

CITY OF NEW BERN  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN WORK SESSION  
NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

FEBRUARY 16, 2010

Present:

Lee Wilson Bettis, Jr., Mayor  
Sabrina Bengel, Alderman  
Dennis K. Bucher, Alderman  
Johnnie Ray Kinsey, Alderman  
Dana Outlaw, Alderman  
Victor J. Taylor, Alderman  
Bernard W. White, Alderman

Other Participants:

Edward A. Wyatt, Interim City Manager  
Scott Davis, City Attorney  
Veronica Mattocks, City Clerk  
Bobby Aster, Chief, New Bern Fire and Rescue  
Mary Muraglia, Finance Director  
Frank Palombo, Chief of Police  
Jon Rynne, Electric Utilities Director  
Jordan Hughes, Acting City Engineer

Other Attendees: Public Attendees

Court Reporter: Bobbie G. Newman

INDEX OF HANDOUTS/EXHIBITS

Exhibit [A] Agenda, New Bern Board of Aldermen  
Work Session, February 16, 2010.

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COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: The Work Session of the New Bern Board of Aldermen commenced on February 16, 2010, at 6:00 p.m., in the City Hall Building. The Work Session was to discuss the Alfred Cunningham Bridge, the radio system, and appointments to the Electric Services Board and to the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency. (See the agenda, Exhibit [A].)

MR. LEE WILSON BETTIS, JR.: All right. This opens our work session for today. I'd like to thank everybody for being here, and I believe we ought to start it off with a prayer. Mr. Outlaw, do you have one you'd like to start out with or Mr. White?

MR. DANA OUTLAW: Certainly, I'd be glad to.

MR. BETTIS: Yes, sir.

MR. OUTLAW: Well, if we could bow. Heavenly Father, you promised where two or three are gathered, You would be with us. We just ask that You be amongst us today as we make the -- the business of the City of New Bern. Give us Your wisdom and guidance. And for all these things, we give You -- we give You thanks. In Your name we pray, Amen.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Outlaw. The first item up tonight is going to be -- what was it again, Johnnie, the bridge issue, so. I just want to preface the -- I just want to preface our discussion on the bridge issue by saying, first, we inherited, for those who don't know, we inherited what may or may not have been an obligation from the prior Board. It appears that that prior -- that obligation, for whatever it was, is going to cost the City quite a bit in the future. It will probably necessitate rate increases and/or tax increases if we accept it. The Board rightfully, and why they were hired, why this new Board is here, the Board rightfully asked for informational meetings with the DOT and with the federal government. The Board questioned the DOT and the federal government in a very respectful way. They did their own research, they spoke with their constituents, and I believe they're ready to report individually on what they found. And, as a preface, I just want to say I'm proud of the way you handled it. I think it was done openly. I think it was tough issue. I don't know what anybody's going to say tonight, but no matter what you say, I'm proud of the way you handled it. And if we accept it or if we don't accept it, we're -- you know, I will go along with it as long as the public speaks and -- and -- and the democratic process works, so that's the way I want to say it. I'm proud of everybody for -- for what they've done. That being said, let's start out with Ward 1. How would you -- what would you like to say on the bridge and what's your opinion?

MS. SABRINA BENGEL: Well, thank you, Mr. Mayor. I'd first like to say that I am in favor of moving forward and honoring the agreement. The bridge must open, and we must go about getting on with the business of -- of our downtown and of our city. As a merchant downtown, we have

suffered for the last two and a half years, not only from the construction of the bridge, but from the construction of Broad Street, and we have suffered financially, in many -- in many instances, because of that construction, so I am in -- in full agreement that we should move forward in honoring the agreement and opening the bridge. With that being said, I would like to make a comment regarding why we did what we did in -- in asking the questions. And, Mr. Mayor, you were right in that we were elected to ask questions, and I would have not felt right if we didn't look into this deal and make sure we knew every aspect of this deal, what it was going to cost to operate it, maintain it, whatever. I believe that the prior Board, in making this decision in 2006, it was a boom time, and, you know, property values were at their highest, we were in great shape financially. And they had the thoughts of four years down the road, reevaluations, property values doubling and tripling, and I think they thought there would be plenty of money to run this, so they didn't need to ask the questions and look into things that we are having to look at now because we don't have the money. I'm sorry they didn't take the time to really figure out what it was going to cost and how we were going to do this. We were left with no road map to go forward. And for that, I'm -- I'm sorry we don't have that, but I -- I -- I -- my vote is to move forward, let's get the bridge opened, and let's get people back in downtown New Bern, and -- and get our city flourishing again. Thank you.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you, Ms. Bengel. Vic Taylor?

MR. VICTOR J. TAYLOR: Good evening. I want to welcome everyone here tonight. My comments will be brief. I think we just need to move forward on the agreement that the previous Board made and drive forward.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you, Mr. Taylor. Mr. Bucher?

MR. DENNIS K. BUCHER: I don't have anything to add, but I agree. Basically, they said -- she said what I was going to say, so --

MR. BETTIS: Thank you, Mr. Bucher.

MR. BUCHER: -- but I -- I do have -- but I do have one thing --

MR. BETTIS: Yes, sir.

MR. BUCHER: -- and that is, once we get past this time of, let's call it, orientation when -- as we all are learning, not just about a bridge, but about a lot of issues within the city, I really believe we need to take a look at how we prepare for the unknown. And if you buy a new automobile, you know that somewhere down the road you're going to have to do maintenance on that vehicle, and it -- it isn't going to just be putting gas in it and changing the oil, and this is going to be a similar thing, and I don't know what that year is, year 10, year 20, year 15. But at some point, we need to start preparing financially for whatever that is, and so, I -- you know, I don't want to wait until we're all off this Board and the next Board said I wonder why they didn't do anything to prepare. I want to

start that -- that thought process very shortly.

MR. BETTIS: Yes, sir. Thank you. Mr. Kinsey?

MR. JOHNNIE RAY KINSEY: Well, Ms. Bengel spoke it very clearly that we need to honor the agreement and move forward, and -- and that's where I'm at.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Kinsey. Mr. White?

MR. BERNARD W. WHITE: I agree with the rest of the Board. I think we need to honor the agreement that was written in the papers that we saw. So, as far as I'm concerned, we -- we are committed to go ahead and do what we said we would do and -- and go on about our business and do what we can for the City.

MR. BETTIS: Anything further, Mr. White?

MR. WHITE: No, sir.

MR. BETTIS: Mr. Outlaw?

MR. OUTLAW: Mayor Bettis, Board Members, public, I have a little bit different background. You know, I was on the Board when this was approved. I don't mean to belabor the point. I thank the patience of those in New Bern that can afford a bridge like this. I appreciate the patience of those that were kind of in between that have talked to me that really don't want to see us have to absorb this maintenance, but have -- are ready to move on. And I also plead for those that are not in the position with the high electric bills, sewer bills, water bills they already have, the hardship that this maintenance is going to bring on residents of New Bern particularly the indigent, and the poor, and people that just, you know, don't live in some of your more affluent areas. I don't, again, mean to belabor this point. But the biggest argument I've heard I -- I didn't agree with way back on this, was that if we didn't build this bridge, there wouldn't be a bridge. Well, let me tell you, life is made on patterns and the greater weight of evidence. And when the State of North Carolina built that exit lane off of that multimillion bridge, the -- the most expensive bridge in the history of North Carolina, they were not going to build that exit lane. And when that exit lane to downtown New Bern became a reality, I can assure you that meant that the State of North Carolina had been persuaded that maybe it was a good idea to maintain a bridge over the Trent River. It has been my thought since that exit lane was a part of the new bridge system, that the State of North Carolina had clear intent, the way that exit lane goes toward downtown New Bern, it would have been much too easy just to have continued on, like if you're going to Havelock. But, I think that the pattern was set, that there was supposed to be a bridge to downtown New Bern. I stress to everybody that's thinking about this after -- this -- this is kind of the closure of the discussion, but I can't stress to you the fact that, if you read the newspapers, in -- in the year 2018, 80 percent of your federal -- your federal revenues, 80 percent of them, 80 cents on a dollar, is going to be -- is going to be debt service. And if you don't

think the federal government's going to start cutting back on some programs, just wait and see. I'm very concerned for this city as to what the future of federal revenue is going to be. They're 80 percent right now, and that's one thing. But if the federal revenues change, which none of us have a barometer of what's going to happen, this city is going to be wishing it had -- had negotiated a better deal for the citizens of New Bern than they're getting, and that's about all I got to say about it.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Outlaw. It appears the Board -- the Board has spoken, and it appears that the Board, with the exception of Mr. Outlaw -- there's no official vote taken here right now. This -- this discussion is mainly being done because we promised transparency and accountability to the citizens of New Bern. This Board is saying it's going to honor the prior agreement, whatever that agreement is. They're not making a statement on what that agreement is. They're just saying they're not going to dispute that that agreement is valid for right now. I can't tell you how vehemently opposed I am to that because I've read the agreement and I'm coming at it from the prospective of a lawyer. From the prospective of a lawyer, that agreement is so vague and ambiguous as to its terms as to be unenforceable. I would have been terminated from my job if I'd allowed a client to sign such an agreement. That being said, the democratic process has spoken here tonight. I say we're going to accept that bridge. I'm going to be the first person across there. I'll cut a ribbon. Let's go forward and -- let's go forward and... You know, the opinion of one person doesn't matter in the democracy. It's the -- it's that the many -- it's our -- it's our Board that made the decision. I'm proud of you guys for what you've done here tonight, and you've -- the voters should be proud for what you've heard here tonight. Moving on, bridge issue done. Mr. Wyatt?

MR. EDWARD A. WYATT: We have two items tonight, one dealing with the radio system, and I'll ask the Chief to come up and sit right next to me and then move Bobby over one (chair). And also, Jordan, if you'll get a chair and come up. By way of introduction, the main persons that are affected by the communication system and some the blatant inadequacies is the electric, especially outside the corporate limits, the police chief, naturally, police, fire, and water resources. And I use the word water resources because it's really more restrictive what he's doing than the city engineer, and perhaps one or two others that may have radios. I'd like to make a few prefacing remarks before passing this out. You all had been briefed, I think, around the election concerning the magnitude of this need and the potential cost, and the Chief will go over his PowerPoint presentation, which some of you may have seen, I -- already, as I've indicated. Largely, this affects all our departments plus Public Works, and -- and ultimately, the cost is going to have to be a shared cost. Now, (there

are) several factors that we need to bear in mind. I hope you had an opportunity to read a memorandum that I prepared with the help of Mary concerning our general financial situation, which we certainly do not have for the next FY, FY 10-11, a total hold on, but we are giving you indications of added dollars for programs as we've talked about, whether it's the bridge, or retirement, or some promises perhaps from the previous administration. Our essential responsibility is to try to provide operations and the same level of service. Not only what the Chief is going to go over for you, but there are a large number of items that are capital in nature, and I hope that through our budget process we may even have a separate document that gives you a capital improvements program. Now, many of these are absolute needs, but obviously our resources are limited, and I think we'll see expressed very well why we're in this dilemma because of the -- the economic situation. And, we ought to look with optimism on what we have rather than what we don't. But in addition to what the Chief is mentioning, let me just give you several examples. Relative to our fire rating, this year we will be having a fire rating, which we've enjoyed a good one, and it's helped the taxpayers with their insurance bills to have a favorable treatment because of the rating we currently have. The reality is that we need one, and probably two, fire stations in order to have the desired level of response time. And the cost action of the station firsthand is secondary to manning a fire station 24/7. A few weeks ago, we took a tour of buildings, and I think to see the one that we've bought, and I had promised you to try to start working on a report, but there's so many immediate things, I really haven't been able to move forward, or our team move forward, because it certainly represents more than me. But we have inadequacies space wise throughout our whole organization to the point that it has been said, at least when I first came here, that, you know, we need to go -- just go ahead and do something to this one place without regard to any other needs. Well, I think we need to consider all our needs in context. And -- and I also would say, as one of the things the Chief will go into, is from an ideal standpoint, a communication center, that's another building that needs a new building or an enlargement perhaps. The needs go on and on, and I'd be remiss for us not to present to you a capital improvements program that reflects our needs. The radio is a very essential thing of not only the police and fire, but all our departments operate. But we have, as you'll hear from the Chief or have already heard, we have major problems and, at least, we need to get about the -- the job of studying, what I call, a reconnaissance study of what we have and what we need, and the cost of the study, and I'm putting the cart before the horse, is \$57,000. Regardless of our timing, it is essential to, at least, see what we need, and hopefully, maybe opportunities will open up. It's been suggested that our debt service may be reduced somewhat, and perhaps that's

a window to help fund this, or, as far as that's concerned, other capital improvements that I've mentioned, or others that have gone unnamed at this time. But, I did meet today to wrap up discussions with Mary about where we could get this \$5,700.

MR. OUTLAW: \$57,000 or?

MR. WYATT: \$57,000, I stand to be corrected. I have a --

MR. JORDAN HUGHES: It's actually \$57,500.

MR. WYATT: -- I have a tendency to drop a zero off.

MR. FRANK PALOMBO: I wish you could.

MR. WYATT: I could --

MR. OUTLAW: What is -- what is the \$57,000?

MR. WYATT: It's for a study --

MR. OUTLAW: Okay, a study.

MR. WYATT: -- for \$57,500. I've been corrected for \$500's worth. What we propose is one-third of this study come from the special appropriation category in the general fund, which is community development line item, which really ties into lobbyists that you all terminated. One-third of it would come from the water systems professional service, engineering services, which is essentially a consultant service, more from the water than the sewer because of its challenges, and electric, from that professional services also. I know that's a substantial amount of money as you will hear and have already heard the need, and we certainly -- we need to scope in on what we actually need. And, the Chief will also elaborate the possibility some other parties might be interested in cooperating with us in -- in that regard. But, nevertheless, as he'll point out, that essentially it's the same cost for us even if we get other parties maybe cooperating with us and perhaps coming on to our system. So, you will hear certainly a very comprehensive report relative our situation. And at this point, I will call upon the -- the Chief and -- and point out that I hope we can get a go ahead from you with regard to the study. And I do not do it lightly because of our general financial situation, but we do have a serious system situation with our radios. And hopefully, by doing this study, we will be better prepared to move forward. The Chief will point out how we can access something short of \$1 million to move on with a new system. It's very complicated, but I'm sure he can explain it in a very succinct manner. So, with that, I'd call upon the Chief to -- to go into this.

MR. PALOMBO: Thank you, sir.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you, Mr. Wyatt.

MR. WYATT: Yes, sir.

MR. PALOMBO: The information that you received in your agenda packet is by way of some historical data, and that's for you, sir --

MR. SCOTT DAVIS: What --

MR. PALOMBO: -- it's got some additional data --

MR. DAVIS: Oh, I see.

MR. PALOMBO: -- some stuff attached to it that you asked for.

MR. DAVIS: Excellent.

(Distributed information packet to each Alderman.)

MR. PALOMBO: The first thing that I provided you, this -- the packet that you got in your agenda books, was basically by way of some historical data on the radio system to give you an idea of where we started and -- and where we have come to right now. I don't -- I'm not going to go over that, unless you have any questions about it. I'd be happy to answer any questions that you might have about that. But, the packet I just gave you references the rebanding issue. Do you remember we talked about rebanding back a few months ago. Before the election, we talked about it, and then we had another meeting here at City Hall. We talked about it a little bit there. This -- I'm not going to go over this in great detail either. This is by way of information for you, to give you some idea of what the rebanding is, how it -- how we're subjected to it, why we have to do it. It's not a voluntary thing; it's a compulsory thing. And the reason why it's important is because, although it's a problem, it actually causes -- creates a possible opportunity for us. We talked with the Nextel people and the CSC, which is our consultant, and you see there's a contract in here for you. Our consultants, we've talked for them. About three years now, we've been in this process of negotiating determining what has to be done in order to reband, trying to determine the exact cost of doing that, and then trying to get Nextel to agree to those costs, and it's not been an easy process. A lot of work has been done and Nextel bucks at every opportunity to -- to not agree with the amount of money that we're talking about. Motorola's heavily involved in it because they're our primary vendor, and so they're involved in the process of touching every piece of equipment, determining whether the equipment can be reprogrammed or has to be replaced, and all of those engineering issues and -- and all of the things that are involved in doing the rebanding process. All along, I've been asking the question, well, can we apply rebanding money to a new radio system, and the response I've gotten up until recently was, no, you can't do that. But just recently, within the last two months, I was told that there is a possibility that we could do that, and so we're trying to, like trying to herd cats, we're trying to get an idea of what kind of money we're talking about. And ball park, these are not hard, fast facts there, dollars, but ball park, we're talking -- we're somewhere between about \$1 million to \$1.5 million for the amount of money that it would cost Nextel to reband the City of New Bern's radio system, the entire system. What that would do, it -- it would get us to the bottom of our capabilities. Most of our equipment would still remain very antiquated, very difficult to replace parts on, and we'd be at the bottom of the -- the ladder of capabilities. Obviously, we don't want to do that

because then it puts us spending \$1 million-plus and still having to replace a radio system. So we can take that now, I understand -- we can take that money and apply it to a new system. Well, there are some caveats with that as there always is. One of the caveats is that you have to be ready to go within four to six months. We look at the consulting process. The consultants tell us they could have an assessment and an RFP completed within about 90 days. That's from the day that we hire them, (it will) take them about 90 days to get to the point where we have a request of proposal that we can put out on a new system. We figure that in order to do the bid process, it's another 60 days, so we're looking at about five months -- yes?

MR. BETTIS: May I just be excused one second? I have an emergency I was just told about outside, and --

MR. PALOMBO: Yes, sir. Absolutely.

MR. BETTIS: -- I'll be right back. You guys can continue on.

MR. PALOMBO: Okay.

MR. BETTIS: Don't wait for me.

MR. PALOMBO: All right. So, it's about five months on the outside. If we started today, we could have an RFP ready to go out, the bids done, and accepting bids within about five months. Nextel tells us the -- the TA, the transition authority, tells us we have to be done within six months. We have to be in the -- the phase where we're actually designing the system, committed to the financing, doing all those kinds of things. So, we've got a lot of work to do in a very short time frame which means that we have to get the -- it's actually \$52,500 to do just New Bern. Now, we've talked to Havelock and -- and the hospital. They would love to participate. It goes up to \$57,000 if they participate, but that doesn't affect us. We still have to pay the \$52,500. Havelock and the hospital would have to contribute based on their user -- end user equipment some formula that would get them up to that \$5,000 that they would have to contribute. The County thus far has expressed no interest and has told us that they're really not interested in doing anything. If the County got involved, it would take the consulting fees up to about \$67,000, and so the County would have to participate in that portion of the additional fees. So, I'm assuming, for the sake of moving forward, that we're in this alone. And if Havelock and -- and the hospital want to join, that's great; it doesn't really have an effect on us. The fee goes up, but they pay it. So, going this alone, for the sake of discussion and for the sake of moving forward, we're going to need \$52,500 committed to these contractors to -- to Kimball & Associates is who we're -- we've worked through. We -- we did a whole process of evaluating consultants, looking at cities our size with radio systems our size to determine who would be best to represent the City in our efforts to get a quality radio system to move forward with. And Kimball, by far, all of the -- the contacts we did with

their client base and everything, they had excellent references, very responsive, did what they needed to do, did what they said they were going to do, and provided a quality product for the municipalities and -- and their other clients to move forward on. So, the first order of business is, we need to do that. You need to also understand, in the long run, what we're talking about, if the consultants come through and say, if we -- we agree to pay them money and have the consultants, they're going to come up with a product that you are then are going to have to act on. And the position that the City -- that the Police Department, the Fire Department, and, I believe, the Water Department agree to is that we've got to do something with the radio system. We got to provide a -- a new system, a quality system, one that's APCO-25 compliant that's VIPER compliant and that gets us to where we need to be, it's digital based, and does the things that we need it to do. What we're talking about here is no small amount of money. And just to give you some ideas, you know, I asked Motorola for ball parks. Now, these -- these are not quotes. These are ball park figures. I said, "Tell me what it would cost for New Bern to do a new infrastructure with the exact same capabilities that we have now in our radio system now, not increasing the promulgation of the signal or anything like that, keeping one tower, the same kind of end user equipment, just upgrade it to digital with all the -- the computer-based technology that we would need." And they -- they sent back an email, and -- and tongue in cheek, they said, "Listen, this is a top dollar cost here. We have to build in estimates, and risk factors, and all of those things." So, they said, "We could do it for \$4.5 million." They said to

-- and that doesn't include replacing the portables and the mobiles; that's the consoles, the backbone, all of that stuff, but not the end user equipment. To replace that, we're talking at \$1.9 million. Again, he said, "This is the top dollar figure that you could expect to pay; however, you could expect, buying in bulk like this, a much better price and all of that." Now, so I'm giving you top dollars here and they're ball park figures, okay? And then, if we decided we want to increase the promulgation of the signal so that we had capabilities outside of New Bern, mainly for water, sewer, and electric departments, they talk about putting another tower and having a simulcast capability, and they estimate the cost of that would be somewhere in the neighborhood of about \$1.7 million. So, for a radio system, and we're talking this is list price, if you will, the absolute top dollar that they could think about charging, you're talking about \$6 million, \$7 million, \$8.6 million, or about \$9.1 million for a radio system. Now, my guess is that we'd be way under those numbers. I'm talking maybe \$3 million for the backbone infrastructure stuff, maybe \$900,000 for the end user equipment, maybe a little bit more, somewhere around \$750,000 to \$1 million for a radio

tower site, the whole package, and all of this depends on -- is contingent upon what do -- do you need to buy land, do you need to build a tower, can you put the equipment on somebody else's tower, so there's lots of variables that -- that I don't have the answers to right now. Hopefully, we'll have those answers at the end of the consultant's, you know, performance of his job. So, (we're) talking a lot of money here. We're also talking about the -- that \$1 million that

-- that Nextel would provide in the rebanding, that money can apply -- can be applied to whatever the end costs are here either in the direct purchase of equipment or in using it to pay installment purchases for any, you know, funding streams that we have. We've -- we're looking at the possibility of grants, we're looking at the possibility of earmarks, we're looking at any other possibilities that we could have to develop a funding stream that would assist the City in acquiring the radio system. The other part of the radio system --

MR. OUTLAW: Funding streaming again. Go over that funding streaming again.

MR. PALOMBO: Sure. Well, we have -- we may have a pot of money from Nextel.

MR. OUTLAW: Uh-huh.

MR. PALOMBO: And -- and on the -- on the low side of that, somewhere around \$1 million, could be as high as \$1.5 million, and that's money that we could apply to the new system.

MR. BUCHER: Explain to me what that money is.  
Why --

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah.

MR. BUCHER: -- are they --

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah. Well, it -- what it is, is they -- they've given you that -- they're not giving you -- they're paying you that money in lieu of rebanding, in lieu of --

MR. BUCHER: Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: -- charging up and doing the --

MR. BUCHER: Right.

MR. PALOMBO: -- engineering studies, and -- and reprogramming and replacing equipment.

MR. BUCHER: So, if we decided, we said, "We're just going to stick with what they've got," they've got to reband.

MR. PALOMBO: They -- they -- we've got -- we have to reband --

MR. BUCHER: But they --

MR. PALOMBO: -- they have to pay --

MR. BUCHER: They have to pay.

MR. PALOMBO: Right.

MR. BUCHER: Okay. Right.

MR. PALOMBO: So, for them, it's six of one, half dozen of the other except that --

MR. BUCHER: It's an expense for them --

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah.

MR. BUCHER: -- either way.

MR. PALOMBO: Right.

MR. BUCHER: Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: It's an expense. And if -- in that documentation, you'll see how they were required to -- to post a \$2.5 billion bond, you know, put money in escrow --

MR. BUCHER: Yeah.

MR. PALOMBO: -- for this rebanding. It's costing them way more than \$2.5 billion to move everybody off --

MR. BUCHER: Yeah.

MR. PALOMBO: -- all along --

MR. BUCHER: What's the -- what's the date on that?

Is there a date, drop --

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah.

MR. BUCHER: -- date?

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah, we -- we should have been rebanded back in 2008.

MR. BUCHER: Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: So, the process -- you'll see that's why I said don't -- don't hold yourself to the dates in here because the process is taking forever because there's so much negotiation, and so much consternation, and -- and it's not an easy thing to do to get everybody to move, so.

MR. BUCHER: Yeah. Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: We're -- we're in -- we're in Phase 3. They're still rebanding systems in Phase 2, so we're -- we're a long way from needing to. However, they would love to do away with as many systems as they possibly could, and that's why the -- the emphasis is, if you're going to upgrade your system, buy a new system, you have to finish, you know, you have to commit the money and all of that. You have to be done within four to six months showing that you can do it, so. And then the FCC still has to agree with it, so. Okay. So, that's the, kind of, a nutshell version, and -- and I'll answer any questions I can for you, but that's a nutshell version of the radio system. The other part of this is the communication center and the emergency operation center that we talked about before the election and -- and after the election. You could go top of the line, top dollar, everything you could possibly need, probably around \$7 million, or anything below that up to and including hardening the existing facility. And the -- the issue with hardening the existing facility is, you can't harden while you're operational. You also -- it's really difficult to put a second radio system into the same facility that's already too small and -- and try to cram that in there and get it operational and then remove the old stuff, so there's an issue there. Again, we could talk anything from a addition onto the COM Center that would be a hardened facility. You could do 2,000 square feet, you could do 4,000 square feet, you know, whatever is appropriate, and you're going to have to make that decision. We will provide you options and what it will do for you as a city and as a

governing Board. One of the things that I've talked about for years, and -- and I know Chief Aster agrees, is that the -- the emergency operations of the city have been conducted out of this building forever. This is not a hardened facility. It's not in a good place to be if you have a major storm. The building is over 100 years old. It's -- I mean, to harden this facility, I think it's virtually impossible based on the construction of it. But even if you just tried to cover the windows, which would be an improvement, because right now we only cover one window downstairs and maybe we have plywood for the other two. But the issue is, if you get a major storm, not -- not a minor storm, but a major storm, this building will be compromised. When this building is compromised, your emergency operations, that the rest of the city relies on, will be compromised, and there's no place to go from here. Also, the continuation of government is critical, and it's not just cleaning up streets, and -- and, you know, getting wires down and doing all of that stuff, it's policy decisions and things that have to come from you all that, in a major storm -- if you look at, for instance, Hugo, or any of those storms where there was total devastation, it wasn't a two-day operation; it was months and months where you all had to make decisions and you had to be around to do it. And so when -- when I look at an emergency operations facility, part of that is a policy area for the continuation of the government, a place where you would be, where you could sleep, and eat, and perform your functions as a governing Board without worrying about being swamped over and everything, so you could continue the operation of the city. The department heads need a place where they can work and direct the operations of the city based on your policy decisions without worrying about being flooded in and having to be rescued. Part of that is a hardened facility, something that's going to withstand 120 or 130 mile an hour winds that's not in a flood plain, that's not going to lose the roof. The COM Center right now has a tin roof on it, and a tin roof with ceiling tiles; that's what you've got there. You get a major storm, that roof's going, and you have no COM Center left. You have no communications capability, so --

COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Bettis rejoins the meeting.

MR. OUTLAW: And that building's how old?

MR. PALOMBO: That building was built in 2001?

MR. HUGHES: Yeah, around 2000.

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah.

MR. OUTLAW: Well, I mean, weren't -- weren't they talking about hardened buildings and all back then?

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah, they were.

MR. OUTLAW: Well, I mean, what happened?

MR. PALOMBO: It didn't get in the budget.

MR. OUTLAW: Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: Here's -- here's what -- what I see as

the problem here. Here's what I see as a problem, sir. When you build a communications facility or you build a police station, you don't take an architect who builds houses and malls. You take an architect who builds communication centers and police departments, and you use the expertise that they have to design those buildings and to construct them in a way that you don't have to worry about losing a roof or the front door, or it doesn't have a UPS system, you know, those kinds of things. I mean, we had to retrofit the police department to get accredited.

MR. OUTLAW: Uh-huh.

MR. PALOMBO: So, you don't want to do those kinds of things; you want to use people that are experts in that field. Whatever we do, we're -- we're talking to people right now on the COM Center issue that design COM Centers and hardened emergency operation centers so that we're not trying to -- we're not going on the cheap here. You know, I could build a building for a lot less than I could build a hardened communication/EOC, a lot less. You know, what's commercial rates, \$130 a square, \$150, \$180?

MR. OUTLAW: Depends on what you're building.

MR. BETTIS: I got a -- I got a quote today for the Stanley White at \$100 a foot.

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah. Well, for emergency operation center, a hardened facility, you're talking \$260-\$350.

MR. BETTIS: Chief --

MR. KINSEY: Chief --

MR. BETTIS: Chief, we've -- we've -- oh, you first, and then I'll go.

MR. KINSEY: Chief, you mentioned grants earlier.

MR. PALOMBO: Yes?

MR. KINSEY: Where are you now in the process of writing any type of grants? Is -- is that -- have you looked into or found out any information about any grant money yet going towards the system? Have you started any process yet?

MR. PALOMBO: What we're doing right now is we're -- we're looking at what grants are available. You know, it's -- somebody, I think it was you that was saying, federal money is not going to be there forever. Well, to give you an example, Department of Homeland Security money back in 2003, the State got \$40 million-something. Last year -- this year, they got \$14 million for the whole state. Back in -- in 2003, you could write a grant that was basically individual, like an individual city or a county, could write a grant and -- and it would be considered, and might even be approved. Today, we're not even talking about county-wide; we're talking regional grants. When I write a DHS grant right now, I have to have a regional perspective, so.

MR. KINSEY: But why wasn't that looked into, like Mr. Outlaw said back then, even last year, looking at this emergency center trying to find money for that?

MR. BUCHER: No, it doesn't matter.

MR. BETTIS: These are the guys that gave us that bridge.

MR. BUCHER: It doesn't matter.

MR. KINSEY: Okay. All right.

MR. BUCHER: That's true.

MR. KINSEY: That's right. Move on.

MR. BETTIS: But these are the guys that gave us that bridge.

MR. PALOMBO: Well, and -- and, just to put it in perspective, we haven't come forward to the Board with anything 'til now --

MR. BETTIS: Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: -- and -- and so it's been an internal process of discussion amongst department heads, and -- and the city manager, and those kinds of things, and -- and there's always been other things that had priority over these issues. I mean, I -- I have three proposals from -- from -- in three years from three different company -- from different companies --

MR. KINSEY: Uh-huh.

MR. PALOMBO: -- on replacing the radio system, and --- and it was a wonderful exercise, but it never went anywhere, and that's a problem.

MR. BETTIS: My question is, and maybe this was answered while I was outside in the emergency, but do you -- do you guys work together? You were talking -- Mr. Wyatt was talking about the need for possibly a new fire station. Can the new fire station and the COM Center be combined in any way?

MR. PALOMBO: Well, I -- I mean, I don't --

MR. BETTIS: Would that -- would that be a cost --

MR. PALOMBO: -- we -- we haven't talked about it.

MR. BETTIS: -- I mean, is that a cost effective solution or --

MR. BOBBY ASTER: It hasn't really --

MR. BETTIS: -- has it been looked into it?

MR. ASTER: It hasn't been discussed at all. We -- you know.

MR. BETTIS: What kind of -- I mean, I don't know.

MR. PALOMBO: The only issue we have relative to the COM Center is site location. We -- we already have the site where the tower is, and that's very important to maintain your communication to not use telephone lines and -- and all of that, so we -- we would build -- our recommendation is to either add on to or -- or build a new facility at the current location of the communication center, which is out at -- at Wind Hill Court.

MR. BETTIS: And we don't need a fire station there?

MR. BUCHER: No.

MS. BENGEL: No.

CLERK: Uh-uh.

MR. OUTLAW: Chief, let me ask you --

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: I had to ask.

MR. OUTLAW: -- a question. One thing was interesting about our -- our interim manager over there is that he came from Wilson, and you guys had a \$21 million broadband system. Does -- didn't Wilson do that?

MR. WYATT: The -- yeah -- actually, they financed \$28 million I read in the paper.

MR. OUTLAW: I was just curious if -- if you'd ever -- I mean, when you're talking about spending all that kind of money, you really need to look long term at -- at the best bang for the money, and is it -- if it -- have you and the manager ever discussed, if you're going to spend that kind of money, the City just broadbanding it? Have you --

MR. WYATT: Well, I've not had that discussion --

MR. BETTIS: Well, what -- what is broadbanding?

MR. WYATT: Well, it allows you to go into cable TV, and telephone, and computers, and so forth. I ought to address that because Jon and --

MR. OUTLAW: Oh, okay, thank you.

MR. WYATT: -- I had this discussion the other day. Jon brought it up in context with his association with Wilson probably, with the power agencies. Wilson's had the courage to -- to start this system such as only a few cities like Bristol, Tennessee and Danville in the -- in -- around, so to speak. It -- they were able to borrow, I think it's remarkable given some debt they had, \$28 million on a new type of municipal enterprise. And -- and Wilson, because of what they did, Time Warner tried to exclude municipalities from being in the broadband business, and the municipalities, and it wasn't just Wilson, helped them hold that off, but it's not a -- not a dead issue. Jon just conceptually brought it to my attention the other day, and my concern initially is we have so many basic things, basic government things, on our plate, and also we are very much in the dog house with the Local Government Commission, I -- I don't think we could seriously embark upon it. I only get this secondhand, but I think Wilson is working on a real aggressive marketing thing to -- to put themselves in a good financial position. I don't know -- I don't know the particulars other than they have a very aggressive marketing. The one thing it has done, and I think is tremendous, and I don't know how it is in this -- this community, is Time Warner had one increase after another after each other. And basically, there was no control over them with the exception of base rate, and they are the rates that probably persons with modest means can only afford, and there is a very cumbersome procedure that you go through, which I was a part of a number years ago, but what it has brought is it brought competition, and Time Warner is -- is, frankly, a very smug company, but I think they know -- they've got their hands full as far as competition is concerned, but that -- that would -- getting involved in that would require a tremendous amount of energy and

resources, and --

MR. OUTLAW: The only reason I bring it up is if you were to go with this type system and then four or five years later find out that you want to do broadband, you might have so much money invested in this that you, as a city, I think Laurinburg and some other cities are doing that, you -- you would be kind of too deep into this to -- to get out of it. And that's -- I mean, I would seriously make all consideration of -- of what had -- you know, I don't know that Wilson is a success story, but --

MR. WYATT: I hope it is.

MR. OUTLAW: Beg your pardon?

MR. WYATT: I hope it will be. The study started with me.

MR. OUTLAW: But --

MR. BUCHER: How -- how long ago was that done?

MR. WYATT: They -- they've been implementing it over the last three to four years.

MR. BUCHER: Okay.

MR. WYATT: It started with a very --

MR. BETTIS: Explain that.

MR. WYATT: -- studying group more than a few years ago.

MR. OUTLAW: It just basically -- and, again, I --

MR. BETTIS: Explain -- if you'll explain how a radio -- explain how a radio --

MR. OUTLAW: Well, you're probably more familiar with it --

MR. BETTIS: -- cable has to do with broadband.

MR. OUTLAW: -- than I would be. Then the city is the -- the broadband is in general, you are a --

MR. BETTIS: It's a cable though, right?

MR. PALOMBO: No. Well, it's internet, everything.

CLERK: It's all those.

MR. PALOMBO: Right now --

MR. OUTLAW: But it's very general --

MR. PALOMBO: -- to get -- to give you an example of -- of the broad base issue, all our police issues have computers in the cars. We use air cards, Verizon air cards, to communicate with our system, and that's -- so that's our -- and that's our connection via broadband to all of our computer systems. I'm not sure what the, and I don't know this, I don't know what the application would be in a two-way communication system, so I'm not sure how we could, you know, utilize a broadband. I know you -- not you, Jordan, could for your planimetry issues and everything on the water lift stations and all of those things.

MR. WYATT: But I think the Councilman has raised a very interesting question, and -- and Jon's will bear out a couple of weeks ago when he was talking about whether it might be merit to -- to think about going into this. Laurinburg has some form of that that serves public facilities, libraries, schools, and so forth, and there may be one or two other communities that do that to help public

institutions. If it has some correlation, it's certainly worth looking into.

MR. PALOMBO: And just to wrap this up a little bit, what I gave you was the worst case scenario relative to cost. What we hope to have happen by utilizing the consultants is for them to give us a best case scenario. We -- we -- we may not necessarily need to have an expanded radio capability in order to service the needs of the electric department and the water department. We may be able to -- to have some kind of a hybrid system where we use certain technologies for outlying areas and other technologies for in close, so, you know, there -- there could be a combination of things that we can do that will impact the cost of replacing the radio system. You know, I'm -- I don't necessarily want to have -- spend \$9 million on a radio system. I want to have the best -- at the end of the day, I'd like to have the best plan in place and the best system that serves the needs of the City at the best possible cost, so that's why the consultant is so very important to what we're doing. It's -- it's not a matter of a couple -- of a fire chief and a police chief trying to figure out what we need and -- and getting -- we could do that, get the prices and everything, but I am not up on all the technology and all the capabilities that are out there, and these guys are. So, we're going to talk to them about the variety of ways that we can satisfy the needs of the different departments. Maybe not everybody in the city needs a \$3,000 portable radio. You know, maybe there are other ways to communicate even with the system. So, you know, you're talking about \$1.9 million for radios and portables, mobiles and portables, maybe we don't need to have 830 end user equipment out there to cost the minimum of \$3,000, so that's part of a consultant's responsibility, and that's one of the things we're looking to get off the ground right away. Also, the -- the whole idea about the facility, we're talking, worst case scenario with this, you know, \$5 million or \$6 million facility, but we can work in to where we can accomplish what we need to accomplish right now at a reasonable cost adding -- making sure that what we build can be added onto. You know, not building something that you're going to need to grow into five years from now and wind up five years from now, you can't use what you got; you got to rebuild it. It -- we -- we want to make sure we don't do that. So, I don't know what the end dollar is going to be like, but I know it's not going to be cheap, but we want to try to get the best we can. One other thing is the issue of the debt service. I know Mary and I have talked with -- Mary and I talked a little bit about the debt service that's going to be retiring on the Police Department, and on the Fire Department, and on the COM Center, and other things that the City will be getting out of their debt service on, and it would be nice to be able to put that money away. Unfortunately, you know, we have a lot of needs. And so, in

looking at the debt service on the Police Department and the Fire Department, the Headquarters Building, we're looking at about, in 2010, August of 2012, we'd retire those debts, and so we -- and also on the New World Systems, computer system, that the departments have. So, we're looking at roughly around \$500,000 that we won't be putting out in 2012. And so I know that Mary said we've already spoken for about \$90,000 of that on the Stanley White Rec Center project, but, still, that leaves roughly \$400,000 to apply to the debt service that we would incur if we move forward. So, it's those kinds of things, if we can combine pools of money here, and here, and here that we might be able to get to the point where we could do this.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you, Chief.

MS. BENGEL: I have a question.

MR. PALOMBO: Yes, ma'am?

MS. BENGEL: I want you to go back to the \$57,000 you need for the --

MR. PALOMBO: \$52,500.

MS. BENGEL: -- \$52,500. Mr. Wyatt said it was going to come from three different pools of money. Can you explain that to me again? I didn't hear --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MS. BENGEL: -- I don't know that I understood the -

-

MR. WYATT: Well --

MS. BENGEL: -- different pools of money --

MR. WYATT: And I -- I'm --

MS. BENGEL: -- and where we're getting this --

MR. WYATT: Well --

MS. BENGEL: -- from.

MR. WYATT: -- the owner assigns, I'm sending you with our budget, and I would digress just a moment from what the Chief said. Money that is presently being used that will be freed up from capital improvements, unless things markedly improve, maybe -- may -- may have to -- to go into day to day operating costs just to have a balanced budget and keep our personnel in place assuming they're needed and so forth and so on; that is -- that's an -- that's an interesting concept. What I reeled off was that the -- the study, which I think we certainly need to have, to take advantage of what kind of unforeseen opportunities we see now, and what we are recommending, and, Mary, correct me if I'm wrong --

MS. MARY MURAGLIA: It was 17 --

MR. WYATT: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. MURAGLIA: -- I think \$17.5 million.

MR. WYATT: Yeah. Don't worry about the details, but my point I want to be sure that I'm not misspeaking is there's -- there's professional services, basically, engineering services in the water fund, the electric fund, and then there's community development funds that were used, among other things, for lobbying efforts that no longer exist, so we can draw from those three pots and make --

MS. BENGEL: Community development? So, we had a line item in our budget --

MR. WYATT: Well --

MS. BENGEL: -- for community --

MR. WYATT: She can elaborate on it. It's a -- it's --

MS. BENGEL: -- development; is that correct?

MR. WYATT: -- it's a revelation to this person; I'm new.

MS. MURAGLIA: Separate -- it's special appropriations.

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MS. MURAGLIA: There's a line item --

MR. BUCHER: Special appropriations.

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MS. MURAGLIA: -- called community development --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MS. MURAGLIA: -- and it's kind --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MS. MURAGLIA: -- of a catch all.

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MS. BENGEL: Okay.

MR. WYATT: And I hate to, frankly, draw from anything in the general fund right now because of the general --

MS. BENGEL: Okay.

MR. WYATT: -- circumstance, but I do think it's -- it's useful to have this study, and at -- at some point in time, hopefully, there will be some light that we can take advantage of, but we'd be remiss not to go forward with the study. And believe you me, I'm very sensitive about recommending anything that will represent spending a considerable amount of money, but I think we do need this as a start for this great need we have organizationally.

MR. BETTIS: Yes, sir. Mr. Bucher?

MS. BENGEL: I got one --

MR. BETTIS: Oh.

MS. BENGEL: -- more. My other -- my other question was when you're talking about radios, you -- you mentioned just the electric department, fire, and engineering. Does Planning and Inspection --

MR. DAVIS: Everybody.

MS. BENGEL: -- don't they use radios? So --

MR. PALOMBO: Yes, ma'am.

MS. BENGEL: -- everybody. So, we're talking across the board --

MR. PALOMBO: We're talking the --

MS. BENGEL: -- that it's going --

MR. PALOMBO: - entire city's --

MS. BENGEL: -- to be for all the departments.

MR. PALOMBO: -- communication.

MS. BENGEL: Okay. I just want to make sure of that.

MR. PALOMBO: And I have to emphasize this. We are

working on a wing and a prayer. I can't tell you that the next time the system falls in -- goes into failsoft that we're going to be able to get it back out.

MS. BENDEL: Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: We don't have -- we -- we -- there's no market for parts, there's -- you know, it's -- we're on a wing and a prayer here, and a lot rides on our ability to communicate with each other, a lot rides on it. It's not just a, Boy, it'd be nice to have a new -- yeah. The fire chief wants me to point out that we buy a lot of our stuff on eBay 'cause that's the only place we can find stuff this old, but --

MR. ASTER: That's the truth.

MR. PALOMBO: -- but -- yeah. It's -- it's good if you like to auction stuff.

MR. BUCHER: Thank goodness for eBay.

MR. PALOMBO: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. So --

MR. WYATT: It's an optimistic point.

MR. PALOMBO: -- I -- I think most of you know me well enough that I'm not a -- an alarmist and -- and I don't run around talking about the sky falling, but you need to understand the significance of the condition that this system's in and what would happen if it went down and we couldn't bring it back up. We would have zero communication with policemen, firemen, EMS people, you know, public works, electric department, the people that are out there doing their job every day. And when somebody called 911, we could answer it, but we'd have to use smoke signals to get, or cell phones or something, to get officers to the calls for service, so.

MR. BETTIS: In a -- in a major storm, even eBay might be down.

MR. PALOMBO: Well, yeah, that's the truth, too. And certainly postal service won't be delivering, so.

MS. BENDEL: And I have one other dreaded question.

MR. PALOMBO: Yes, ma'am.

MS. BENDEL: This is the dreaded question, okay. How come -- does the County have a -- a hardened 911 system, or, I mean, the communication, the hardened communication center, they don't have one either?

MR. PALOMBO: No, ma'am. The County's communication center is in the Courthouse, the old Sheriff's Department, across --

MS. BENDEL: Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: -- you know, across Broad Street.

MS. BENDEL: All right. So that's --

MR. PALOMBO: That's --

MS. BENDEL: -- where --

MR. PALOMBO: -- that's where --

MS. BENDEL: -- their 911 center is or?

MR. BUCHER: No.

MR. PALOMBO: That's where their 911 center is.

MR. BUCHER: No, they have their own 911 center.

MR. PALOMBO: They have their own function, right.

MS. BENGEL: Okay. So, they don't have a hardened one that there would be the possibility we could join forces or something?

MR. PALOMBO: No, ma'am.

MS. BENGEL: Okay. All right.

MR. PALOMBO: And -- right.

MS. BENGEL: I said it was the dreaded question, but I wanted to ask it anyway.

MR. WYATT: It's a good question.

MS. BENGEL: Thank you.

MR. BETTIS: All right. And I guess the follow up to that --

MR. WYATT: If we could consolidate.

MS. BENGEL: Right. It could consolidate the efforts, yes, would be nice.

MR. BETTIS: Unless --

MR. BUCHER: I met with one of the commissioners today. This is aside, but they're anxious and willing and eager to meet with us --

MR. WYATT: I called the --

MR. OUTLAW: Really?

MR. WYATT: -- County Manager today.

MR. BUCHER: -- and --

MR. BETTIS: Good job.

MR. BUCHER: -- and their perception is that there hasn't been much communication, not about this issue, but in general, between these two agencies and/or these two government agencies, and they're anxious just to change that. I just -- that's just an aside.

MR. BETTIS: Good.

MR. WYATT: Good point; very good.

MR. BUCHER: Forgive me, but my experience with consultants is, they borrow your watch to tell you what time it is, and it -- you -- we can't do this -- I was -- my question is, is there anyone else in our area here who has done this that we can draw from in addition to consultants?

MR. PALOMBO: Well --

MR. BUCHER: Sometimes consultants have agendas --

MR. PALOMBO: -- and -- and I appreciate that.

MR. BUCHER: -- and that concerns me.

MR. PALOMBO: And -- and one of the -- one of the criteria that we used to select a consultant was that they were not vendor specific.

MR. BUCHER: Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: So, we didn't go for a Motorola consultant. We went for a consultant that knows what they're doing and has handled these kinds of problems in the past. I have some experience here from my former life down in Florida. We tried to build stuff our -- on our own, and it cost tons of money, and we wound up having to re-do things --

MR. BUCHER: Yeah.

MR. PALOMBO: -- because none of us have the expertise --

MR. BUCHER: Understand.

MR. PALOMBO: -- to -- to do this the right way and to make it work to the benefit of the City, so.

MR. BUCHER: Okay. The -- the first question. Second question, is there someone around here that's done this that we could learn from? Is there another city that's -- that has done what we're talking about doing that we can learn from that --

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah.

MR. BUCHER: -- that wouldn't have any bias whatsoever other than to say, Hey, here's what we did, here's what we should have done, we wish we would have done this, we wish we had done that? Is --

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah.

MR. BUCHER: -- have we done that or is that --

MR. PALOMBO: Sure, we have. Yeah, we -- we've -- I hope you don't mind.

MR. WYATT: No.

MR. PALOMBO: Okay. We -- when we talked about this many years ago, Wilson was just going to -- they were changing from their old VHS radios -- VHS radio system, VHF radio system, and they were doing something out of the, you know, kind of out of the box. They were going to go to a push to talk cell phone system. And the problem that they had is that in order to be qualified as a -- a public safety system, there has to be a lot of redundancy built in, and generators, and all of that, and the -- the company that they used spent a lot of money to make that happen. And we went up there after they had -- I think they were operational for about six or eight months, and we went up there, brought some staff people up there, and we went, talked to -- they had a little panel of people who were involved in the process; we talked to them. And the guy who spearheaded it, the project manager, best thing that he'd ever seen, it's working great, everybody loves it, and everything, and then we went out into the field and started talking to people in the COM Center, and the cops on the street, and stuff like that, and they hated it. And since then, they've moved away from it and gone to a -- I think they're going to a trunk system or they went to a trunk system. So, that was a huge project that they had that, when you went and talked to the folks that did it, you know, the project manager's not going to tell you he made a huge mistake --

MR. ASTER: Uh-uh.

MR. BUCHER: Well, I guess my point is --

MR. PALOMBO: -- so.

MR. BUCHER: -- there should be somebody that's done this recently, maybe similar to what we're looking at, that if -- we might be able to draw from; that's my point and --

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah, and -- and we are --

MR. BUCHER: -- I don't know who that would be, but.

MR. PALOMBO: We went to Kimball's clients. We went to -- we had actually three different consultants that we

looked into and went and did backgrounds on them and all of that, and we went to their clients and got information about what they did and how they did it --

MR. BUCHER: Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: -- and so we're -- we're certainly not adverse to listening to other people's ideas.

MR. BUCHER: Last question, and this is probably peanuts, but is the old -- the old equipment, even though we're going to get rid of it, is there a -- is there a market for it?

MR. BETTIS: The Smithsonian.

MR. PALOMBO: I think the Smithsonian is interested.

MR. HUGHES: Probably eBay, yeah.

MR. BUCHER: Well, and --

CLERK: eBay.

MR. BUCHER: -- I'm -- I'm talking about --

MR. BETTIS: Not even eBay, Craig's List.

MR. BUCHER: -- maybe in another country or, you know.

MR. PALOMBO: Well, what we tried to do, and this is -- this is going to be way down the road, but what we tried to do is -- is the vendor that we choose to actually do the new radio system, hopefully there's a trade in --

MR. BUCHER: Trade in? Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: -- issue, you know, on portables, mobiles. It won't be a lot of money.

MR. BETTIS: We're talking about 1984 era equipment that's --

MR. PALOMBO: And -- and some of it's as young as -- as --

MR. BUCHER: Some of it's --

MR. PALOMBO: -- 2000, you know, but --

MR. BUCHER: Not all of it is that old.

MR. PALOMBO: -- there's not going to be a huge trade in because it's Type 1 old --

MR. WHITE: Uh-huh.

MR. PALOMBO: -- technology, radio stuff --

MR. BUCHER: Yeah. I don't see it going to some municipality, but there could be some other non-government type use --

MR. PALOMBO: Sure.

MR. BUCHER: -- no?

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah. Anything's possible.

MR. BUCHER: Just -- just a question.

MR. PALOMBO: Best thing is we're probably going to get a trade in offer --

MR. BUCHER: Okay.

MR. PALOMBO: -- from the vendors.

MR. BUCHER: That's it.

MR. BETTIS: Mr. White?

MR. WHITE: Yeah. Chief, I'd like to ask a question. The question is how quick could you start on your studies?

MR. PALOMBO: The -- we -- the consultants are ready

to come on board now. As soon as we can say here's a check, we've got the agreements done -- ready to go and everything, and so they could start work, you know, I'm guessing within a week or two.

MR. WHITE: I think the sooner you start on your studies, the better. It's been put off long enough. You talked to us several months ago about it. And -- and if it goes down, then we're all in a hurt especially if it goes down during a crisis.

MR. BETTIS: All right. Any further discussion?  
(No response.)

MR. BETTIS: Mister -- before we get to Mr. Wyatt, can I just say one thing? Chief, thank you for everything. Thank you for everything over the weekend with the snow. You did -- you did a great job. I know that -- I know that Jon, Mr. Hughes, Jordan, the Chief, and a lot of the other department heads --

MS. BENGEL: Chief Aster --

MR. BETTIS: -- doing --

MS. BENGEL: -- too. He was up all night long.

MR. BETTIS: No, Chief's the one who -- that's who -

-

MS. BENGEL: Oh.

MR. BETTIS: -- talking about.

MS. BENGEL: Okay.

MR. BETTIS: I was talking about Chief. He's --

MS. BENGEL: I thought you were talking about Chief Palombo.

MR. OUTLAW: Uh-huh.

MR. BETTIS: I know he was up all night long, 'cause he woke me up at 5:00 in the morning to get me up so I could --

MS. BENGEL: He called me at 6:00.

MR. BETTIS: -- so I could drive --

MR. ASTER: That -- that was at -- that was at the Manager's request.

MR. BETTIS: I drove -- at 5:00 in the morning, I drove to the airport in the snow to make sure it was safe for all of us, so thank you for that.

MR. ASTER: You're welcome.

MR. BETTIS: Guinea pig. But I just wanted to say thank you to all the department heads who have been pulling double and triple duty in -- in a lot of -- in a lot of instances. It means the world. Don't burn yourselves out. Mr. Wyatt, quit working them so hard. Give them a day off if they need it.

MR. WYATT: He needs to work harder.

MR. BETTIS: But, just thank you. I just want you to know how much the Board appreciates it. And that last storm did a -- or I appreciate it. The last storm, the last two storms, went off without a hitch. People saw -- I got compliments on your guys being out there just --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: -- Johnnie-on-the-spot and got

compliments on everybody, so thank you. Now, Mr. Wyatt, what are we going to do about this and what needs to be done --

MR. WYATT: I --

MR. BETTIS: -- at this point?

MR. WYATT: If -- if you all are in accord, we can handle it in the manner I described.

MR. BETTIS: Am I allowed to sign this or should I --

-

MR. WYATT: No, I think it's fine.

MR. BETTIS: -- is this -- is that the --

MR. WYATT: I think it's fine, not -- unless Mary tells me otherwise, I think it can be signed in terms of the way -- the payments.

MR. PALOMBO: That's --

MR. BETTIS: Is that the --

MR. PALOMBO: -- that's a different -- that's for your information purposes. We don't have a contract with the consultants.

MR. BETTIS: Oh, all right. This isn't a contract?

MR. PALOMBO: That's a rebanding issue. That's been executed already.

MR. BETTIS: All right. Where's the -- what am I --

MR. PALOMBO: We'll get that -- we'll get that for you.

MR. BETTIS: Well, I was going to say, that's a good contract, too.

MR. PALOMBO: Yeah, it's not bad.

MR. BETTIS: It's got details in it, which I like. All right. So, you get that to me. And if that's the pleasure of the Board, do we take a vote on it or no?

MR. WYATT: I think as -- as long as you feel comfortable in what we're doing, we've got study money in here.

MS. BENGEL: Well, do we need -- need a budget amendment or --

MS. MURAGLIA: Budget.

MS. BENGEL: -- money, or line item?

MR. WYATT: The money can be spent out of the particular funds because, as I told you, it was one-third out of each one.

MR. BETTIS: Mr. Davis? What -- what needs to be done?

MR. DAVIS: Mr. Wyatt can -- I think what he's saying is he can sign this contract if -- if he has the green light --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. DAVIS: -- from -- from the Board.

MR. WYATT: I feel very --

MR. BETTIS: So what --

MR. OUTLAW: What would be the turnaround time -- in other words, how -- how long is a study like this good for? I know this equipment is obsolete like real soon, so, I

mean, what would you -- if we did the study, how long is it good for?

MR. PALOMBO: Well, I mean, good is a relative term. The -- the amount of time that you have to probably take advantage of Nextel's money is four to six months, so. And in order to take their -- Nextel's money, you have to have agreed as a Board to finance whatever is left -- to finance of whatever you decide to buy, and -- and you can do leases through -- through some of these companies. Motorola leases equipment, and -- and it's a easier way to do that. There's less maintenance issues and stuff. You know, but it all depends on where you're going with this, but the time frame on that money from Nextel is four to six months.

MR. KINSEY: So, what term of lease are we looking at?

MR. PALOMBO: Oh, I don't know. That's -- that would be part of the discussion process. You'd have to -- you'd have to have your consultant work done, the RFP written, and then the RFP put out to, you know, on the -- on the street, and then vendors respond back to the request for proposal, and then you decide, you know, whether it -- 'cause they provide a lease option or a purchase option, and you could look at those and make a decision --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. PALOMBO: -- which direction you wanted to take, you know, from a -- from a --

MR. WYATT: My --

MR. PALOMBO: -- financial perspective.

MR. WYATT: -- my point, in summary, is we need to do the study. Whether we can avail ourselves of what he's just outlined remains to be seen.

MR. BETTIS: Yes, sir. And -- and I think we're hearing --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: -- go for it.

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: All right. Next issue, I think you're going to lead us through the --

MR. TAYLOR: I --

MR. BETTIS: You got to go home and go to --

MR. TAYLOR: Mayor Bettis, I got a question real quick. So, what you're saying, once the study is done, you come back to us? That's all.

MR. BETTIS: Yeah.

MR. PALOMBO: Sure.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you.

MR. BETTIS: Once the study's come -- done, it comes back to us, and that's --

MR. WYATT: Absolutely.

MR. PALOMBO: -- and that's -- and then we decide if we have the big bucks to go forward --

MR. WYATT: And these needs --

MR. BETTIS: -- or what --

MR. WYATT: -- these needs will be reflected in the

capital improvements plan I hope we can put together.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you. All right. You guys, great job. Thank you very much, Chief Aster.

MR. ASTER: Yes, sir.

MR. WYATT: Thank you, Chief.

(Mr. Hughes, Mr. Aster, Mr. Palombo leave the work session.)

MR. BETTIS: You're going to lead us through the Electric --

MR. WYATT: Yes.

MR. BETTIS: -- discussion?

MR. WYATT: Just to make opening comments, if you --

MR. BETTIS: Yes, sir.

MR. WYATT: -- don't mind? I would like to say, as you all are well aware, virtually all our senior staff has taken on added responsibilities with the vacancies we have, and Bobby's, particularly, been very helpful, but I think I told you the other day, but it's worth repeating again, one person came to me that I hadn't given some selected assignments to that were foreign to what he normally would do, and he was asking for the opportunity to -- to contribute, so that speaks very well of our senior staff. I'd like to -- like to -- I'm going to be very brief on this because this is a -- just sets the stage for discussion, but I'm going to deal with two issues. I'm going to deal with the Services Board and also, and hopefully you won't be upset with me on it, but the -- the public -- the power agencies, Eastern North Carolina Municipal Power Agency, everybody's got a acronym these days, and that's called NCMPEA. But anyway, I'm going to ask that the ordinance pertaining to the Service Board be passed out as you've probably have already have had. And, I do want to acknowledge, and I started, because this was the point of the discussion we had the other night, and on page 2 it says, "The Board may have written suggestions with the structure of rates to advise the Board of Aldermen regarding the impact on consumers and how to spread that impact among the various classes of customers." What I want to say from an overall generic standpoint that it goes without saying that the -- the City is very dependent upon the electric system for its financial strength. First, with fund transfers, which are comparatively small because you can only appropriate 3 percent of your gross assets in terms of fund transfer. On that particular note, I'm intimately acquainted how we wound up with that four years ago. Second --

MR. OUTLAW: Mr. Wyatt, say that again. I'm sorry.

MR. WYATT: What I'm saying is that earnings -- earnings for electricity have always been criticized, especially during the last 15 years with this enormous debt we have to pay for taking profits, so to speak. And the formula that the Local Government Commission promulgated was 3 percent of gross assets, and I'm sure we take full advantage of that. Now, that really is a comparatively

small amount, and that's all we can take in terms of so-called profits. So, if your system's worth \$50 billion -- million dollars, 3 percent of that would be \$1.5 million. Now, also, they allow you to take, and I'm not sure whether we do, take an amount for in lieu of taxes. The point that I think brings out more concern is where the electric fund, as well as the water and sewer fund, help the general city fund, which is tax driven, are transferring dollars for services provided from electric, particular, water and sewer into the general fund. And if you look at the general fund, there's been a large amount of money that helps underwrite overall administrative work that is -- that is charged out in the -- in -- in the general fund. For example, the human resources, or personnel, a part of that cost is paid for by the utilities, and that -- and paying for that is transferred in as a revenue to the general fund. For example, let's simplify it, and this is not exactly the way it is, but let's say we have four of these funds, general fund, water, sewer, and electric, and 25 percent is pay -- 25 percent of the dollars -- 25 percent of the cost of personnel is transferred of -- if the cost, let me -- let me try to say it (again). If the cost for personnel, say, is \$200,000, it -- at 25

percent for each one of the funds, as I've just mentioned, would be \$50,000. So, to help pay for the personnel budget which serves all the city's operation, \$150,000, being \$50,000 from each one of the enterprise funds, water, sewer, and electric, are transferred to the -- to the general fund. And I'm going to ask Mary to come up.

MS. BENGEL: She just --

MR. WYATT: She's trying to duck me. And -- and that goes towards helping run the personnel department. Now, my intuition tells me, and I've already said this, I think, in the first couple of weeks, that probably we may be contributing too much from the enterprise funds to the general fund to deal with overlay of the expenses, whether the garage, or warehouse, insurance, telephone, and so forth. And as I promised, we're looking at what we have now. As a matter of fact, if I went back to where I used to work to -- to try to recall what we distributed, but I'll tell you that probably, more than likely, my review would indicate that we probably are giving the benefit of the doubt or charging more out of the enterprise fund, not only the electric, but water and sewer to the general fund, very simply, because -- to keep taxes down. Now, let us say that we felt like that \$75,000 would be more appropriate to transfer, \$25,000 from each, water, sewer, and electric, rather than \$150,000, so you'll only transfer \$75,000 to the general fund. And so from a simplification -- and so, the general fund's going to be short of \$75,000. Now, what I've tried to do very openly is to say at least we're going to take a look at the -- and look it and see whether maybe too much money is being, perhaps, and this is in the eyes of the beholder, and the -- the accountants do not have a problem

with this, but the assignment of -- of those kind of dollars may be -- may be, in -- in some judgement, some person's judgement, too much. Let's say -- and let's say we took a look comprehensively of all the monies transferred. I'm not going to give you the figures; she can give you the figures. But suppose we say we're going to not assign about \$500,000 we've been assigning to give to the general fund to operate, these overlay expenses, personnel, finance, et cetera, et cetera. And -- and then -- then what happens is, you've had, for years, more than likely, that money that's helped artificially keep the general fund revenues up, and it certainly, to some extent, has kept the taxes down.

MR. BETTIS: That was a huge campaign issue --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: -- for all of us --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: -- by the way --

MR. WYATT: And -- and I --

MR. BETTIS: -- so.

MR. WYATT: -- and I -- I hope I'm not insulting anybody about using these simple examples, but that's -- but that's the problem and maybe you are aware of it more so than I. And I think we have a responsibility, as I acknowledge without any really direct prompting from you all, to take a look at it. But what I want to emphasize to you is the consequence. If you make a major reduction in these transfers to the general fund, you either do one of two things or a combination of both. You increase taxes and the only one that's probably much -- can be increased is the property tax, heaven forbid, or you reduce services. I really haven't heard any outcry since I've been here of anybody wanting to reduce services. Yes, they'd like to reduce taxes, but they still want the same services. And so, I think we are certainly going to -- going to work through that and we may very honestly not be able to (make a) recommendation to reduce it any, but at least we'll look at it and you all may decide that's what you want to do, and it remains to be seen. She's called, or tried to call, several communities.

MS. MURAGLIA: Uh-huh.

MR. WYATT: I've gone back and talked with folks that I've -- I've -- I've worked with, and it's a matter of where you assign -- it's a cost accounting exercise. Now, relative to rates, and I -- I know there's indignation about rates, but I want to point out, and Jon can put a year around it that with two times in the last few years, much to my absolute surprise, that we got increases, one of which I think was very substantial, from the power agency and there was no adjustment in the retail rates. Now, since then, there has been some adjustments, and I -- Jon, we can answer the particulars in a minute.

MR. JON RYNNE: (Indicates affirmative.)

MR. WYATT: I did -- did go back and look at the ordinance on the Services Board, and -- and certainly, they

have a right to, under this point indeed to make recommendations they make relative to rates. What I say to you though is you all have got the responsibility for the overall picture of running the city government, and you've got to come up with a resource to -- to operate, and the same applies to the city manager because he would be negligent in his job, he or she, in recommending a budget that didn't balance. And -- and it may be painful sometime how we come up with a recommendation to balance, but -- but come June 30, you've got to have a balanced budget. And -- and what I am trying to -- to emphasize, again, and, please, I apologize for mentioning it time and time again, if you make any significant reduction in these transfers, not -- not profits, and you may choose to reduce that if you want to, is that it would have a -- could well have a profound effect on the resources of the general fund. Now, I want Mary to correct me if I've stated anything incorrect because it's very important to be very straight forward and honest on this, or Jon, in anything I've said. Mary, do you -- would you like to elaborate?

MS. MURAGLIA: No, I think you've explained it well.

MS. BENGEL: I know you're talking just about the electricity, but the question I've had for a long time and I can't seem to get answered, Jordan, this would be probably for you, is that 3,000 minimum gallon, you know, that I -- I want to be able to do something about because so many people -- I've had more phone calls in the last month from people who are conserving and not using water and, you know, not -- having to pay 3,000 minimum gallon. Will that impact this what we're talking about here if we can find a way to conserve, you know, people -- to reward people who conserve or? I was told by Mr. Hartman that that was an arbitrary number that it's always been the number so they kept the number that way and there was no rhyme or reason?

MR. BETTIS: Mister -- look, I think that's an interesting question. We're here to, according to the agenda, this --

MS. BENGEL: Well --

MR. BETTIS: -- Electric Services Board.

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: Can we finish one thing --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: -- before we start --

MR. WYATT: Right.

MR. BETTIS: -- another, please?

MS. BENGEL: I just wanted to know as far as --

MR. WYATT: Okay.

MS. BENGEL: -- the rate.

MR. BETTIS: And that's -- that's something that we can do at another meeting --

MR. WYATT: Okay.

MR. BETTIS: -- but right now we're here --

MR. WYATT: Now --

MR. BETTIS: -- for one particular issue.

MR. WYATT: -- I -- I also want to interject --

MR. BETTIS: Thank you, Jordan.

MR. WYATT: -- and I don't think out of place, is relative to the power agency. And, I pled with you the other night to please, of your numbers, select two people to be a commissioner and an alternate commissioner to the power agency. The power agency -- it used to be, as I was saying, used to meet on a quarterly, almost inform -- fairly casual basis years ago, and now they meet every month, and I know it's difficult for people that are working to -- to go to these meetings. A good number of the people on this Board are employees, but I think it would be desirable for you all to have representation, and let Jon carry you there, and -- and see and -- and learn what all of these rate situations are about in terms of their wholesale rate to us as a member of -- of the power agency. And -- and I would admit to you that so many things are so set because so --

MR. BETTIS: Mr. Wyatt, can we just practically -- I know a lot of us work and we know your opinion on this. Is it possible to --

MR. WYATT: Thank you.

MR. BETTIS: -- is it possible to share the responsibility and to -- and to --

MR. WYATT: Yes.

MR. BETTIS: -- and to do, you know --

MR. RYNNE: Sure.

MR. WYATT: Yes.

MR. BETTIS: -- so that no one person is burdened with it?

MR. WYATT: Well, I would suggest it be done this way. Have one member, at least from here, to go every time, one member -- one elected official each time. You can add two more people as members, but make one of the elected officials the commissioner and the other two, Jon and someone else, as the alternate.

MR. BETTIS: And I think that was the --

MR. BUCHER: So, you can have a total of three?

MR. WYATT: Three, yes.

MR. BETTIS: And I think that was -- I think that's a good idea 'cause I know that, you know, those of us who work in small businesses and those of -- those of us who, you know, small business, small business, small business, small business, small business, it would be, you know, we're going to do the best we can, and I --

MS. BENGEL: Big business (indicating Mr. Taylor).

MR. BETTIS: -- want to go -- big, oh.

MR. BENGEL: Big business.

MR. BETTIS: Big business, big business. But, you know, the small business guys, it's, I don't work, I don't get paid, so, and the same goes with a lot of us, so that's a good idea that we can -- that we can rotate?

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. BUCHER: He's saying one person would be as officially the member --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.  
CLERK: One person -- he said one person.  
MR. BUCHER: -- but then an alternate could --  
MR. WYATT: Just give me two of you all.  
MR. BUCHER: -- go if they can't go. Yeah.  
MR. WYATT: Two of you all.  
MR. BETTIS: And are you volunteering to be the  
permanent member?  
MR. BUCHER: As long as I can get --  
MS. BENGEL: Or Dana.  
MR. BUCHER: -- two people that are --  
MS. BENGEL: Dana.  
MR. BUCHER: -- going to be serious about --  
MS. BENGEL: Dana.  
MR. BUCHER: -- being the alternates and going to  
go --  
MR. WYATT: Well --  
MR. BUCHER: -- like --  
MR. RYNNE: I --  
MR. BUCHER: -- Mr. Outlaw --  
CLERK: This -- isn't Jon the one to go?  
MR. BUCHER: -- who's the utility --  
MR. RYNNE: I have to attend --  
MR. WYATT: Jon will already be there.  
MR. RYNNE: Yeah, because --  
MR. BETTIS: Jon's is already going to be there.  
MR. RYNNE: -- I have to --  
MR. TAYLOR: Right.  
MR. RYNNE: -- attend every --  
MR. TAYLOR: Right. Right.  
MR. RYNNE: -- meeting, mostly, anyway --  
MR. WYATT: He's on the rate --  
MR. RYNNE: -- so.  
MR. WYATT: -- committee which is -- I'd --  
MR. RYNNE: The --  
MR. WYATT: -- like for y'all to go to that some  
time, too.  
MR. RYNNE: -- the advantage would be that the other  
issues that are discussed besides the technical issues of  
the operation of the power agency, the legislative, economic  
development, and -- and those other issues that you folks  
really need to know about as a -- as something that the  
power agency provides that we need to take advantage of,  
those are the things that -- that someone from this Board  
needs to be there to hear and to -- to know that they're out  
there. And so, the agendas come out before the meeting  
happens. You could look at the agenda and decide if there  
was something that interests you and then --  
MR. BETTIS: I --  
MR. RYNNE: -- and then attend the meeting in that  
manner.  
MR. BETTIS: And I think you're just --  
MR. RYNNE: I'm going to attend the meeting no  
matter what, so.

MR. BETTIS: And I think we're all saying thank you for volunteering, Mr. Bucher.

MR. RYNNE: No, I'm -- I'm -- I'm saying that --

MR. BENGEL: Talk about slam dunk.

MR. RYNNE: -- any one of you.

MR. BETTIS: Your hand's already up. Thank you.

MR. WYATT: You need one more.

MR. BETTIS: And we need -- and then the -- the one more --

MR. WYATT: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: -- Mr. Bucher and then we'll --

MR. BUCHER: Mr. Outlaw would be --

MR. BETTIS: And there's Mr. Outlaw --

MR. BUCHER: He's the utility guy.

MR. BETTIS: All right.

MS. BENGEL: He is the utility guy.

MR. BETTIS: But then -- then the other one would be rotating among the -- the remaining six of us; is that -- is that -- would that be --

MR. WYATT: No, no, no. I --

CLERK: No, it's just three.

MR. BUCHER: You need to have an alternate.

MR. WYATT: Yeah, you need an alternate.

MR. BETTIS: Alternate.

MR. WYATT: One commissioner and two alternates.

MR. BETTIS: And then that's what I'm -- oh, two; does it have to be formalized?

MR. WYATT: Yes.

MR. RYNNE: Yes.

MR. BUCHER: They have to be sworn in.

MR. OUTLAW: Mr. Mayor?

MR. BETTIS: Can't you just swear us all in and -- and --

MR. WYATT: No.

MR. BETTIS: -- work --

MR. RYNNE: No.

MR. WYATT: Uh-uh. I don't mean to be contrite, but --

MR. BETTIS: No, no, I just --

MR. OUTLAW: Can I make a comment?

MR. BETTIS: Yes, sir.

MR. OUTLAW: Everybody that ran for this office and got in, the big issue was the electric rates. If -- if you don't fundamentally start at the base of the triangle, do away with this advisory board, create a new advisory board, and the number one criteria is qualified advisory board members that know electricity, know transmission, know everything there is about electricity that can then recommend to the Board recommendations. I never wanted to see an advisory board make rates. Until you establish an advisory board that is given the ability to have every question of Mary, of the city manager, of Electricities, of the power agency, until you're basically going to be serious enough to recreate your advisory board and then let them

advise you on who needs to go to Raleigh, and all these other things, you -- you're just spinning your wheels as far as I'm concerned.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you.

MR. BUCHER: Let me -- let me ask a question on that.

Now, am I understanding -- my understanding, if, and maybe I'm off base, is that we're talking two different issues here.

MR. BETTIS: We are.

CLERK: Right.

MR. BETTIS: Uh-huh. Well, one -- Mr. Outlaw's got a -- Mr. Outlaw's got a -- before we -- what he's saying is before we put somebody on the board that they're asking us to appoint, he thinks we ought to tackle the problem of our own advisory system -- our own advisory board system; correct?

MR. OUTLAW: Well, again, I said, and I'll -- I'll say as long as I'm on this Board, I don't make zoning decisions without getting information from a zoning board, and that zoning board is comprised of appointed zoning board members and staff that help educate me on zoning. The same is true with the board of adjustments. The same is true with HPC. I don't hear a lot of people complaining about the cost of HPC, zoning, or board of adjustments, but I hear a lot of people complaining about that 13 cent kilowatt hour we've got versus that 10.5 cent Progress, or whatever. And until you fundamentally answer the question of getting some people -- as many retired people and people in this city that know electricity that can help you be advised on how to make decisions for this city, I think you're spinning your wheels, but that's just my two cents.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you. Mr. Wyatt? You'll be next after that one. No, Mr. Wyatt first then you'll be next after that.

MR. WYATT: I've sat here as somebody that's been a former government employee and interim right now --

MR. BUCHER: I'm sorry; say that again?

MR. WYATT: I sat here last time, or stood here, as a former government employee, I'm there; I know I'm engaged temporarily, and begged you to put two of you all on this Board, and -- and because I've seen that there are too many like me that were on the board rather than elected officials. And if you're going to make a difference, and it's -- it's a struggle, if you're going to make a difference, you need to be at the table at the power agency because --

MS. MURAGLIA: Yeah. That's right.

MR. WYATT: -- 70 --

MR. BETTIS: All right. I -- I understand.

MR. WYATT: Let me finish. Let me finish. 70 percent or 80 percent --

MR. BETTIS: I've got the solution already.

MR. WYATT: Okay.

MR. BETTIS: I've got the solution already. The -- the issue that Mister -- Mister -- the -- that Mr. Outlaw's talking is not -- is not on the table right now. I agree with him that needs to be brought up. I say we put that on the agenda. Mr. Bucher has -- Mr. Bucher has graciously volunteered to be on. Guess what? I'm graciously volunteering. There's your two. Now, that being said, will the remaining five of us -- will the remaining five of us agree to attend meetings periodically?

MS. BENGEL: I will.

MR. BUCHER: Can -- can they do that?

MR. RYNNE: Yes, as guests.

MS. MURAGLIA: Yes.

MR. WYATT: Yes.

MR. RYNNE: Yes.

MS. BENGEL: I will.

MR. BETTIS: And so I'll -- we'll be the two sworn. If I can't make it, then we'll have -- and I'm going to make as many as I can, Mister -- Mr. Wyatt, because, you know, I'll -- I'll make as many as I can. Mister -- Mr. Outlaw's right, we -- we campaigned on this issue. You know what? I asked for this job, I'll go and I'll -- I'll live up to my responsibility. I'll work on weekends to make up for it. Okay?

MR. WYATT: All right. Now --

MR. BETTIS: There --

MR. WYATT: -- here's the action --

MR. BETTIS: -- that's done.

MR. WYATT: -- here's the action item for you. What I'd recommend to you then to appoint you (indicates Bucher) as the commissioner, you (indicates Bettis) and Jon as the alternate. That action can be taken here tonight so we can get started getting you --

MR. BETTIS: I have no problem with that.

MS. BENGEL: I'd like to make a motion that we appoint Denny Bucher as the commissioner to the power agency with Mayor Bettis and Mr. Ron -- Rynne --

MR. RYNNE: Rynne.

MS. BENGEL: -- Rynne, sorry, as the alternates.

MR. TAYLOR: I second.

MS. BENGEL: Did you second it?

MR. TAYLOR: (Indicates affirmative.)

MR. WHITE: I got a question. Question.

MR. BETTIS: Yes, sir.

MR. WHITE: The question is we talked about are people that's been on that Board as having electrical background or electrical --

MS. MURAGLIA: No.

MR. BUCHER: No, not this one.

MR. BETTIS: No, sir, we're not doing -- we're not talking about that issue right now. That's Mr. Bucher's or that's Mr. Outlaw's issue. We're talking about the Electricities Services Board --

MR. WHITE: I know.

MR. BETTIS: No, no. We're not talking -- that's two -- the -- which Board are you talking about?

MR. WHITE: I'm talking the Electric Board.

MR. BETTIS: The New Bern Electric Board?

MR. WHITE: The one traveling going with Jon.

MR. RYNNE: That -- that's the Power Agency Board --

MR. WHITE: Oh, okay.

MR. RYNNE: -- and then the -- the Electric Service Board are the two separate items. I --

MR. WHITE: Right.

MR. RYNNE: -- think Mr. Outlaw was, or Alderman Outlaw, was talking about having technically savvy people on New Bern's Electric Board --

MR. OUTLAW: Uh-huh.

MR. RYNNE: -- and Mr. Wyatt was talking about having some -- some of the elected officials on the Power Agency Board in addition to myself.

MR. OUTLAW: Yeah.

MR. WHITE: But what I -- okay, I'll let that ride on, but I -- I was thinking about electrical experience and people that know something about electric and about the system, and that was the only reason I was asking the question. I -- I mean, how many of these people that we are talking about sending, how many of those know that much about electrical? Are we going to learn or we already have some of the skills?

MR. BETTIS: If -- I'll be glad to have you go in my place, if you want?

MR. WHITE: I mean, I'm not afraid to go, and I mean, I can do just about --

MR. BETTIS: Well, then --

MR. BUCHER: I -- I think --

MR. WHITE: -- I think, what Jon do, I used to do all of that.

MR. BUCHER: Jon, correct me if I'm wrong. You're not talking about electric experience, you're talking about -- we're talking -- Mr. Wyatt, you -- we're talking about -- I don't know anything about electricity.

MR. TAYLOR: Talking about two different --

MR. BUCHER: I'm -- I -- if that's the criteria, man, you need somebody else to go into these meetings.

MR. TAYLOR: No, it's two different things.

MR. BETTIS: No, it's done. We -- we've -- the -- the issue that we're here for tonight, that issue Mr. Wyatt -- that issue Mr. Outlaw is going to bring up. He's going to bring up the issue that you're talking about in another meeting. I volunteered, Mr. Bucher's volunteered. The only debate now is -- the only debate now is do you want Mr. Bucher and I to go?

MR. OUTLAW: I don't want you to go until you are educated enough to go up there and do some good. I mean, you couldn't begin to get a learning curve on electricity. Now, if you quit your job and -- and hang out for 24 hours a

day, probably in about three or four months, you -- you might have a little bit of knowledge base. There's a lot of issues there. Now, Mr. Wyatt, in all due respect, most of what you do when you go up to these meetings, is you talk about the pending legislation in the General Assembly that your lobbyist is doing to keep the co-ops and the other competing electricity companies --

MR. BETTIS: Well, let me just --

MR. OUTLAW: -- from --

MR. BETTIS: -- let me just tell you one thing. I don't know anything about electricity except not to --

MR. OUTLAW: Then get somebody that knows it.

MR. BETTIS: -- well, hold -- hold on -- to -- except not to stick my finger wet into the socket --

MR. BUCHER: Right.

MR. BETTIS: -- but I know lobbyists inside and out and I know -- I know when I -- when I'm smelling BS --

MR. OUTLAW: Well, you -- you need to go --

MR. BETTIS: -- and -- and that's one thing --

MR. OUTLAW: You go to one meeting and you'll know.

MR. BETTIS: -- that I got -- that's one that thing that I got over any -- anybody in the electric board. I've been around lobbyists for the -- in Washington and everywhere else. You -- you know, I know BS when I smell it.

MR. OUTLAW: Well, you fixin' to see some.

MR. BETTIS: And I'm fixin' to do exactly what -- you know what? If there's BS up there, please send me up there 'cause I'm the first one to smell it and say, No. So, I mean, I don't know much about it. I'll -- I'll learn from Jon over here, and -- and then -- Jon's one of the silent, smart types. I'm one of the loud, stop that crap type, and I'm willing to do that. So, the vote is to --

MS. BENGEL: We need to take a vote. There's a motion on the table.

MR. BUCHER: Second and a motion on the --

MR. BETTIS: There's a second and a motion. We had the -- we had the debate on it. Now, let's take the vote. Mr. Outlaw, yes or no?

MR. OUTLAW: No.

MR. BETTIS: Mr. White, yes or no?

MR. WHITE: No.

MR. BETTIS: Mr. Taylor, yes or no?

MR. TAYLOR: Yes.

MR. BETTIS: Mr. Johnnie Ray Kinsey?

MR. KINSEY: No.

MR. BETTIS: Ms. Bengel?

MS. BENGEL: You mean to put those people on the Board? That's --

MR. BETTIS: To put --

MS. BENGEL: Yes.

MR. BETTIS: -- these people on the Board.

MS. BENGEL: Yes.

MR. BETTIS: Mr. Bucher?

MR. BUCHER: Yes.

MR. BETTIS: And to break the tie, yes, so that's four to three; we're -- we're done. I'm going; you're going. Mr. Outlaw, I think that the next -- the next meeting that we have, you should put this issue of the -- of the Power Board that -- on the agenda and let's get some -- let's get some -- let's restructure that thing immediately so it's -- is Ms. Heller here?

MR. WYATT: I'm not sure.

MR. BETTIS: Well, let's get that on the -- let's get that on the agenda --

MR. DAVIS: Is it not?

MR. BETTIS: -- and please get with Mr. Outlaw --

MR. WYATT: It's on the agenda.

MR. BETTIS: -- because we're going to -- I agree with --

MS. BENGEL: It is on the agenda.

MR. WYATT: Yeah, it is on the agenda.

MR. BETTIS: It --

MS. BENGEL: It's on our agenda.

MR. BETTIS: Well, good. Then -- then that's our opportunity to talk about it. And you know what? If you have to replace me at that time on the Board, let's do it. But for now, we've got certainty. Is that -- that's it. That appears -- that appears that we've gone through every item on the agenda.

MR. DAVIS: Mayor, just let me mention that the first sentence on Item 3 is the Electric Service Board. If you don't want to talk about it tonight, you don't have to.

MS. BENGEL: Right.

CLERK: Yeah, that's a part of number 3.

MR. DAVIS: You can continue that if you'd like.

MR. BETTIS: Electric Service Board?

MR. DAVIS: But if --

MS. BENGEL: Yes, and also it's --

MR. OUTLAW: I -- I think your page 2 should be your page 3; is that not correct?

CLERK: Right. Right.

MR. BETTIS: Well, I need to borrow --

MR. OUTLAW: For your information.

MR. BETTIS: -- Mr. Bucher's glasses again.

CLERK: It was stapled wrong.

MR. OUTLAW: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: All I saw was electric.

MR. OUTLAW: Okay. Well, you need advice -- somebody to advise you on that.

MR. BETTIS: Yes, I certainly do. Now, that -- we've got the two down; the vote's done on that. Now, Mr. Outlaw, would you like to talk about the Electric Services Board?

MR. OUTLAW: The Electric Advisory Board --

MR. BETTIS: The Electric Advisory Board?

MR. OUTLAW: -- in the past, my experience with them

is never has the Electric Advisory Board, with the -- my time these -- these fine folks have served, have been given the opportunity to even, in some instances, notice a rate increase in the City of New Bern. I -- I don't have any answers, but I think that you definitely need qualified individuals serving on the Advisory Board.

MR. BETTIS: And how do we go about doing that?

MR. OUTLAW: Disband the one you've got and carefully create a new advisory board that does not set rates, but quarterly makes presentations to the City of New Bern. What this Board would be is very similar to the -- the Board of Aldermen. There's a staff that does a great job. There's 28,000 people out there that communicate to us, and -- and we're supposed to be the -- the go between to take the information from the staff, collate the information from the citizenry, and then make educated decisions. Now, I see the Advisory Board similarly would be comprised of very educated, long interested type people that have the background in electricity that would, based on what we all know we're hearing from the public, we would take that information along with Jon and his staff's information, and we would decide how along with Austin, Texas and other places, Fayetteville folk, PWC, that have winterization programs, community block items like Mr. Kinsey's, lined up for us, that we take the big picture and we get quarterly presentations to the Board. And actually, in the case of having to make a rate increase, I -- I've always -- I've -- I've never wanted to be a part of one that I -- that -- that I -- somebody couldn't have, at least, like, again, zoning, Board of Adjustments, and other departments that -- that I have some advice.

MR. BETTIS: Just to be fair, I've talked with you about this before. I wholeheartedly agree with you. Do you -- do you know how long it would take to -- if we were to disband that Board, do you know how long -- do you -- do you know, first, how to rebuild it and how long it would take to rebuild it?

MR. OUTLAW: Well, I would -- I would just take, and I think our legal advisor could -- could help us better on that, but I would basically -- a lot of what this ordinance is, is a good ordinance. I just would -- I would -- I would, particularly on this Board, look for people with that background.

MS. BENGEL: Then I would just take it one step further. You know, I almost -- we had talked one time about calling it a task force also. You know, I guess the name doesn't matter, but, you know, with specific duties, and then taking it a step further and setting this one up, also setting up one for water/sewer to -- to do the same thing --

MR. BETTIS: Well, let's get -- let's get this --

MS. BENGEL: -- because the issue we have -- see --

MR. BETTIS: Well, let's get the electric --

MS. BENGEL: Well --

MR. BETTIS: -- done first.

MS. BENGEL: -- I'm just saying it would apply to the -- the same rules would apply to both. So, if we're setting this up, it would be the same thing --

MR. BETTIS: Let's --

MS. BENGEL: -- that we follow as Advisory Board.

MR. BETTIS: -- right, tonight, we're talking about the Electric --

MS. BENGEL: I understand.

MR. BETTIS: -- Services Board, and I don't want to get far afoot. If -- we should put that on the next agenda, if that's something we want to talk about.

MS. BENGEL: I do.

MR. BETTIS: We'll hold it clear on this one --

MR. OUTLAW: You -- you might could piggy back off the --

MS. BENGEL: That's what I'm saying.

MR. OUTLAW: Electrical Advisory Board, the Water Board.

MR. WYATT: Have you ever thought that perhaps if you just had your staff come in here and talk about some of these issues? They're the -- they're the professionals, that they might could shine a light, a greater light on it?

MR. BETTIS: No, Mr. Wyatt, I haven't thought about that, so have we thought about that?

MR. OUTLAW: Well, in all due respect, I think staff is in the awkward position of being apolitical, and they do their job, and they do a great job, but it -- they -- they have to stay within the -- the box of being a staff member. I -- I think they are a little bit limited in their ability to, off the cuff, state their personal feelings about things. I think -- I think just by the job they do, we're the ones that have to -- have to step out of the box and be the go-between between what the citizens are saying and what the -- the -- the very qualified staff is telling you.

MR. BETTIS: Thank you. Let's -- let's continue this discussion. Mr. White, you voted with Mr. Outlaw in the previous -- on the previous vote. What are your -- what are your thoughts on this?

MR. WHITE: My thoughts are that the more educated that people are in the electrical field, the better they will be of service to you. And the reason I spoke up because that's -- that's always been my background. That's all I've done from the post all the way down. I told Jon about that, every -- everything that's done, basically meters or whatever it is. And I just sit here and listen, but I had to go along with my conscience. My conscience is -- and I have got a misunderstanding. My conscience is that we were going to have somebody on the Board that was going that was electrically inclined and know really what was -- how the system went. And Jon is one person going, but the other people go -- that would be going with him wouldn't be just learning; they would have good insight on what's going on, too, and then they could pick up a little bit more.

MR. TAYLOR: Uh-huh.

MR. BETTIS: And -- and now we're -- now we're talking about the -- the Board that -- the Board -- now we're talking about the New Bern Board. Mister -- Mr. Outlaw proposes disbanding -- disbanding the Electric Services Board; correct?

MR. OUTLAW: (Indicates affirmative.)

MR. BETTIS: So --

CLERK: Uh-huh.

MR. BETTIS: -- do you -- Mr. Outlaw's proposal is that abandon -- or disbanding the Electric Services Board and then rebuilding it from scratch with professionals.

MR. WHITE: If you disband that Board and you did -- you built it from scratch, then how are you going to do it? Are you going to pick or how many people are on the Board? I don't know. Say, for instance, there are 12 people on the Board. If there are 12 people on the Board, is two coming out of each Ward or --

MR. WHITE: -- or how you going to do it --

MR. BETTIS: I don't know. With -- if --

MR. WHITE: -- being fair.

MR. BETTIS: With -- is that something that you would want to work with Mr. Outlaw on?

MR. WHITE: I wouldn't mind working with Mr. Outlaw. In fact, I'd probably learn something on it --

MR. BETTIS: I mean -- all right.

MR. WHITE: -- you know, if he wants to.

MR. BETTIS: All right. Mr. Kinsey?

MR. KINSEY: I already have two individuals from my Ward that's just retired from that, so we're pretty much set.

I feel ready to go in finding someone that has the experience to come in to share the information that we need to know to move forward with.

MR. BETTIS: Do you -- do you agree with Mr. Outlaw that -- that the Electric Services Board needs to be disbanded and rebuilt --

MR. KINSEY: Yes.

MR. BETTIS: -- with -- with all professionals?

MR. KINSEY: Yes.

MR. BETTIS: And -- okay. Mister -- Mister --

MR. BUCHER: Bucher.

MR. BETTIS: -- Bucher? Sorry.

MR. BUCHER: That's all right.

MR. BETTIS: It's getting -- it's --

MR. BUCHER: I'm not sure I understand, and I'd like to hear, why we would disband the one we've got if we have some talented people on there? I don't know.

MR. BETTIS: Mister -- Mister --

MS. BENGEL: Just do it as a task --

MR. BETTIS: -- and let me just -- just so we can facilitate this. It appears to be Mr. Outlaw's premise that the Board that we have at this time is not comprised of the professionals that he -- that our City would like to

have --

MR. BUCHER: I don't know.

MR. BETTIS: -- and that he would like to put it back together with the -- he'd like to put it back together with all professionals.

MR. BUCHER: Okay. Then, I have a question --

MR. BETTIS: Yes, sir.

MR. BUCHER: -- from Jon -- for Jon --

MR. BETTIS: Yes, sir.

MR. BUCHER: -- is -- you know these -- you know the people that are on that Board now?

MR. RYNNE: Yes.

MR. BUCHER: Are they engineer type, not necessarily electricity, but are -- they -- are they the -- in your opinion, are they people that can -- can inform us or is -- is it a group of people that are just --

MR. BETTIS: Political hacks.

MR. BUCHER: -- somebody put people on because they were their neighbor? I -- I don't know, you know.

MR. OUTLAW: I don't -- with all due respect, Mr. Bucher, I would not ask -- that is the kind of question as to why I would like an advisory board that -- Mr. Rynne is a great -- he's a -- I'm very impressed with his qualifications, and I'd like to see an employee like Mr. Rynne stay apolitical, and that is a political question, and he should not have to answer that. It's not fair to that man.

MS. BENGEL: Yeah.

MR. BETTIS: Mister -- Mister -- Mr. Davis, would you just say, "Objection"?

MR. DAVIS: Yeah. Yeah. I --

MR. BETTIS: Say, "Objection."

MR. DAVIS: -- I'll be the referee.

MR. BETTIS: Sustained. All right. Is there another question?

MR. BUCHER: I don't have any other questions.

MS. BENGEL: There are some -- I -- I think that there are --

MR. BETTIS: Well, it puts him in a bad spot; I agree with you.

MS. BENGEL: -- people on that Board currently that would serve under a new -- new situation, would you not agree, Alderman Outlaw, that there's people already serving on there now, maybe one or two that would continue to serve --

MR. OUTLAW: I think that some of the --

MS. BENGEL: -- that -- with that professional background?

MR. OUTLAW: -- the present or former Electric Advisory Board members that are very familiar with the City of New Bern and its past, present, and future as where it wants to go, could be a good ad hoc committee to help comprise and compose a new Electric Advisory Board with qualifications. I mean, the main thing I see that you'd

want to change in that would be the qualifications.

MS. BENGEL: It's like the HPC. Currently now, to serve on -- when somebody -- somebody's asked to serve on HPC, it's asked that you have a demonstrated ability in the area of architecture or rehabilitation of homes, or whatever, so this would be the same --

CLERK: Uh-huh.

MS. BENGEL: -- case that we would ask --

MR. OUTLAW: Correct.

MS. BENGEL: -- somebody to have a demonstrated interest or -- or experience in -- in the electric field --

MR. BETTIS: Okay. And finally --

MS. BENGEL: -- makes it easier.

MR. BETTIS: -- finally, Mr. Taylor?

MR. TAYLOR: Well, my -- my say on this is somewhat disband, however, not completely. Just find out who's qualified because I won't want anybody to advise me that knows less than me; see what I'm saying? Not -- like she was saying, that some of them probably are qualified to be on the Board. We just need to research and find the ones that's qualified and the one's that's not qualified and then get a qualified Board.

MR. BETTIS: Okay. And I've heard -- I've heard a resounding sound, then. You know what? I tend to agree with you, Mister -- Mr. Outlaw. What we need -- what we need is we need a plan. We need a -- we need an outline and a format for going forward. Can you reduce -- can you reduce your plan to -- to writing to -- to show us how it would work for -- for rebuilding? I mean, I think that would help us out.

MR. OUTLAW: I would pretty much go with what you got other than I would -- I would -- just like Ms. Bengel brought out, I have never appointed -- I think I've made two appointments to HPC. And in both cases, they were individuals very heavily involved in the historic district that knew a lot of the history of what that HPC Board was. I would never have gone and put somebody on with my background. I mean, I don't -- that's not my forte, you know, and the same is true with -- with the Electric Advisory Board.

MR. BETTIS: So, how -- how do you -- well, just practically, from a practical standpoint --

MR. OUTLAW: There's -- there's so many of retired electrical engineers --

MR. BUCHER: How --

MR. OUTLAW: -- and people --

MR. BETTIS: From --

MR. BUCHER: Okay. He's saying how do you do that?

MR. BETTIS: Yeah, how do you do that?

MR. DAVIS: I think what you're groping with is do we amend the ordinance and do away with this section and re-create it next month; that's one option. I'd want to think through that, but -- Simply put, you delete the ordinance, delete that section of the ordinance, and there is no more

Board; it's all over. And then you may use the exact provisions and come back next month with a new Board.

MR. BETTIS: Is that what you're talking about?

MR. OUTLAW: No, that's --

MR. BETTIS: I mean, I'm sorry. I was talking --

MR. OUTLAW: -- I have to --

MR. BETTIS: -- I was thinking --

MR. OUTLAW: I haven't talked to our legal counsel. But if that's the best way to get qualified individuals on the Board, fine.

MR. DAVIS: Well, or -- or in lieu -- I mean --

MR. BETTIS: Well, and just so -- and just so we're overly clear about it, you know what I think? Would you get with Mister -- would you get with Mister -- let's just talk to the Board. Do you think -- Mr. Outlaw seems to -- seems to like this issue. He seems to know a lot about this issue, and he seems to be passionate about this issue. Would the Board have any problem with Mr. Outlaw getting with Mr. Davis and -- and coming up with a proposal for -- that he -- that they can present to us saying this is exactly how we're going to do it, this is exactly the way it should be done, and we'll have all the paperwork to do it correctly and transparently; is that something you'd be interested in doing, Mr. Outlaw?

MR. OUTLAW: Yes, sir, but I -- I do want to say I -- I know I -- I so enjoy working with Mister -- with our interim manager, and I know this is causing him concerns that, but I -- I want to say this that, and I -- I will ask you to say -- say this for us, Mr. Rynne. Out of your most recent study, what were the three rates -- what -- what was the EMC, the Co-op, and Progress Energy in New Bern? Wasn't it like 9.-something and 10.-something, and the City of New Bern was 13.-something?

MR. RYNNE: I -- I can tell you the percentages easier than I could tell you exactly what their rates are. The difference in our residential rate structure versus Progress Energy is approximately 25 to 27 percent for the average customer. And the difference between us and -- and Carteret/Craven Co-op, we were actually, I think, --I'm trying to think what the residential rate structure was. I think there was actually a little bit more of a spread between us and them, their residential.

MR. OUTLAW: You know, this whole thing, the rate structure of the City of New Bern and a lady at -- in a double -- in a pretty new doublewide home that got a \$900 bill. I mean, we're in -- we're in shock mode here, folks.

MR. BETTIS: And I agree with you.

MR. OUTLAW: We have got to do -- if there's anything else in New Bern we do that -- that we don't work harder on the electric rates, I don't know what -- what it needs to be.

MR. BETTIS: Then -- then is it -- is it the pleasure of this Board that we -- that we authorize Mr. Outlaw to take -- take the lead and -- take the lead on this

and we --

MR. OUTLAW: Well, Mr. White, I -- I would enjoy -- beg your pardon. And Mr. White --

MS. BENGEL: Mr. White should help.

MR. OUTLAW: -- seemed to have an interest in this.

MR. BETTIS: All right. Then let's -- Mr. White, that we appoint Mister -- Mr. Wyatt, or, sorry, Mr. White and Mr. Outlaw to get with Mr. Davis and bring -- get a proposal together to bring to us at the -- at our next meeting on exactly how we're going to disband and reorganize, and -- and give us the function. Look, I'm not an electrician. I'm -- I'm a lawyer. I don't understand any of this stuff that you guys are talking about.

MR. OUTLAW: Well, that's why I don't see you going to Raleigh. What -- what good you going to do --

MR. BETTIS: Because I know -- I know lobbyists. No, I know lobbyists, and I know that when I have a question, I have enough to ask a question, and I have an expert here --

MR. OUTLAW: I mean, if you can't get my electric rate down --

MR. BETTIS: Hold on. Hold on. Let me -- and I -- and I didn't -- I didn't interrupt.

MR. OUTLAW: -- I don't need you.

MR. BETTIS: I know, but I -- I know enough to know when I need a question answered when I -- when it comes to business; I know to ask Mr. Bucher. And that -- that issue has been decided. It's moot; it's a done deal. And if -- and if it needs to be -- after you put your Board together, if it needs to be revisited, Mister -- Mr. Outlaw, I will gladly say take me off of that list because I have to work. But just to provide certainty, you know, I'm going until we -- until we get the new Board. And if next week you have a group of people who want to go, how hard is it to take me off of there and put somebody else --

MR. WYATT: You can do -- norm --

MR. BETTIS: There you go.

MR. WYATT: They --

MR. BETTIS: And that issue is going to be decided next week. All we're talking about is Mr. White and Mister -- sorry -- Mister --

MS. BENGEL: Lee, no more coffee for you.

MR. BETTIS: Zip it. We're going to sit around here listening to you and Mr. Outlaw all night. We're going to get this done, and we're going to get it done correctly. The only thing on the board is, Mr. White and Mr. Outlaw, you guys are going to get with Mr. Davis and we're going to get this done; right?

MR. OUTLAW: Sure.

MR. WHITE: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

MR. BETTIS: Then we're done. All right. That was the last thing we needed to get done tonight; correct?

CLERK: Yes.

MR. WYATT: Yes, sir.

MR. BETTIS: The agenda's done? Do I hear a motion?

MR. WYATT: I have the rough agenda for -- and we're -- we're four hours late, the rough agenda for next week, so I'll pass it out as you leave and call and ask if you want to add to it.

MS. BENGEL: You've got until noon tomorrow to make any changes to this draft agenda.

MR. BETTIS: Perfect. And do I hear a motion to adjourn from somebody? Hold on, did I hear -- did I hear a motion to adjourn?

MR. WHITE: 12:00.

MS. BENGEL: So move.

MR. OUTLAW: Thank you, sir.

MR. WYATT: Yes, sir.

MR. BETTIS: Second?

MR. TAYLOR: Second.

MR. BETTIS: All in favor say aye.

(All Alderman respond aye.)

MR. BETTIS: All right. We're done.

\*\*\*WORK SESSION CONCLUDED AT 7:48 P.M.\*\*\*