

**CHATHAM COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ABSTRACT**

ITEM NUMBER:
MEETING DATE:
01/22/2008 Work Session

PART A

Subject: Consideration of Closed Session Minutes Policy
Action Requested: Approve revised Closed Session Minutes Policy.
Attachments: **A.** Draft of Policy showing actual revisions; Final version of Policy for Adoption

Submitted By:

Kevin W. Whiteheart
County Attorney

Date

County Manager Review:

Charlie Horne, County Manager

Date

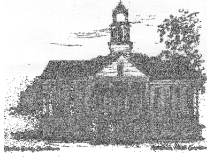
This abstract requires review by:

- County Attorney** _____
Date Reviewed
- Finance Officer** _____
Date Reviewed
- Budget Officer** _____
Date Reviewed

PART B

Introduction & Background:

The Board of Commissioners requested that the County Attorney work with John Graybeal, Esquire to look at revising the Closed Session Minutes Policy to address comments and concerns raised at the September 17, 2007 meeting. After reviewing and discussing the areas where revisions should be made, John undertook a complete review of the draft Policy previously considered by the Board. Attached to this Agenda Abstract is a marked-up version identifying the portions of the Policy which were revised. Also attached is the "Final" draft of the Policy containing these revisions for the Board's consideration and approval. If adopted, the Closed Session Minutes Policy would apply to all boards of Chatham County.



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Discussion & Analysis:

John Graybeal made very careful and thoughtful revisions to the Policy. A synopsis of the revisions include:

*Expanding the defined purpose of the Policy;

*Removal of the text of the Public Records Law from the body of the Policy. The text is included in an appendix to the Policy; of the

*Addition of a "nutshell" or bullet points for determining whether or when to hold a closed session. The first concept in this section is to strongly discourage the use of closed sessions whenever possible.

*Instructions in a "plain English" style for keeping a general account of the matters discussed in closed session, and the process for creating, keeping and releasing drafts and final versions of general accounts and minutes of closed sessions;

*Identification of the limited types of matters that may be discussed in closed sessions;

*Clarification of the methods for releasing copies of drafts and final versions of general accounts and minutes of closed sessions.

Having reviewed John's revisions, I strongly endorse his changes and improvements to the document. The Policy promotes a greater sensitivity to the use of closed sessions, and provides more clarity in the ways to prepare and release drafts and final versions of general accounts and minutes in a more timely manner.

Budgetary Impact:

None anticipated.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Commissioners adopt the revised Closed Session Minutes Policy.

Suggested Motion:

Move that the Board adopt the Closed Session Minutes Policy as amended.