

# Floyd County Board of Supervisors Retreat

January 18, 2024

Chateau Morrisette

## Meeting Notes

Board of Supervisors Chair Joe Turman called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. In addition to the Chair, Vice Chair Jerry Boothe and Board members Kalinda Bechtold, Levi Cox, and Linda DeVito Kuchenbuch were present. Staff in attendance were County Administrator Dr. Linda Millsaps, Deputy County Administrator Kim Chiddo, and County Attorney Stephen Durbin. Kimball Payne, Executive Manager with the Berkley Group, served as facilitator.

Notes for the retreat were captured on flip charts. Transcriptions of the notes, with clarifying annotations, are attached as an addendum to these notes.

After calling the meeting to order Mr. Turman turned the meeting over to the facilitator. Mr. Payne introduced himself and provided a brief review of his professional background. He referred to the day's agenda and reviewed suggested goals for the retreat as follows:

- Work as a team and develop consensus
- Encourage input from all Board members
- Identify major goals and priorities
- Identify objectives, with assigned responsibility and timelines, to advance the goals
- Craft a work plan for the next 18 to 24 months
- Identify longer term issues
- Understand constraints to progress and identify means to overcome them

He then mentioned some themes that might run through the day including, Board roles, responsibilities, and dynamics, Board/Administrator roles and relationships, public engagement, and potential limitations that might have to be overcome to accomplish the Board's priorities.

Mr. Payne also offered ground rules for the day's discussion:

- Everyone participates; no one dominates
- Engage
- Be honest
- Listen to each other
- Respect different opinions
- No idea is too outlandish
- Seek to understand
- Ask questions

- Seek consensus (formal action at a future Board meeting)
- Silence means consent – speak up if you disagree
- Use the parking lot for issues that may evade consensus or require more background
- Have fun
- We will take breaks when it seems appropriate

Mr. Payne asked if the agenda and goals for the retreat were consistent with the Board’s expectations and if anything was missing. There were no additions, and the Board accepted the agenda, goals, and ground rules.

To start the day’s substantive conversation, the facilitator asked each Board member to answer the following questions:

- *Why do you serve on the Board?*
- *Tell your colleagues something about yourself that they probably don’t know.*
- *What do you hope the Board accomplishes by the end of the retreat?*

Board members spoke about their motivations for service and shared some interesting insights. Responses to the third question were captured on flip chart #1. There was a desire for a collective direction for the County, with the Board and staff moving in the same direction. The need for concrete plans, with fallback plans and off ramps, if necessary, was also expressed. Mr. Payne briefly commented on the need for a strategic plan to be nimble and flexible in moving towards its stated goals by continuing to focus on its long range vision.

To start to define a vision for Floyd County, Mr. Payne asked Board members to define the County in the future, 5, 10, or 20 years out. He asked what would be different or better as a result of the Board’s initiatives. Responses were captured on flip charts #3 and #4.

- A collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship with the Town of Floyd.
- An effective and efficient solid waste management system.
- A well-managed and fiscally sound public service authority.
- Adequate land for public facilities.
- A protected water supply.
- Adequate and affordable workforce housing.
- A strong agriculture and forest sector.
- A beautiful rural, mountain environment.
- A healthy, entrepreneurial small business community.
- A strong education system.

Mr. Payne pointed out that the 2012 Comprehensive Plan included the following “vision” statement:

*Floyd County is a creative, prosperous, and resilient community that respects its people and protects its farms, forests, and water for future generations.*

He asked if that statement was still a good description of the County's vision. Board members expressed agreement with the statement.

The facilitator then asked the Board to consider County operations. He asked the following questions:

- *What is the County doing well?*
- *What is the County doing not so well?*
- *What is it that the County is not doing that it should?*
- *What is it that the County is doing that it should, or could, stop doing?*

In response to the question about what the County was doing well, the Board identified the following (flip chart #5):

- The purchase of the bank building to house County offices.
- The relationship between the Board and County staff is good.
- There is good support for new businesses.
- There is a good relationship with County citizens; there are good communications and citizens have confidence in the Board.
- The Board is operating at an appropriate level, focusing on policy setting and strategic priorities and not getting overly involved in day-to-day operations.
- There is a good relationship with County schools.

The Board identified the following areas in which the County was not doing so well (flip chart #6):

- Outreach to citizens to encourage greater participation.
- Timely, proactive decision making.
- The public safety radio system.
- Information technology.
- Solid waste management.
- A true partnership with the Town of Floyd.

The Board also identified a couple of areas in which the County was doing neither "well" nor "not so well;" they called it "mediocre." Those two areas were the relationship with the Town of Floyd and emergency medical services (EMS).

In response to the question about what the County was not doing that it should be, the following responses were captured (flip charts #7 and #7a):

- Setting a strategic direction for the County.
- Financial management policies and planning.
- Capital planning and asset management.
- An annual review of progress toward meeting strategic priorities.
- Better financial reporting and projections utilizing the MUNIS system.
- Stronger procurement policies and practices.

- Having a dedicated County mechanic.

Finally, Mr. Payne asked if there was anything that the County was doing that it could or should stop doing. Suggestions were to “stop doing things the way that we have always done them,” and for the Board to stop being so concerned about citizen reaction and go ahead and act when adequate information has been provided. (Flip chart #8.)

Mr. Payne then asked the Board, “What is the mission of County government?” The response was, “To serve the citizens.” Mr. Payne agreed that providing necessary and desirable services to citizens was the fundamental mission of local government.

He then asked the Board to consider the “how” of County operations, values or operating principles that are important in how the County operates and, in its interactions, and relationships among the Board, with staff, and with citizens. This could be characterized as doing things ‘the right way.’ The Board identified the following values-or operating principles (flip charts #9 and #10):

- Property rights
- Protecting natural resources (water and more)
- Integrity
- Transparency – open communications
- Trust
- Staff development
- Respect for the culture and history of the County
- A “makers” approach; self-reliance
- Community and neighborliness
- Sound fiscal management

Dr. Millsaps then shared with the Board responses from County staff to three questions:

1. *What are the biggest challenges facing Floyd County?*
2. *What are the biggest challenges facing Floyd County government?*
3. *What is something that we do really well as a community or as a county government?*

The responses echoed some of the issues that had been raised by the Board and added some context. They are attached as an addendum to these notes. Dr. Millsaps said that senior staff and the school superintendent had been invited to attend that portion of the retreat in order to share their thoughts with the Board and answer questions. The additional staff were Mark Bolt, Building Official, Director of Public Safety Kevin Sowers, Director of Community and Economic Development Lydeana Martin, Director of Recreation Jacob Agee, and School Superintendent Dr. Jessica Cromer.

As it was noon, the Board recessed for lunch. The retreat reconvened at 1:30 p.m.

Dr. Millsaps offered the Board the opportunity to hear from the senior staff and the school superintendent who had come to the retreat. Mark Bolt and Kevin Sowers spoke to the Board

about challenges in delivering solid waste management and emergency medical services, respectively. Lydeana Martin addressed issues of economic development and housing. Jacob Agee talked about recreation programs and suggested the development of a parks and recreation master plan for the County with a goal of providing facilities and programs that would make the County more attractive to young individuals and families. School Superintendent Dr. Cromer shared with the Board her concerns about the potential impacts of the Governor's proposed budget, the increase in the County's Local Composite Index (LCI), and flat or falling average daily membership (ADM) on local school funding.

Mr. Payne remarked that during the day's discussions he had heard suggestions for more in-depth studies in several areas. He listed them on a flip chart and a few more were added in the ensuing discussion. Areas to consider for further study were (flip chart #11):

- Emergency Medical Services; service delivery standards, facilities, and staffing
- Solid Waste Management; green box sites, convenience centers, recycling
- Parks and Recreation; facilities and programs
- Economic Development
- Capital Improvement Planning, including asset management
- Long-term Financial Planning
- Comprehensive Plan update
- Schools Plan to address shrinking membership and funding

### **Major Strategic Goal Areas**

Mr. Payne noted that the Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2012, had included a list of goals intended to help the County achieve its vision. It also included a matrix of strategies, projects, and activities to advance the goals that the plan had identified. The matrix included priorities in terms of the time schedule for completion, identified responsible parties, and gave an idea of potential budget impact. Mr. Payne commented that the work done in 2012, although dated, formed the basics of a strategic plan for the County. He pointed out that many of the goals went beyond land use, the typical focus of comprehensive plans, and suggested that the County might consider developing a separate strategic plan that could then also inform the update of the comprehensive plan. He said that the Board had already identified vision and mission statements, and its values and operating principles, which are basic components of a strategic plan. He suggested that much of the remaining time for the retreat, leaving time for a budget presentation by Dr. Millsaps, be dedicated to affirming or amending the list of goals included in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan.

During the subsequent discussion the Board identified the following Strategic Goal Areas (flip charts #12 and #13):

- Farm and Forest Protection
- Environmental Protection (especially water)
- Economic Development
- Education
- Public Safety
- Housing

- Public Services
- Responsive and Effective Government

Mr. Payne advised that next steps would include providing short descriptors for each strategic goal area and then identifying specific actions, with timelines, under each strategic goal area. He said that he regretted that the time did not allow for that work to start that day but encouraged the Board to continue to flesh out the strategic plan in subsequent planning sessions. He then turned the floor over to Dr. Millsaps.

#### **FY 2025 Budget Preview (Flip charts #14 and #15)**

Dr. Millsaps spoke to a number of drivers, affecting both revenues and expenditures, which would influence the development of the FY 2025 Budget. She reported that revenues associated with EMS were showing growth and that she anticipated that Floyd Fest would bring in additional revenues in the areas of sales and transient occupancy taxes. The County was already seeing a small increase in sales tax revenues and the real estate tax collection rate was good. On the downside, meals tax revenues had flattened out. Dr. Millsaps reported that the County still had \$1.3-1.5 million in ARPA funds to spend, and that grand funding was being sought in several areas. She then identified some pressures on the upcoming budget, including schools funding, school bus replacement, a third truck for EMS, and the State budget. For the longer term, Dr. Millsaps said that she wanted to take a closer look at tourism related revenues.

As it was time for the retreat to adjourn, Mr. Payne thanked the Board for the opportunity to be of service to Floyd County and wished them the best.

The retreat adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Attachments: Transcription of Meeting Notes (w/Annotations)  
Compiled staff responses to questions about County challenges and operations.

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Transcription of Notes from Flip Charts  
(w/annotations for clarity)

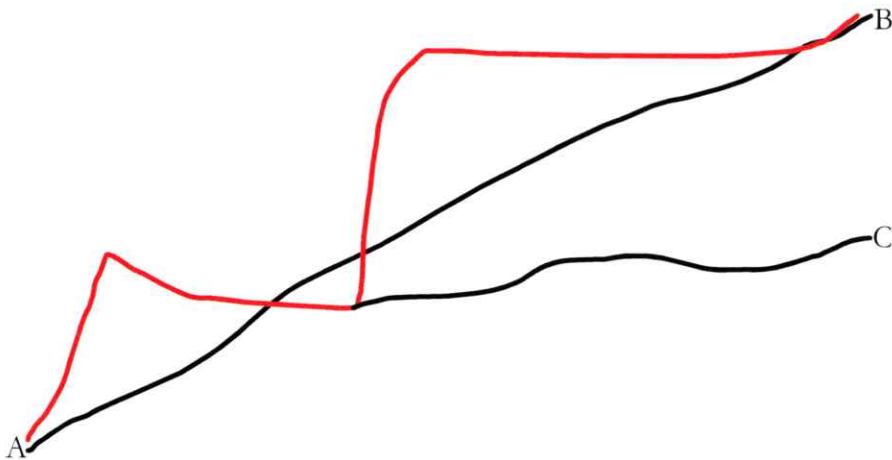
**Flip Chart #1**

FLOYD CO BOS  
1/18/2024

TODAY

- COLLECTIVE DIRECTION FOR THE COUNTY  
(STAFF UNDERSTANDING)
- CONCRETE PLANS            W/OFF RAMPS [in case needed]  
+FALLBACK PLANS
- BOS & STAFF MOVING IN THE SAME DIRECTION

**Flip Chart #2**



### Flip Chart #3

#### VISION

- RELATIONSHIP W/ TOWN  
MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL  
COLLABORATION
- EFFECTIVE & EFFICIENT SWM [Solid Waste Management] SYSTEM
- GOOD PSA
- ADEQUATE LAND FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES

### Flip Chart #4 [Vision cont.]

- ~~RELIABLE~~ PROTECTED H2O SUPPLY
- WORKFORCE HOUSING
- STRONG AG/FOREST SECTOR
- BEAUTIFUL RURAL/MTN ENVIRONMENT
- HEALTHY, SMALL, ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY
- STRONG EDUCATION SYSTEM

### Flip Chart #5

#### DO WELL

- BANK BLDG PURCHASE
- STAFF/BOS RELATIONSHIP
- NEW BUSINESS SUPPORT
- RELATIONSHIP W/ CITIZENS  
CONFIDENCE, COMMUNICATIONS
- BOS OPERATING AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL
- RELATIONSHIP W/ SCHOOLS



**Flip Chart #6**

NOT SO WELL

- OUTREACH & PARTICIPATION [to and by citizens]
- TIMELY, PROACTIVE DECISION MAKING
- RADIO SYSTEM
- IT [Information Technology]
- SOLID WASTE
- TRUE PARTNERSHIP W/ TOWN

**Unnumbered Flip Chart**

MEDIOCRE

- TOWN RELATIONSHIP
- EMS

**Flip Chart #7**

SHOULD BE DOING

- STRATEGIC DIRECTION
- FINANCIAL POLICY & PLANNING
- CAPITAL PLANNING  
ASSET MGMT.
- ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW
- BETTER PROJECTIONS & REPORTING W/ MUNIS

**Flip Chart #7a**

- STRONGER PROCUREMENT PRACTICES
- CO. MECHANIC

**Flip Chart #8**

STOP DOING?

- THE WAY WE HAVE ALWAYS DONE IT
- BEING SO CONCERNED ABOUT CITIZEN REACTION & [just] ACT

**Flip Chart #9**

VALUES / OPERATING PRINCIPLES

- PROPERTY RIGHTS
- PROTECTING RESOURCES (H2O +)
- INTEGRITY
- TRANSPARENCY – OPEN COMMUNICATION
- TRUST
- STAFF DEVELOPMENT

**Flip Chart #10 [Values, cont.]**

- RESPECT FOR HISTORY & CULTURE
- MAKERS
- SELF-RELIANCE
- COMMUNITY – NEIGHBORLINESS
- SOUND FISCAL MGMT.

**Flip Chart #11**

FURTHER PLANNING

EMS  
SWM  
P&R  
ECON. DEV.

CIP  
LONG-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN  
COMP PLAN  
SCHOOL PLAN

**Flip Chart #12 & #13**

STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS

- FARM & FOREST PROTECTION
- WATER ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- EDUCATION
- PUBLIC SAFETY
- HOUSING
- PUBLIC SERVICES
- RESPONSIVE EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

**Flip Chart #14**

BUDGET DRIVERS

EMS REVS ↑

FLOYD FEST TAX REV

TRANS OCC

DOWNSIDE  
MEALS TAX

SALES TAX INC

R.E. TAX – COLLECTION RATE GOOD

\$1.3-1.5 [million] ARPA \$  
GRANT \$

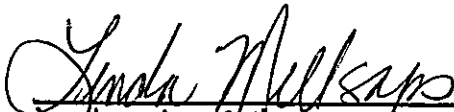
Flip Chart #15


BUDGET  
PRESSURES

SCHOOLS – ADM  
BUSES  
EMS – 3<sup>RD</sup> TRUCK  
STATE BUDGT

LONGER TERM

TOURISM RELATED REVENUES

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Linda Millsaps, County  
Administrator

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe D. Surman, Chairman