

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET WORKSHOP
Wednesday, May 11, 2005
5:00 P.M.

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above stated date and at the above stated time in the Dempsey B. Herring Courthouse Annex Building located at 112 West Smith Street, Whiteville, North Carolina, for the purpose of holding a Budget Workshop.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Sammie Jacobs, **Chairman**
 Kipling Godwin, **Vice Chairman**
 Amon E. McKenzie
 James E. Prevatte
 Bill Memory
 Lynwood Norris
 David L. Dutton, Jr.

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Billy Joe Farmer, **County Manager**
 James E. Hill, Jr., **County Attorney**
 Darren L. Currie, **Assistant County Manager**
 June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**
 Roxanne Coleman, **Finance Officer**

BUDGET WORKSHOP CALLED TO ORDER:

At 5:00 P.M., Chairman Jacobs called the Budget Workshop to order. Chairman Jacobs stated he appreciated everyone's input and attendance at this meeting. He requested each listed entity to present their information in the order that was listed on the Budget Schedule.

1. **Columbus County Schools:** Tommy Nance, Superintendent, stated the following:
 - A. Some of the major increases in our budget are due to the information given by the Columbus County Fire Marshall that we had to increase the cafeteria space in two (2) schools, which are Williams Township, at a cost of \$383,000, and Cerro Gordo Elementary School, at a cost of \$416,000.
 - B. Guideway Elementary School gymnasium has been in operation for years without any restrooms, and this needs to be corrected.
 - C. \$80,000 Increase in vehicles and mowing equipment.
 - D. I do not need to express how important education is to our children and our future.
 - E. Our budget has been cut in the previous years, and our funds are getting down to the critical stage.
 - F. We sincerely appreciate what the County Commissioners are doing to help build Williams Township School back.
 - G. We know you have a tough job in providing funds for all that is required, and, all we are asking you, is to do the best you can with what you have to work with.

2. **Whiteville City Schools:** Danny McPherson, Superintendent, stated the following:
 - A. Due to a decrease in funding, the number of assistant principals has been cut;
 - B. Only \$5.71 per student is allocated by Columbus County, and the State Average is doubled that;
 - C. We have been notified that the ADM Funds may be cut, and this will mean a loss of \$750,000;
 - D. Space is very critical at Whiteville Primary and Whiteville High School;
 - E. State is requiring us to reduce class size, therefore, requiring more classrooms, but is not providing us with a means of providing such;
 - F. We do not run track at Whiteville High School anymore because of the condition of the tract that present a safety problem;
 - G. Our buildings are very old and needs a lot of repair and/or replacement; **and**
 - H. We know the County Commissioners are faced with too many requests and not enough funds each year, but, all we ask is that you do the best you can with what you have to work with.

3. **Southeastern Community College:** Kathy Matlock, President, and Lonnie Fox stated the following:
 - A. In the spring of 2002, the Columbus County Board of Commissioners allowed us to transfer funds from Capital Outlay to Operating Expenses, and that helped us get through that year;

- B. We received a one (1) time grant from the College Foundation;
 - C. Our budget carries two (2) vacant custodial positions;
 - D. We have a 200,000 square foot campus; **and**
 - E. We hope to get the level of funding like we received in 2001.
4. **Sheriff's Department:** Sheriff Christopher Batten stated the following:
- A. I have included an amount in this budget for some TASERs, which shoot out electronic charges to the criminals that resist arrest who are very powerful and take many officers to subdue;
 - B. I have included an amount for some Stop Sticks which are used in chase situations (these are used to deflate tires);
 - C. I have requested a twenty-five (25%) percent increase in fuel due the gas prices;
 - D. I think we should look at more fuel-efficient vehicles;
 - E. We have one hundred three (103) employees;
 - F. Tabor City and Fair Bluff have agreed to pay part of the salary for the vacant position which will do felonies for them;
 - G. We will need ten (10) new vehicles this year which should level us out, and basically we will need this same amount each year thereafter; **and**
 - H. No significant change in the other line items.

NOTE OF INTEREST STATED BY JAMES E. HILL, JR., COLUMBUS COUNTY ATTORNEY:

James E. Hill, Jr., Columbus County Attorney, stated extreme caution needed to be exercised when doing the Lease-Purchase Agreements for vehicles. If you should violate the conditions of the requirements of the Local Government Commission, and go over the \$10 Million financing limit, then you will be forced to pay one (1%) percent over the, then, prime rate, and one-half (½%) percent pre-payment premium.

5. **Health Department:** Kimberly Smith, Director, stated the following:
- A. No local county money is involved in the majority of our programs;
 - B. Out of twenty (20) programs, we're asking for money for only three (3) programs;
 - C. A large percentage of our revenue comes from the State through Medicare and Medicaid; **and**
 - D. The Point of Care System involves \$1 million.
6. **Social Services Department:** Larry Moore, Interim Director, stated the following:
- A. This budget was extremely difficult to deal with since I was not a part of its creation;
 - B. I concentrated on the areas with the greatest increases which I do not think need that much of an increase;
 - C. I did take out the large increase in the Director's salary;
 - D. The salaries of the employees were done in such a convoluted way, I could not determine what needed to be done there; **and**
 - E. I did the best job I could from what information was afforded to me.
7. **Emergencies Services:** Ronnie Hayes, Director, stated the following:
- A. I have six (6) different budgets which are: 1) Fire Marshal; 2) Emergency Services; 3) Emergency Medical Services; 4) Emergency Telephone Systems E-911; 5) Emergency Telephone Systems Wireless 911; and, 6) GIS;
 - B. There are some increases in areas where we are mandated to meet certain requirements; **and**
 - C. No significant increases in the other areas.
8. **Maintenance:** Leroy Sellers, Director, stated the following:
- A. Within the Maintenance Budget, there are nine (9) different departments as follows:
 - 500 Courthouse and Grounds;
 - 501 Judges Chambers;
 - 502 Social Services Building;
 - 503 Administration Building/Grounds;
 - 504 Senior Center Building;
 - 505 Miller Building;
 - 506 Public Buildings - All;
 - 507 Farm Services Building; **and**

515 District Court;

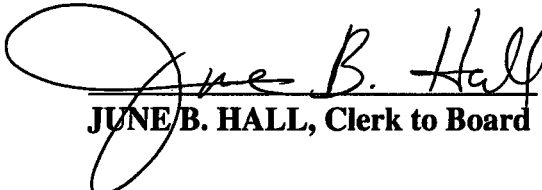
- B. I am considering replacing the carpet at the Social Services Building in the high-traffic areas due to the condition;
 - C. We are working on getting rid of the boilers in the Miller Building, and eventually hope to eliminate all the boilers in the County buildings;
 - D. No significant increase.
9. **Water Department:** Leroy Sellers, Superintendent, stated the following:
- A. The percentage of the cost for maintaining quality water for the residents of Columbus County is figured at the following percentages for each district:

District I	25%;
District II	30%;
District III	30%;
District IV	5%;
District V	5%; and
Acme	5%;
 - B. The Water Advisory Committee has recommended that the flat rate for Deerfield Estates and Lakeland Village be brought up to levels with District I, and will be figured in the 2005-2006 budget at \$21.00;
 - C. I have put in a water line in Bird Case Estate which consists of nine (9) houses in a short distance, which I think will be profitable; **and**
 - D. No significant change.
10. **Administration/Governing Body:** Billy Joe Farmer, County Manager, stated the following:
- A. In the Administration Budget, we have included \$6,000 for Internet wiring for the Board Room and projection screen, and for codification of County Ordinances;
 - B. In the Governing Body, we have included \$15,000 for indexing of Minutes of County Commissioners' Meeting from 1868 to the present; **and**
 - C. No other significant changes.
11. **Airport:** Phil Edwards, Secretary of the Columbus County Airport Authority, stated the following:
- A. I have included \$2,000 for a computer and printer for the Airport; **and**
 - B. No significant changes in other areas.

Chairman Jacobs stated the Board of County Commissioners would take these requests under consideration.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Dutton made a motion to adjourn the Budget Workshop, seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.


 JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

APPROVED:

 SAMMIE JACOBS, Chairman

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