



JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes / July 1, 2010 / Chamber Board Room

Attendance: Codie Jenkins, Roy Knight, Jack Gorden, Wes Suiter, Mark Dunn, Kelly Holcomb, Dawn Glover, Trent Ashby, Jim Wehmeier, Susie Cardwell, Larry Phillips, Jerry Huffman, Carl Ray Polk, Paul Parker, Trey Henderson, Jody Anderson, Van Watson and Chris Moss

Chairman Ashby called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and thanked all attendees for their time and attendance.

CENSUS UPDATE:

Judge Suiter and Chairman Ashby updated the group on the progress of the 2010 Census. To date we are at the State average on responses which is above what our area has historically done. The Census has now taken over the process from local and are knocking on doors and calling to hit those that did not respond. We are optimistic for a positive show of growth over the past census and hopeful to hit the Metro number of 50,000.

STATE APPOINTMENTS UPDATE:

Chair of the Vision 20/20 Legislative committee, Chris Moss updated the group that Lufkin had another recently announced appointment to a State Commission and that Danny Vines had been announced as an appointment to a Statewide Biomass policy committee. Mr. Moss also intimated that there was yet another appointment that would be announced soon. The Committee commended the group for its success in this area and encouraged others to get involved.

Chairman Ashby turned the group's attention to the setting of local priorities for both state and federal legislation and requests. He first turned to Mayor Gorden to speak to the City's priorities and requested that the City, County, College and ISD lead us off and then others can add their thoughts.

CITY PRIORITIES:

Mayor Gorden started off the conversation mentioning several priorities for the City that are both current and ongoing. City priorities include:

- 1) Fighting unfunded mandates at both the state and federal level,
- 2) Making sure that Lufkin get's treated fairly with the second round of Hurricane Ike Disaster funding (the mayor updated the group on the constant state of flux regarding the IKE funding guidelines and the fact that Lufkin and all of DETCOG is getting the short end of the stick on funding and are finally standing up and fighting.
- 3) The mayor also mentioned the importance of downtown renovation and the Pines Theater specifically.
- 4) Lastly, the mayor mentioned the community's and areas ongoing battle to protect our water resources from legislative changes that could adversely affect our waters that we have bought and paid for.

COUNTY PRIORITIES:

Judge Suiter shared a list of county concerns that also led off with unfunded mandates.

- 1) The Judge stated that like the city, Angelina County was looking at a deficit of over \$1 million and that continuous unfunded mandates only exasperate the problem.
- 2) Judge Suiter also listed Revenue Caps,
- 3) the methodology of oil and gas valuations,
- 4) changes in TYC juvenile detention programs, and
- 5) saving the funding for the Angelina County Mental Health Emergent Care facility as major priorities.
- 6) Judge Suiter also shared a concern with the "Secure Rural Communities Act Funding going away.

COLLEGE PRIORITIES:

Dr. Phillips shared a short list but also offered to pass along the TJC legislative with the group for incorporation when it comes out in finished form in the near future. Among Dr. Phillips' priorities are:

- 1) Protecting Community College Funding (the State of Texas is cutting 5% of the funding for Community Colleges due to the Deficit while Community Colleges continue to grow much faster than 4 year Universities).

- 2) Second, Dr. Phillips brought the groups attention to new "dual and concurrent credit" legislation. Legislature made free some online dual credit which could be harmful to community colleges and not serve the student population well.

SCHOOL DISTRICT PRIORITIES:

Superintendent Knight shared a list of priorities for the ISD including:

- 1) Redistricting and the constant losing of legislative clout by rural communities.
- 2) Unfunded mandates inherent in the lack of fairness in the funding method across the state (different ISD's get significantly different amounts per child to educate our youth).
- 3) Also the lack of local control over ISD budgets is a major concern. 80% of Lufkin ISD's budget is salaries and due to state law, Step increases are mandatory and during lean times local ISD Boards do not have the authority to delay them etc. due to budget shortfalls.

After the Major Stakeholder / taxing entities provided their suggestions Mr. Ashby opened it up the floor for other comments. Mayor Gorden complimented the group on getting all the players in the same room and spoke to the importance of one voice and one agenda. Carl Ray Polk Jr. whole heartedly agreed with the mayor and reiterated the importance of one voice and one agenda.

It was also suggested by Trey Henderson that we utilize our other East Texas Partners and that we pull together at the 60,000 ft. level and support the area's cause in Austin and DC. Reference was made to the Valley and how organized they are and how powerful due to their organization.

The Chairman asked about timing of future meetings and it was decided that with the 2011 session soon upon us that we meet monthly for the time being.

The next meeting date will be shared with everyone at a later time.

With no other business the meeting was adjourned.