

Action Agenda
Fayette County / City of Fayetteville Called Meeting
Fayette County Commission Chambers
140 Stonewall Avenue West, Suite 100
Fayetteville, Georgia 30214
6:00 p.m.

Fayette County Commissioners	Steve Brown, Chairman Charles Oddo, Vice Chairman David Barlow
Fayette County Commissioners Absent:	Allen McCarty Randy Ognio
Fayetteville City Council	Greg Clifton, Mayor Mickey Edwards Ed Johnson Paul Oddo, Jr. Jim Williams Scott Stacey
County and City Staff	Steve Rapson, Fayette County Administrator Joe Morton, Fayetteville City Manager Floyd Jones, Fayette County Clerk Tameca P. White, Fayette County Deputy Clerk Dennis Davenport, County Attorney

1. Call to Order – Fayette County Commission Chairman Steve Brown

Fayette County Commissioner Chairman called the April 9, 2014 Joint Meeting of the Fayette Commission Board of Commissioners and the City of Fayetteville City Council to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Discussion concerning Fayette County's Fire Consolidation Proposal

Fayette County Commission Chairman Steve Brown gave some opening comments on Fayette County's Fire Consolidation Proposal.

Fayette County Administrator Steve Rapson provided the joint elected officials and the audience with a PowerPoint presentation on Fayette County's Fire Consolidation Proposal.

Fayette County Commission Chairman Steve Brown and Fayette County Administrator Steve Rapson provided additional comments. Chairman Brown then opened the floor for public comments.

Steven Woodward: Mr. Woodward of Fayetteville spoke for approximately 26 minutes. He said he was concerned about misinformation that had been provided on this subject. He then spoke about the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) ratings saying the City of Fayetteville has an ISO rating of Class 4 and Fayette County has an ISO rating of Class 4/8B, while explain some of the criteria used to make the ratings calculations. He spoke about the differences in the ratings, reasons for the different ratings, his concerns with the ratings and consolidation, and concluded that the proposed consolidation would dilute an already

diluted system. He asked why the County was taking on the City of Fayetteville's fire problem when the County has not fixed his fire problem. Commissioner Brown responded to some of the issues Mr. Woodward spoke about.

Larry Dell: Mr. Dell spoke for approximately 21 minutes in opposition to the proposed consolidation.

Jessica Leonard: Ms. Jessica Leonard of the Fayette County Fire Department reminded everyone that the county runs all the calls with the city. She said one jurisdiction could not do without the other, and that they already work together.

Al Hovey-King: Mr. Hovey-King spoke for approximately 19 minutes in opposition to consolidation.

Betty McKibben: Ms. McKibben spoke in opposition to the proposed consolidation.

Ken Holland: Mr. Holland said he was concerned that the county was planning to take over the city, and he asked how the county was planning to pay for all of the extra employees. He also asked if the city's funding would come with the consolidation to the county. County Administrator Steve Rapson replied to Mr. Holland's questions.

Ms. Wilbanks: Ms. Wilbanks, from the Lakemont subdivision, said everybody had just gone through the school board fiasco where schools were closed, children and parents were uprooted, and then, suddenly, money was found. She said the teachers were paid, but not one school was reopened. She stated that when the city gets rid of its fire department, it will never get the fire department back.

Ken Steele: Mr. Steele stated that Fayette County and the City of Fayetteville both have outstanding fire departments. He was surprised to hear that the mayor and city council asked for the consolidation proposal, and he said the city council was shortchanging its citizens. He spoke about the quality and good work of the city fire department. Mr. Steele said innocence, like the fire department, once surrendered, is never recovered. He could not understand why the city council would get rid of the fire department; especially since maintaining a fire department is one of the criteria needed to be and remain a city. He suggested that the two new members on the city council were not qualified to make a decision on the matter, due to their lack of experience.

Michael Green: Mr. Green, a City of Fayetteville firefighter, said he had a lot of questions that needed to be answered. He told the city council that he was the person they were affecting with their decision, and that he would be taking a pay cut with Fayette County. Fayette County Commissioner Chairman Steve Brown encouraged the City of Fayetteville's firefighters to meet with the County Administrator and the County's Human Resources Director concerning their proposed positions and pay in the County.

Ken Steele: Mr. Steele returned to the podium saying city residents pay 3.07 mils for fire services and that he was told that if the consolidation was approved that the city would reduce the 3.07 mils for those fire services so there is not a tax increase for city residents. He said he had not heard a city council member tell about that statement, and he asked the city council if they were committing to a reduction of the millage rate in the amount of 3.07 mils.

Chris Stanley: Mr. Stanley, a firefighter for Lamar and Pike Counties, and whose family lives and has worked for both the city's and county's fire departments, asked Fayette County Administrator Steve Rapson if, in his capacity in other cities had this issue arisen. He also asked if other jurisdictions were similarly talking about consolidation. He said his father, a resident of Fayette County, was concerned about taxes since he has property in both the city and the county. He also asked about the numbers of time calls were issued from both the city and the county. Mr. Stanley said he and his father were concerned that the city would annex more land, but would be subject to the county's financial needs. Mr. Stanley also asked if the county had approached the City of Peachtree City in order to consolidate its fire department as well.

Josh Collins: Mr. Josh Collins, a City of Fayetteville firefighter, said he saw his proposed raise of \$500.00 if the consolidation goes through, and he asked about his pension and retirement with the County. He also asked about the County's healthcare benefits. He also asked why the City of Fayetteville's command staff was being downgraded to a lesser level due to the consolidation. He asked what benefit the city firefighters would have should the proposed consolidation be approved. He said the city and county already works well together, and he asked what the problem was with the current situation. Mr. Collins said he did not know why this was a big issue and why the firefighters were not valued anymore by the city. He spoke about the financial sacrifices the firefighters have taken over the years, and he asked the city council to allow them to keep working for the city.

Carl Scottman: Mr. Scottman spoke in opposition to the proposed consolidation.

Bobby Hayden: Mr. Hayden, a City of Fayetteville firefighter, said he had worked for both the city and the county. He said he worked with Fayette County for 23 years, but through a series of events he went to work for the City of Fayetteville Fire Department. He spoke about both the unity and distinctiveness of the city's and county's firefighters. He said the consolidation was a wash, and that it would save the city \$350,000.00. He said if saving \$350,000.00 was the issue that he would gladly give up whatever it took. He said that County Administrator Steve Rapson, Commission Chairman Steve Brown, and the other County Commissioners have spoken to the city firefighters, but that he had not even had the opportunity to meet with a city councilmember. He suggested that the firefighters' input was important. He also asked, if the consolidation deal was so good, why not turn the consolidation around and give the control to the City of Fayetteville. He reiterated that these decisions were affecting a lot of people. He said the county's firefighters were good people, and so were the city's firefighters. He questioned the fairness of how the city and county employees would be affected. He thought it was not fair for Chief Jones to "come down." He thought this was a big hit for anyone to get rid of the fire department. He said when the city gives up its fire department and the county raises the taxes, the citizens of Fayetteville will not have any say in the matter. He repeated that he has talked to the County Administrator more than the city councilmembers, and that was disheartening.

Keith Harris: Mr. Harris, a Captain with the City of Fayetteville Fire Department, spoke about having two families, his home family and the firefighter's family. He said he would receive a \$200.00 raise if the proposed consolidation is approved, but that he would actually lose over \$400.00 per month. He said he was looking to retire, and this consolidation would hit his retirement hard. He said the consolidation would cause a loss of income, putting financial stress on him at a time when his child was preparing for college. He also asked where his time of service would go if the consolidation was approved. He asked the elected officials to take these considerations seriously since he has two families and loves them all. County Administrator Steve Rapson responded to Captain Harris' concerns.

Jimmy Jones: Mr. Jones said he could appreciate what the firefighters were going through. He also suggested that the County Commissioners should be let off the hook since it seemed the Fayetteville City Council was the entity throwing the citizens under the bus. He was strongly concerned that the city approached the county on this matter. He said the councilmembers could be voted out of office, and he asked them to vote no on this matter.

Sean Vansis: (*Note: audio recording did not clearly capture the speaker's last name*). The speaker, a City of Fayetteville firefighter, said there were other questions that needed to be answered. He spoke about the numbers of hours he works, and the strain he and his family are going through. He said he would gladly work for anyone, but he asked the city council to provide the people with more time to get answers on this matter. County Administrator Steve Rapson and Fayette County Fire Chief David Scarbrough spoke addressed the concerns that were expressed. The speaker thanked Mr. Rapson and Chief Scarbrough for answering his questions and stated that he wished he could get the same amount of time to speak with his city council.

Melina Collins: Mrs. Collins, the wife of a City of Fayetteville firefighter, said the answer to the budgetary questions that was asked earlier caused her to urge everyone to consider why this initiative was voted down in the past. She said she wanted to know how many other options have been put on the table to keep the city out of the red. Chairman Brown said that the options are what are currently had and the proposal and he spoke about the financial difficulties that the city is facing. Mrs. Collins asked the elected officials to not be hasty in their decision.

Brenda Stevens: Ms. Stevens asked why this matter could not be brought before the citizens of the City of Fayetteville and the Fayette County citizens. Chairman Brown responded to Ms. Steven's questions.

Sandra Parker-Barnes: Mrs. Parker-Barnes said she knew the city firefighters and they are great people. She wished that the City of Peachtree City's Fire Department had the City of Fayetteville's performance. She stated that the City of Peachtree City's Fire Department had not reached the same achievement that the City of Fayetteville's Fire Department has achieved.

Frank Gardner: Mr. Gardner suggested that fire services could drive down Lester Road if they needed a way to get through Fayetteville. He said he came to the meeting leaning toward approving the consolidation, but that he was given reason to reconsider his position. He said he had not heard about the percentage of costs, and he asked where the costs would come from. He said he did not know what the people of Fayetteville were worried about since in another twenty years the municipalities would push out the county. Mr. Gardner said he wanted to see the percentage of how much would be paid per household. He said there was a greater probability for people to get hurt in a condensed area, but that the county was paying more. He said he was probably in favor of combining the fire services since Fayetteville is growing and expanding, and since it meant he would be living in Fayetteville due to future annexations.

Bill Grist: Mr. Grist said he did not know which branch of government brought this matter up, and he asked why this matter was brought up. He said he did not see any reason for the proposed consolidation. He said if the proposal came from the city, then there were two members on the city council who have not had time to figure out what is going on yet. County Commissioner Chairman Steve Brown replied to Mr. Grist's questions. Fayetteville Mayor Greg Clifton also addressed Mr. Grist's concerns.

Larry Dell: Mr. Dell returned speaking in opposition to the proposed consolidation.

Al Hovey-King: Mr. Hovey-King returned to the podium speaking in opposition to the proposed consolidation.

3. Adjournment

Fayette County Commission Chairman Steve Brown and Fayette County Commissioner Vice-Chairman gave closing comments to those in attendance.

Chairman Brown adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Floyd L. Jones, Fayette County Clerk