

NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
Newton County Historic Courthouse
April 18, 2023
MINUTES

Present: Chairman Marcello Banes, Commissioner's Stan Edwards, Demond Mason, Alana Sanders, J.C. Henderson, Ronnie Cowan, and Clerk Jackie Smith
(Commissioners Mason & Henderson entered the work session late.)
Others Present: Staff & Newspapers

Chairman Banes call the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., extended a welcome, followed by the invocation and pledge.

Chairman Banes recognized Finance Director Brittany White who introduced ACCG Retirement Program representatives, Kale Hodges, Trey Johnson and HR Director Amanda Shoemaker who addressed the board.

Director Shoemaker noted that the county started this discussion about a defined benefits pension plan last year and she has continued the conversation with ACCG to see what we can do to offer a DBP to our employees.

She noted that what she hears from our employees is that Newton County is great place to work, but we lack a Defined Benefit Plan.

ACCG provided 2 handouts. Newton County Comparison of Retirement Plans in Contiguous Counties and Newton County (New Plan) Proposed Benefit Plan.

Mr. Hodges noted that counties are competing with their neighbors for good employees and sometimes it goes down to the pension plan that is offered.

He said that ACCG manages 108 plans state wide as well as a defined contribution plan.

Mr. Johnson is the Regional Client Manager with ACCG.

He spoke about what other counties are offering their employees and highlighted our surrounding counties benefits in comparison to Newton County's. He noted that our neighbors are enhancing their retirement program.

Commissioner Cowan asked if this was a Trust Account, Omnibus? Mr. Johnson stated it is with USB, one of the largest investment firms in the world. ACCG has a Defined Benefits Board. He said it is standard to become vested in 5-years. ACCG has administered pension plans since 1968.

Commissioner Henderson questioned if ACCG would continue to administer the DBP for employees that was frozen? He said there are 74 employees who receive monthly benefits currently and that will continue.

Mr. Johnson said that all active employees will be a part of DBP, going back to the date of hire.

Commissioner Henderson questioned what is the % that employees receive and do they get to keep their 401 and 457 Plans.

Director Shoemaker said currently the multiplier is 1%. Commissioner Cowan stated he thought that was low and she said she has asked for 1.25%, 1.5% and waiting on the numbers. Director Shoemaker noted that if we can mandate employees to put into the DBP we can get to a 2% multiplier. He also questioned if the employees would keep their 401 & 457 Plans. Yes.

Commissioner Henderson stated he felt like we need to at least the 2% multiplier and shared a story about an employee who worked and received very little pension benefits.

Mr. Shoemaker stated that our employees do not mind contribution to the DBP.

Commissioner Cowan questioned if there was survivor benefits and Mr. Hodges stated they have several different options. Mr. Cowan said to please make sure the survivor benefit form is clear.

ACCG, Director Shoemaker and Director White will continue to work on this plan and come back to the board.

Note: Handouts are attached and made part of these minutes.

With no further business, a motion by Commissioner Edwards, second by Commissioner Henderson, the work session adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie B. Smith, County Clerk

Marcello Banes, Chairman