits to visit face-to-face with those officials because so many things can be covered better face-to-face than they can by zoom or any other way, for that matter. He said there are a lot of questions to be answered. He said just about anything you can think of that has to do with law enforcement in Beaufort County we have to, at least, we don't have to solve the problem but we have to be aware of how it was solved somewhere else so that answers can be presented to the full Board of Commissioners. He said I want to make one thing really clear, I've had some people come to me and say well you're taking over law enforcement for the whole county so the cities won't have any law enforcement, it will all be the county, no, we're not doing that. He said we don't even plan to do that. He said we do not plan to bother or interfere with in any way what the municipalities are doing now. He said we want to cooperate with the municipalities. He said obviously a part of the solution to having a county police force is how does the County work with the municipalities, how do we interface with the municipalities. He said that's another question that has to be answered down the road but we're only looking at law enforcement within what the County now provides for law enforcement. He said we do not intend to override, take over or in any way interfere with, I think there's what, three municipalities here in Beaufort County. He said we want to cooperate with them. He said does anybody have anything to add about what we are supposed to be doing.

Commissioner Deatherage said no, I think you've got a real good vision as to which way we should head.

Commissioner Walker said this book has a lot of information in it and I appreciate those that put it together. He said I'm going to be much better at this after I look through this.

Chairman Richardson said yeah, this is probably the first time you guys have seen this. He said you may have gotten it by email but it's the first time you've gotten a hard copy to look at and I think that's our homework before our next meeting, is to read this stuff, look over it and make a list of questions that need to be answered, that we need to present to Gaston County and Mecklenburg County and see where their pitfalls have been and how we can avoid them. He said this information came from Gaston County, it's on the Gaston County website. He said I don't know what's on the Mecklenburg County website but the interesting thing here is whereas we have had problems getting information in the past from the Sheriff's Department about anything, these guys produce an annual report that is, if I remember right, is quite lengthy and then they produce a monthly report and they give you a lot of information about what's going on in law enforcement so the public can have their finger on this every minute. He said also in here is the County police force, the last legislation that was done. He said apparently Gaston County tried two or three times with the legislature in getting local bills that would work. He said their last local bill addition looks like it was in March 2001, we need to read that, we need to study that because it's a more comprehensive bill, in HB 626, Chapter 904 from the General Assembly. He said we need to study that, read that for the next meeting because it's going to let us have a much more intelligent conversation than we're having today because HB 626, chapter 904 goes into detail in exactly how the county police works in that county. He said there's a lot of stuff for anybody that wants to do a little bit of their own research on the Gaston County site. He said if you get on there you can find your way, I had a little bit of trouble

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finding the police part of it but once you get in the police part of it there's a lot of information there and it lets the citizenry know what the sheriff is doing insofar as domestic situations, what he's doing, or the police chief in that county, what he's doing in domestic situations and what he's doing about drugs and all this. He said the public can definitely be heavily involved in that. He said does anybody else have anything they want to say about this.

Chairman Richardson said #8 on our agenda list is questions and issues to be addressed, benefits to the public. He said what do you think we need to start off talking about or trying to address first.

Commissioner Walker said I think we need to ask ourselves can this be done. He said I know it has been done in two instances but I know there's, I think a house bill where they're discussing not allowing entities to defund the police, so to speak, and could this be misconstrued as a defunding tool and if so, if that bill were to pass, I think the end result is they take away how ever much money you defunded is how much the State takes away coming in so we don't want to cross that line.

Chairman Richardson said no, we definitely don't want to cross that line. He said I have no intentions of defunding law enforcement whatsoever.

Commissioner Walker said I think we're actually funding, just in a different fashion.

Commissioner Deatherage said yeah, it would be in a different fashion. He said I'm sure whatever bill they have, since there's already two operating police commissions, I would suspect they have commissions don't they, they would be directly under the commissioners, do you know Chairman Richardson.

Chairman Richardson said how do you mean.

Commissioner Deatherage said you have the commissioners right, then you have a police commission under the commissioners and the police commission manages the police department or the commissioners do.

Chairman Richardson said well, not so much, really. He said I think the homework is going to clear that up when you read the bill for Gaston County. He said if I understand it correctly, and I've scanned it because I spent some time looking for this stuff, basically you have a three person police commission and that police commission is charged with reviewing all persons who are hired as employees of the police department. He said they're charged with handling complaints from the public, they're charged with getting the first shot at, shall we say, disciplinary problems. He said if somebody has done something wrong, they get it and then under certain conditions it goes to the manager and from the manager, it's structured, to the commissioners. He said and by the way, one of the features that I saw about that particular committee they have is you serve for three years and you cannot succeed yourself, which I think is a good thing.

Commissioner Deatherage said this could, you said it's a committee or is it a commission.

Chairman Richardson said I think it's a commission.

Commissioner Deatherage said is it commissioners serving on the commission or is it outsiders.

Chairman Richardson said no. He said we appoint, the commissioners would appoint.

Commissioner Deatherage said it would be a paid job, wouldn't it.

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Chairman Richardson said I don't know if it's a full-time job. He said we could give them a stipend if we wanted to.

Commissioner Deatherage said we need to have serious people so we should pay them something and they should be pillars of the community, so to speak.

Commissioner Walker said you could get a good cross reference of the community.

Chairman Richardson said that's one of the things we need to find out, if when we chose these people, how do you go about selecting the committee. He said how do you pick these people and what kind of pitfalls and problems did you have. He said I think the big advantage of this is, from my reading of this is everything is an open door. He said the public knows what's going on, the Commissioners know what's going on, the police know what's going on and one of the advantages that I see coming out of this is when you change sheriff's administrations a lot of stuff gets lost. He said investigations can get stopped that are not started again because everything depends on what the new sheriff thinks. He said if you have a county police department those investigations are not necessarily going to be dropped, except for good cause. He said you've got a lot of continuity; you've got permanent files that just keep running and are there so there can be some advantages to the County. He said I know right now, the last two sheriffs', it has been like pulling teeth to call them and get definitive information on some really mundane things. He said if they don't want to give it to you, they don't give it to you. He said if you had a police commission and someone was asking for information you could at least get a ruling from the manager or the commission as to whether they had a legitimate request or not because some of that stuff you don't want to put out to the public.

Mr. Allgood said you had a question about members. He said according to the bill the three members of the civil service board are appointed by the senior resident judge of the superior court of the district that the county is located so you could certainly ask that be changed and the authority be given to the Board of Commissioners but as it is, it's the chief resident judge.

Chairman Richardson said thank you for that. He said this is why we need to be doing our homework and reading this stuff. He said I've only read it once so it's sort of a blur.

Commissioner Deatherage said one of the things I would want if we had a police commission is that commission meet in public and make decisions in public except when you talk about personnel and individual cases. He said that's got to be closed but they need to at least show they're meeting in public and then you can know how the sunshine law works. He said then they can go into closed session when they need to. He said I think that would be important.

Commissioner Walker said I'm just reading ahead on this email, Gaston County actually wanted to abolish the police department but they're being disallowed here in the last paragraph. He said we're not trying to abolish anything. He said if anything I think it could be better to free the Sheriff up to do what he does and then have a good tribunal, if you will, to overlook what the County could do as far as police activity.

Chairman Richardson said I guess that's probably something we need to clear up too. He said the purpose, our purpose is not to abolish the sheriff. He said we're not trying to get rid of the sheriff. He said the state constitution provides that every county has a sheriff and if somebody wants to correct me when I finish that's fine, but it also provides that the sheriff has certain duties and they're basically three. He said he takes care of the courthouse proceedings for the courts with bailiff's and he serves papers. He said that's a whole myriad of papers that can be served. He said normally you think of warrants but there's a whole bunch of stuff the sheriff can serve and then he runs the jail and the state constitution says that he does that and we don't have any intention of changing that whatsoever. He said the sheriff, over the years, because he ran the jail and had the jail and kept the bad people locked, more or less, law enforcement has

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been pawned off on sheriffs and then a body of law has grown to assist the sheriff's in doing their duties so there's nothing in the constitution of North Carolina that says the sheriff has to be the chief law enforcement officer of the county. He said but we have no desire to take his duties or interfere with his duties. He said we're trying to get the policing part of this, domestic policing, criminal policing, drugs. He said we're trying to get that part of law enforcement, we're not trying to do anything right now, we're trying to gather the information to see if we want to go to a countywide police department or not.

Commissioner Walker said it sounds like this GS 15-3a-76 won't allow it so we can't do it anyway, to abolish it.

Chairman Richardson said right. He said the state constitution, you would have to change the constitution to change his duties or abolish the sheriff. He said we have no intention of doing that.

Mr. Alligood said just real quick, the piece that came under city-county consolidations, in the email from the Association, Gaston County is a your single source for, if you see that there, two counties, Gaston and Mecklenburg, received legislative authority in the 1920's to establish county police departments, Mecklenburg's police department merged with Charlotte's in the 1990's so Gaston is currently the lone county with a county police department so there was a city/county consolidation at one time, Charlotte and Mecklenburg did have that but the county of Charlotte, or the City of Charlotte merged so that is no longer, it's a city/county merger essentially there so the lone county police force is Gaston County. He said they're the only ones left with a county police department.

Chairman Richardson said I'm actually glad you said that because I think there's a law that allows city/county to merge into a metropolitan district and that's what Mecklenburg did. He said I don't know if there are any other counties that have done that in North Carolina or not.

Mr. Alligood said there have been several efforts. He said as you look at the bottom under "A Single Law Enforcement Agency" it says a fifth effort, Durham, second and third efforts Wilmington-New Hanover, third effort, New Hanover so there's some other information related to city/county consolidation, not just a county police force. He said Gaston is your soul source on that.

Chairman Richardson said well, we're moving on the right track with that at least. He said some of the questions that I have in my head on this are the serving of papers. He said on reading the annual report from Gaston County it looks like the police still serve some warrants there and some papers there so how does the sheriff and the county police cooperate. He said I would think there would be occasions when the sheriff couldn't get it done it would be advantageous to have another peace officer who's in more of a hurry to serve documents. He said so how does that work.

Mr. Alligood said it's our understanding, and we would actually have to have someone who can speak to that directly but my understanding is if there are warrants in a specific district. That they would shuffle those warrants to that police department and let them serve them when they could and if not that cooperation goes back and forth. He said that's my understanding so I think that if the City of Washington has warrants for somebody they come to the sheriff and the sheriff would pass those warrants to the City of Washington and the City of Washington would serve those warrants when the sheriff's department can't serve them. He said that's the way that works between the two of them but there is a lot of cooperation between them.

Chairman Richardson said another thing is on transporting prisoners. He said the sheriff runs the jail and he has the jail, does he do all of the transports and if he gets in a bind can he call on the police department to assist him.

Mr. Alligood said he could ask but I don't think there are any municipalities who would agree to do that because once they become residents of the jail the county is responsible for moving them around and

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doing all that they do. He said there's some work that occurs occasionally with other counties, they help move folks around if we need to and we help move folks around when they need to but I doubt you will see municipal police departments saying we'd be glad to do transports. He said it's just not their function. He said they don't want to leave their area.

Chairman Richardson said by the way, I believe that you have some experience when you were City Manager of Washington. He said the police chief reported to you.

Mr. Alligood said yes sir, in the municipal setting everybody works for the city manager so if, and it's funny that, you will here city managers say that's a good way for a city manager to get fired is to have issues with the police chief but everybody in the city function works for the city manager, the city manager, in turn, works for the city council so if the city council has an issue with something the police department is doing or the fire department is doing, the city manager either gets it straight or the city manager goes away. He said obviously it's different in the county in that the county manager works only for the county, looks after the county departments that the County Board of Commissioner has direct control over and you have a lot of other folks who have independent authority.

Chairman Richardson said we appreciate your comments and want you to keep commenting when we run into things because we're babes in the woods on this, at least at the moment. He said transports, we talked about, other interfaces with the police department that we need to talk about that anybody has any thoughts about. He said I would say this, we need to develop, each one of us needs to develop a list of questions that you want answered. He said all three of us may have the same question, that's not a problem, we just need to make sure that we get this stuff addressed.

Commissioner Deatherage said one thing you could probably find out if this thing did happen and it does move forward and does become a success you're going to probably see cities in Beaufort County want to become a part of this entire spectrum so that needs to be talked about because that's going to add cost.

Commissioner Walker said something else that's neat that's going to be happening is that the Board of Education is actually ahead of us in what we're doing here because they're going to be forced into the SRO business so they're going to be coming up with questions and answers that we probably could use so we probably need to mirror or shadow what they're doing and they're coming up very shortly. He said they're getting bids right now to handle this so it will be interesting to read and look at. He said we're supposed to be getting, well, we've already gotten the RFP but when the bids start coming in, I think it's at the end of this month that they start collecting them, we'll see what that looks like. He said that might bring a whole other sheet of questions.

Mr. Alligood said just to speak a little bit towards Commissioner Deatherage's comment, currently the Sheriff's Office does provide law enforcement services in our municipalities that do not have their own police departments. He said and as you mentioned earlier Washington, Chocowinity and Belhaven have their own. He said Aurora used to have theirs a few years ago, there's went away so the Sheriff's Office picked that up to try and help them out. He said I would not think, no matter how successful this is I would not think there would be any municipal police departments or city councils that would want to get rid of their police department and have the County do it. He said I just don't see them doing that. He said that's control that they have over their jurisdiction and I would not see a city council giving that away. He said boards are usually pretty tight on what their authorities are and what they want to keep. He said I don't necessarily seeing that to be the case.

Chairman Richardson said certainly anybody walking into that would have a whole lot less level of service from the County than they would have from their own local police because there's a lot of things the local police can do that we're going to say look, we're not going to go out there just because you're fighting with your neighbor over the dog and that's when the police department might show up.

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Mr. Alligood said and that's what we've always said to people when they talk to us about how come I don't get a certain level of service like in the city and what we've often said is when you live in the city you pay additional city taxes to get additional city services so yes, you do have the sheriff who can do things in municipalities they typically don't. He said there's a very limited response there. He said they will help out as they need to but you pay extra city taxes for extra city services that people in the county don't enjoy. He said if you want those you need to move into a city.

Chairman Richardson said there's a whole lot of questions and issues for us to talk about on whether it benefits the public or whether it doesn't if we went to a county police force and I'm sure we will be talking about those at every meeting we have. He said does anybody else have anything that they can think of that we need to get into the minutes. He said that's basically what we're doing is getting us a work list in the minutes. He said are we ready to move on to identity and notice of stakeholders.

Commissioner Deatherage said yes.

Chairman Richardson said you know one of the things that goes on here, from our discussions today, we've rambled all over the place with a lot of different things. He said there's a lot of different people that interface and come into contact with law enforcement and we need to identify those people early on so that we can invite them to this meeting so that we can ask for their comments or what they see as issues or problems. He said I'll just name some of them. He said there's traffic things that happen at accidents that sheriff's do where they interface with EMS and that sort of thing. He said they interface with the local police departments. He said who else can you think of that we ought to give some consideration to as a stakeholder.

Commissioner Deatherage said fire departments.

Chairman Richardson said who else is an important interface.

Commissioner Deatherage said EMS.

Chairman Richardson said yes, EMS, Fire Department, the highway patrol, they have to work with the highway patrol to work back and forth and exchange information.

Commissioner Deatherage said the schools. He said eventually it's going to be under us since we're paying for it. He said it comes from the state through us.

Chairman Richardson said as part of the process here you've got the state legislatures, you've got the representative and senator because we're going to need a local bill if the County decides to do this so what they're thoughts and concerns and considerations are, are an issue because if they won't introduce a local bill then you have to find somebody to introduce a local bill.

Commissioner Deatherage said it would be nice to have their interaction now so that they can be, like you said, a stakeholder and be part of all this, that they understand that we're serious enough that they need to go ahead and express how they feel.

Chairman Richardson said we could go ahead and invite them to a meeting.

Commissioner Deatherage said absolutely. He said the problem with is they're in session.

Commissioner Walker said we could start quizzing them on what if's.

Commissioner Deatherage said so we should probably go ahead, in public, and talk with our representative about it but he's in session right now.

Chairman Richardson said communication, the sheriff right now supervises communications. He said I wouldn't think that he would be doing that if we do this, make this change. He said I think that would go to the police chief if we make the change. He said our attorney, but I think we're a long way from involving our attorney. He said what do you all think because he would have to be involved in looking at some law and giving us some guidance and advice and I don't think we're close enough. He said we ought to say we want to do it before we get him involved I would think, what do you all think.

Commissioner Deatherage said absolutely and I think at some point we better be talking to our whole board before we talk to the attorney.

Chairman Richardson said yeah, I think you're right.

Commissioner Walker said that's definitely in the final stages.

Commissioner Deatherage said it might be before that.

Commissioner Walker said well yeah but it will be further down the road than we are now.

Commissioner Deatherage said I see us going to Gaston County and talking amongst ourselves, talking to our representative, getting him involved, knowing what all the ground rules are going to be in Raleigh because that's the harbinger right there. He said if you can't get Raleigh on our side it's not going to happen, none of this is going to happen.

Chairman Richardson said well, that's the next item on the list is a trip to Gaston County. He said when would we think about doing that.

Commissioner Deatherage said can it wait until April, is that possible.

Chairman Richardson said I don't have a problem waiting until April. He said when there's not ice and snow on the road, after that season, plus the Covid thing, hopefully there will be some day we're all going to be able to get together again.

Commissioner Walker said the president said this will all be over by April.

Commissioner Deatherage said Lord Fauci said no. He said Lord Fauci says a lot of things because he's following the science.

Chairman Richardson said if we made a trip to Gaston County, someone, I guess we would ask the manager to arrange the trip to interface with those people, set up something and of course we want to talk to two or three of their knowledgeable people who are involved in this. He said I could see where we would certainly want to talk to the police chief or his right hand man, if you will, and we may want to talk to someone in the DA's office or one of those groups that has to deal with law enforcement about what kind of problems they've had and anybody else that we can think of. He said if we're going in April we have plenty of time to think about who the right people are but I think the manager should go ahead and put out a feeler that we may want to come in April and just see what they say. He said they may say forget it, we're not talking to you.

Commissioner Walker said I'd like to see a commission meeting if we could swing that. He said you know, they're commission meeting to kind of watch what that looks like.

Mr. Alligood said so, just off the top of my head I would assume that group would be maybe the chairman of the board from the elected officials side, obviously the county manager, the police chief,

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probably the chair of their civil service board, that would give you the structure and then you could look outside, maybe the DA or maybe even because the Chief Resident Superior Court judge appoints, maybe we could get them.

Chairman Richardson said I think those are great ideas and we don't have to meet with all of those people at the same time, we could have separate meetings, whatever is convenient for them. He said I see at least an overnight trip in order to do it.

Mr. Alligood said it wouldn't be an issue as long as we, as long as you are able to do that before the end of the fiscal year. He said there's plenty of funding in the County Commissioners travel budget right now because of all the conferences that have been cancelled. He said so you wouldn't have to ask for anything additional.

Chairman Richardson said why don't we look at, what do you guys think, sometime after the 15<sup>th</sup> of April.

Commissioner Deatherage said that would be good.

Chairman Richardson said now their commission, you guys wanted to see a Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Commissioner Walker said no, a commission, the police commission.

Commissioner Deatherage said you might find they have a lot of closed session stuff. He said I'm nubile, I have no understanding of how this thing works. He said I've got a feeling, just from governing all these years they're going to have a lot of closed session.

Commissioner Walker said that's a question to ask and if it is then that's off the table.

Commissioner Deatherage said it would be interesting. He said Mr. Manager, if we do go to a meeting how much of it is going to be closed session and we're just sitting there waiting for them to get out of closed session.

Mr. Alligood said based on a quick review of the video it looks like to me that the civil service board, they review disciplinary actions which would all be closed session and they make recommendations and review personnel policy so I don't know, I can certainly reach out and ask them about that, I don't have a general feel for how they run their meetings. He said it looks like they mostly deal with personnel issues which would be held in closed session.

Commissioner Deatherage said if they were dealing with policy that would be good to see.

Chairman Richardson said but you could schedule a meeting for them 30 minutes before their meeting starts just to meet with the whole board and get comments from them. He said that might be worthwhile depending on when they meet. He said they may only meet when they have to so we might not get a chance.

Mr. Alligood said I can certainly check on that for you.

Chairman Richardson said the next item on the agenda here is cost and organization. He said that really refers to way down the road after we decide on feasibility of this. He said probably something that we would bring to the Commissioners but I do think, as a preliminary, that we need to be able to answer the Commissioners in how many people do you think it's going to take to run this department and how much do you think it's going to cost and what are your additional expenses do you anticipate with this, if any.

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He said I did a quick thing, and these numbers don't mean anything but it seems to me like, and I wouldn't want to hold to them until I went back and researched them but there are 210,000 people in Gaston County, they've got 130 sworn officers, sworn policemen. He said Beaufort County has 47,000, we've got like 60 something sworn officers.

Commissioner Deatherage said Gaston County is smaller though.

Chairman Richardson said no, they're 210,000 people.

Commissioner Deatherage said no, smaller in size.

Chairman Richardson said oh, area wise.

Commissioner Deatherage said yes.

Chairman Richardson said area wise, yes.

Mr. Alligood said their service area reads they provide law enforcement services to 80,000 citizens in the unincorporated areas in Gaston County and the incorporated areas of High Shoals. He said there's a service area of 275 square miles.

Chairman Richardson said okay, then I need to go back and look at my numbers.

Commissioner Deatherage said okay so they're operating outside the city limits. He said the sheriff works anywhere he wants to work.

Chairman Richardson said well, no. He said the sheriff can but we're talking about police law enforcement.

Commissioner Deatherage said so that would be different.

Mr. Alligood said my assumption is it would be different in that you currently don't have jurisdiction inside a city to begin with except for certain things they agree to like our animal control workers. He said even those county animal control workers, unless the city adopts your animal control ordinance you can only enforce their animal control ordinance so it would be similar to that.

Commissioner Deatherage said what about drugs.

Mr. Alligood said you would not, I mean you follow the case, but you would also have to have cooperation, I would assume from the city. He said there's professional cooperation that goes on when you're working a case, I think you're allowed to follow the case wherever it goes but there's obviously coordination with that.

Commissioner Deatherage said from me watching from Beaufort County Now precipice, the Sheriff does most of the drug busts in the county, by enlarge probably 90% of the drug busts. He said maybe more than that.

Mr. Alligood said I think they do and again, it's not that I could be a city resident, run across the city and at the city limit line the sheriff can't touch me, that's not how that works.

Commissioner Deatherage said they break down doors at the houses and they work the streets and the informants.

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Chairman Richardson said probably, and this is the reason for involving these people as stakeholders, you probably need some cooperating agreements with them.

Commissioner Deatherage said we don't want to lose the drug force.

Chairman Richardson said yeah, we don't want to lose that or mutual aid.

Commissioner Deatherage said I don't care about anything else except the drugs.

Chairman Richardson said well with drugs, I'm very concerned about the amount of drugs there are in society. He said we're being destroyed by drugs.

Commissioner Deatherage said I never want to see marijuana legalized in North Carolina. He said that's a whole other kettle of fish.

Chairman Richardson said if you're done with that lets move on to the next one, who do we need to help us. He said is there anybody we should invite to come make a presentation.

Commissioner Deatherage said you were speaking about the DA, is that on the table, maybe get him to speak with us. He said maybe we could meet at a time that is beneficial to him.

Chairman Richardson said probably because he makes cases move.

Commissioner Deatherage said we're going to have to have a coordination between our police chief and the DA if this thing works. He said they're going to have to work closely together. He said with investigators there's got to be an open door policy, big time.

Chairman Richardson said yeah, because the investigators, I see them all the time going back and forth between the investigators and the DA's office regularly.

Commissioner Deatherage said you've got to be able to put cases together.

Chairman Richardson said when do you think we should have the DA come and tell us how he sees this impacting his office.

Commissioner Deatherage said we could talk to the DA's office and see when is a good time for him.

Chairman Richardson said Mr. Manager, could you do that.

Mr. Alligood said I'd be happy to.

Commissioner Walker said I think the DA is the best thing because he's going to tell us what could go wrong or right for this and if he's for it because if he's not for it it's going to be harder to succeed.

Chairman Richardson said well this is somewhat of a political thing. He said I have an idea that he will come and be neutral but I think he would be very professional in saying this is what I think and what I don't think about it or here is where I see the problems. He said that's really what we want from him and how he does his work.

Commissioner Deatherage said Mr. Edwards is pretty good about working with elected officials.

Commissioner Walker said we could ask him if we need to move up the food chain and talk with a judge.

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Chairman Richardson said anybody else that we need to think about getting in here early on this.

Commissioner Walker said Representative Kidwell.

Chairman Richardson said yeah, or the senator, both of them for that matter. He said when does the legislature get out of session.

Commissioner Deatherage said it's a long session, it's going to be a while.

Chairman Richardson said lets just see when they could come. He said we could arrange our meetings to accommodate all these people.

Commissioner Deatherage said this is a long session. He said I guarantee you it's going to go on into July.

Commissioner Richardson said I think you're right or beyond that.

Commissioner Deatherage said they've got a lot of stuff to deal with and they better have a lot of stuff to deal with, in my mind right now, with the way the state has been going.

Commissioner Richardson said before we talk about the next meeting and ask for an adjournment does anybody have anything you want to say.

Mr. Alligood said you said you wanted me to reach out to the DA, did you also want me to reach out to the Chief Resident Judge.

Chairman Richardson said probably. He said I would think so.

Mr. Alligood said because based on this bill.

Chairman Richardson said yes, we don't want him to feel left out.

Mr. Alligood said I can see that it would be easier when you go to the general assembly you can say you've done this before; all we're doing is changing the name from Gaston County to Beaufort County. He said it gets a little more difficult when you try to start changing the legislation. He said this legislation is based on the appointments by the Chief Resident.

Chairman Richardson said and we've talked to both the DA and the Chief Resident and here's where they are with this particular situation.

Commissioner Deatherage said in my opinion we would benefit from there being some highly structured general statutes pertaining to just this in every county being on the same wavelength. He said if Gaston County is the way it begins and if we go along with Gaston and if we change anything the change should go for all counties.

Chairman Richardson said well Gaston County is the only one right now, it's a special bill so yeah, the pattern is out there.

Commissioner Deatherage said the pattern needs to evolve but it needs to evolve jointly. He said we should not try to create a different scenario to have to deal with statutorily. He said the statutes need to be clear and they need to be constitutional.

Chairman Richardson said the less thinking these boys do the better off we are.

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Mr. Alligood said I say this a little tongue in cheek but should I go ahead and invite Eddie Caldwell from the Sheriff's Association. He's in Raleigh.

Chairman Richardson said he runs the Sheriff's Association.

Mr. Alligood said obviously you would have perspective from that organization and all of the sheriffs.

Chairman Richardson said I think you should put him on the list and maybe after we talk to these other people maybe put him down towards the tail end of it. He said if you get him in here too early all he's going to do is come in and try to torpedo it but if we've got a lot of answers when he comes we're going to be a lot better to handle him.

Mr. Alligood said I'm just looking at who would oppose the legislation and clearly it would make sense the Sheriffs Association would oppose that. He said he is the director of that Association just like Kevin Leonard is the director of your Association.

Chairman Richardson said that's a good thought, I just don't want him in here too soon.

Next meeting: Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 10:00 AM.

**Motion:** Commissioner Deatherage motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Walker seconded. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kathleen Mosher, CMC, NCCCC  
Clerk to the Board