



# Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

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Nathan Ramsey, Chairman  
Bill Stanley, Vice Chairman

David Gantt, Commissioner  
Carol Weir Peterson, Commissioner  
David Young, Commissioner

June 22, 2006

The Honorable Terry Bellamy, Mayor  
The Honorable Holly Jones, Vice Mayor  
The Honorable Robin Cape, Councilwoman  
The Honorable Jan Davis, Councilman  
The Honorable Brian Freeborn, Councilman  
The Honorable Carl Mumpower, Councilman  
The Honorable Brownie Newman, Councilman

Dear Asheville City Council:

County Commissioners remain open-minded and open to negotiating the best outcome for all citizens around management of water services in our region. The meeting of State, County, and City officials on June 12, 2006 was a good opportunity to clear the air and hear the concerns at all levels of government.

When the City terminated the regional water agreement a year ago, we were concerned about the financial impact those actions would have on County residents who live inside the City of Asheville. Indeed, the City began the FY2007 budget process with a stated \$2.4 million revenue shortfall. We were happy to read the City Manager's budget message and see that the City "successfully addressed this budget deficit through a collaborative process of identifying cost savings, reducing expenditures and re-engineering processes in a manner that will not reduce services to the public."

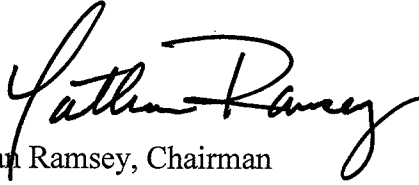
We continue to strongly believe that an independent water authority is the best solution for the region. However, we also believe that continued perceived strife between our governments is not good for our organizations or the community. Therefore, we are prepared to offer the following solution to the water issues:

- Water will be a Municipal system.
- The County and the water districts will transfer to the City both the title and responsibility for all water facilities.
- There will be no differential rates.
- There will be no diversion of water revenues, and this will be verified annually through an independent review.
- Water will not be used as a tool to force annexation.
- The City will transfer to the County both title and responsibility for McCormick Field, Nature Center, Golf Course, Recreation Park, and the Civic Center. (This relieves the City of a net operating loss that is currently \$1.1 million annually and which will grow substantially in the future. Additionally, the County could address the much-needed and long-deferred issue of improving or replacing the Civic Center.)
- All lawsuits on water issues and any related claims will be dropped.
- The County and the City will cooperate in seeking the appropriate legislation necessary to implement this agreement.

We are now at a critical time, and we have tried hard to make an offer that, although not our first choice or yours, is better than the current path towards resolution of this issue in the courts. However, if you do not agree with us, then we feel we have no choice but to take action to protect the interests of all of the citizens of Buncombe County.

We look forward to your response to our offer as well as your continued commitment to seek mutually beneficial solutions for our community.

Sincerely,



Nathan Ramsey, Chairman



Bill Stanley, Vice Chairman



David Gantt, Commissioner



Carol Peterson, Commissioner



David Young, Commissioner

cc: Senator Martin L. Nesbitt, Jr.  
Senator Tom Apodaca  
Representative Wilma M. Sherrill  
Representative Bruce Goforth  
Representative Susan C. Fisher  
Buncombe County Commissioners  
Gary Jackson, Asheville City Manager  
Wanda Greene, Buncombe County Manager  
Charles L. Haltiwanger, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Board Chair  
Rick Lutovsky, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce President  
Chairman Bill Moyer, Henderson County Commission  
Mayor Will Kennedy, Town of Black Mountain  
Mayor George Goosman, Town of Biltmore Forest  
Joe Martin, Woodfin Water and Sewer District Director  
Mayor Jerry VeHaun, Town of Woodfin  
Mayor Bett Stroud, Town of Weaverville  
Mayor Letta Jean Taylor, Town of Montreat  
Joy Franklin, Asheville Citizen-Times