

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Proposed 2010 - 2011 Columbus County Operating Budget Workshop

Thursday, June 03, 2010

6:00 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 conducting the second **Workshop** for the **Proposed 2010 - 2011 Columbus County Operating Budget**.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Edwin Russ **Chairman**
 Giles E. Byrd, **Vice Chairman**
 Amon E. McKenzie
 James E. Prevatte
 Ricky Bullard
 Ronald Gore

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

William S. Clark, **County Manager**
 Mike Stephens, **County Attorney**
 June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**
 Bobbie Faircloth, **Finance Director**

COMMISSIONER ABSENT:

Lynwood Norris

WORKSHOP CALLED to ORDER:

At 6:00 P.M., Chairman P. Edwin Russ called the Proposed 2010 - 2011 Columbus County Operating Budget Workshop to order.

READING of WORKSHOP PROCEDURES:

Chairman P. Edwin Russ stated the following:

1. First, the workshop meeting is to inform the Board and permit discussion - no final action is taken;
2. Second, the procedures are less formal than at a regular meeting, but such meetings are part of the decision-making process, deliberations are going on, and therefore, they constitute "official meetings"; **and**
3. The purpose of this Budget Workshop is to discuss with Mr. Clark and Bobbie Faircloth the Proposed 2010 - 2011 Columbus Country Operating Budget.

INVOCATION:

The invocation was delivered by Commissioner Ricky Bullard.

PROCEDURE for WORKSHOP:

Chairman Russ stated the procedure that will be followed is that each Commissioner will be allowed one (1) question at a time until all six (6) Commissioners have asked their questions of their choosing and allow Mr. Clark and Bobbie to submit any additional information if they would like to do so.

DISCUSSION - QUESTIONS - COMMENTS:

Commissioner Gore:

Page 24 - Office Supplies have increased from \$15,000 to \$18,000, and I find that similar throughout the entire budget;

Page 37 - Departmental Supplies have increased \$151,000. What is the explanation for this large increase?

Bobbie Faircloth replied stating this amount includes the in-camera video systems for the vehicles which is estimated at \$168,000, replacement of portable radios, batteries, fingerprinting, crime scene supplies, toner, ammo, etc.

Commissioner Gore stated that he was highly opposed to this increase in Departmental Supplies. The Sheriff has requested 12 vehicles and you are recommending 6. I am not in favor of any

vehicles at all.

A lengthy discussion was conducted relative to the dollar amount reflected in the budget being grant money or taxpayers' money.

Commissioner Prevatte: stated the following:

1. Last year, I pointed out to the Sheriff that his budget has increased over 100% in the last 5 years;
2. He has added deputies every year, got additional cars every year, and got additional equipment every year;
3. The people are telling me they want protection, but they are also telling me that for a county that has 54,000 people, we have got one of the largest Sheriff's Department around, and there is a time to bring this to an end;
4. I am not in favor of additional cars unless we cut it down to 3;
5. I have talked to Bladen, Brunswick and Robeson Counties and they are telling me they are giving no salary increases, terminating some positions, enacting a hiring freeze and cutting to the bare bones in order to balance their budget;
6. It is true we have a healthy fund balance, but we still need to be conservative in our spending until the economy turns around; **and**
7. The departmental supplies should stay the same as this year, with no increase, and no increase in office supplies.

Commissioner Bullard: stated the following:

1. Relative to the office supplies, could you give the same percentage (1-2%) to each department due to inflation?;
2. Page 37: the grant money needs to be took out of the budget completely, or listed on a separate line item to show a true figure;
3. On the Sheriff's Department, the vehicles requested is probably double what he really wants, and Mr. Clark was to come up with a schedule of the vehicles as they are aging out and need to be replaced; **and**
4. I am in favor of holding the vehicles to 3.

After a discussion was conducted relative to the vehicles, the following resulted:

- The need for a vehicle replacement schedule;
- What to base the replacement vehicles on;
- The Sheriff's Department has 94 vehicles;
- Allowing the Sheriff to determine what cars need to be replaced;

Commissioner Prevatte: stated the following:

1. Who pays the deputies that patrol the Town of Brunswick, and the deputies that attend the school events?;
2. The amount being paid to the deputies does not cover all the expenses involved; **and**
3. I have personally witnessed an off-duty deputy, earning extra time working an event, sit in one spot and allow the patrol car to run one and one-half (1 ½) hours continuously.

Commissioner McKenzie: stated the following:

1. I do agree that the grant dollars need to be broken out of the line items to show the actual grant dollars that are involved;
2. We need to trust the manager's decisions on the budget; **and**
3. We have a recommendation to not fund any recreation, and I am recommending that we fund one half to those that have been previously funded, and let them know that this is the last year of any funding.

After discussion was conducted, a general consensus was conducted with the following results:

Commissioner Gore	No funding
Commissioner Bullard	Same amount as last year and let them know that this is the last year of any funding
Vice Chairman Byrd	No funding
Chairman Russ	No funding
Commissioner Prevatte	No funding
Commissioner McKenzie	Same as last year

The results of the general consensus is four (4) in favor of no funding and two (2) in favor of the same amount as last year with notification that this would be the last year of funding.

DISCUSSION of ITEMS on LIST from the MAY 27, 2010 BUDGET WORKSHOP:

Item #1: Water Districts Fee Increase:

In-depth discussion was conducted relative to the following:

1. Set the flat rate at \$25.00 for all five (5) districts, and leave the additional gallons usage fee at \$4.00;
2. The reason for raising the rates is to create seed money and working capital;
3. Ways to finance the interconnection between Water District I and Water District II;
4. Ways to finance a backup well for Water District III;
5. Elimination of the \$160,000 paid to the Town of Tabor City by Water District I for water;
6. Finding a way to eliminate the special taxes in Water Districts II and III; **and**
7. Building a fund balance for aging equipment, etc.

_____The general consensus of the discussion was to set the flat rate at \$25.00 for all 5 water districts and keep the additional gallons usage fee at \$4.00.

Item #2: Special Appropriations - Funding the Dream Center at ½ requested amount (\$20,000 was requested):

Commissioner McKenzie stated this was a request I made and keep on.

Item #3: Special Appropriations - Funding the Southeastern Oratoria:

_____Do not fund.

Item #4: Special Appropriations - Funding the American Legion:

Accept manager's recommendation and not fund.

Item #5: Suggested 2 ½% COLA and 1% 401K:

In-depth discussion was conducted relative to the following:

1. The most beneficial way to do the salary increase for the employee;
2. The most economical method for Columbus County to be able to help the employees;
3. The total cost of a 1%, 2%, 2 ½% increase for COLA and a 1% 401K; **and**
4. The method in which to give the COLA.

After lengthy discussion, it was the general consensus of the Board to approve a five hundred and 00/100 (\$500.00) dollars salary increase, to be added to the base rate, across the board, with no exceptions, and to 401K.

Item #6: Reallocate Salaries to all water districts:

William S. Clark, County Manager, stated this had already been done.

Item #7: Solid Waste Fee Increase:

After a brief discussion was conducted, it was the general consensus of the Board to agree to a five and 00/100 (\$5.00) dollars Solid Waste fee increase.

Item #8: Health Department Fee Increases:

After discussion was conducted, it was the general consensus of the Board to **not** increase the Environmental Health Fees, and if and when needed to charge only for the cost of the needed kit **only**.

Item #9: Sheriff's Vehicles:

In-depth discussion was conducted relative to the following:

1. The total number of vehicles at the Sheriff's Department
2. The mileage on the vehicles;
3. The number of vehicles in the School Resource Officers Program, and the method in which they are leased;
4. The usage of the types of vehicles, and how to better utilize them; **and**
5. The number of additional vehicles to be approved.

After additional discussion was conducted, it was a dead-lock consensus, three (3) members in favor of three (3) additional vehicles, and three (3) members in favor of four (3) additional vehicles, and one (1) member absent.

SCHEDULED BUDGET WORKSHOP:

After a brief discussion, it was the general consensus of the Board to wait until these recommended changes have been made to the Proposed 2010 - 2011 Columbus County Operating Budget before another workshop date was set.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:09 P.M., Commissioner Prevatte made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

APPROVED:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

P. EDWIN RUSS, Chairman