

Blaine Young delivers new management style

Patti S. Borda News-Post Staff | Posted: Wednesday, January 12, 2011 12:00 am

As president of the Board of County Commissioners, Blaine Young is sticking to his campaign pledges to change the way Frederick County does business and helps business.

Speaking to The Frederick News-Post's Editorial Board on Tuesday, Young broadly outlined commissioners' efforts to increase jobs, create predictable regulations for business, enhance public safety, balance agricultural preservation with strategic development opportunities and improve transportation. One goal possible privatization of some government services was added by his fellow commissioners.

He also said he would serve only one elected term.

In an emotional moment, Young said he would not serve more than one term and would not seek a county executive position if one were created because he does not want to miss too much of his young sons' activities.

They have had to adjust to his unpredictable schedule.

"I came from a political family," he said. "That was one of the things that drove me crazy as a kid."

After his term as commissioner is up, he said he would retire from political office and return to running his jointly owned taxi business -- at least until his sons, now ages 7 and 9, have graduated from high school.

"They are the world to me," he said.

Young, who first became a commissioner by appointment in March and then by election in November, brings a new management style to his office: He gets consensus from other commissioners and sets County Manager Barry Stanton loose to implement the board's wishes.

Young said this board will not micromanage when there is staff to do the job. He credited Stanton with having previously untapped potential.



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Frederick County Commissioners President Blaine Young speaks to The Frederick News-Post's Editorial Board on Tuesday afternoon about various issues.

He has directed Stanton to meet with more than 100 businesses to assess the areas where changes might help business interests thrive.

By the end of the month, Stanton said he hoped to bring three or four ideas to the commissioners for discussion. That process will continue over the next several months, with commissioners taking up as many as 40 ideas originating from the businesses.

He also wants to keep business development corridors open through zoning and land management, and possibly by reconsidering some of the zoning changes included in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. He said commissioners will consider the individual merits of each zoning case brought for reconsideration.

He objected to the county's rezoning land without consideration for the loss of value the property owner had to bear.

Department managers are reporting to Stanton with ideas for privatization, and the commissioners plan to visit Sandy Springs, Ga., to see its success with privatizing services.

Young and Stanton said they recognized that department heads may be reluctant to find outsourcing opportunities affecting their departments, but no department will be exempt, Young said.

Young said he would like to keep more of the estimated 3,500 federal employees at work in the county. To that end, he is trying to get the Social Security Administration and the Department of Homeland Security to open offices here.

"We should make sure we do everything we can," he said.

It is time again for the voters to decide whether to adopt a county executive form of government, Young said. Twenty years ago the idea was rejected, but a charter-writing committee will start exploring the idea in March.

The intention is to have the measure on the 2012 presidential ballot, for possible implementation in 2014. If the charter-writing committee suggests a countywide police force in place of an elected sheriff and deputies, Young said the idea is doomed.

An estimated \$11.8 million deficit in the general fund for fiscal 2012 is one of the overarching concerns Young has when he reviews expenses and cost savings. Another is a possible \$15 million expense for teacher pensions if they are shifted from state responsibility.

Stanton said Young's management style is completely different from his public persona as radio talk-show host.

The Blaine Young on the radio is not the Blaine Young managing the county government, Stanton said.