

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET WORKSHOP #1
Thursday, June 02, 2011
6:30 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 a Budget Workshop.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Giles E. Byrd **Chairman** (Arrived: 6:43 P.M.)
Amon E. McKenzie, **Vice Chairman**
James E. Prevatte
Lynwood Norris
Ricky Bullard
Charles T. McDowell

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

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

COMMISSIONER ABSENT:

P. Edwin Russ

BUDGET WORKSHOP CALLED to ORDER, INVOCATION and PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE:

At 6:30 P.M., in the absence of the Chairman, Vice Chairman Amon E. McKenzie called the June 02, 2011 Columbus County Proposed 2011 - 2012 Operating Budget Workshop to order. The invocation was delivered by Commissioner James E. Prevatte. Everyone in attendance stood and pledged Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America which was led by Vice Chairman Amon E. McKenzie.

INTRODUCTION:

Vice Chairman McKenzie stated we are not scheduled to have any questions, discussion or comments from the audience, but if there is something you need to talk about, raise your hand and you will be recognized. I would like for us to take this time to remember our fellow Board member who was in an accident and is now recovering. I will request that William S. Clark, County Manager, deliver a summary of the Budget Message that was delivered at the May 16, 2011 Board Meeting.

William S. Clark, County Manager, stated the following:

1. We do present a balanced budget as we are required to do without a property tax increase;
2. We did have one (1) user fee increase and that was for solid waste in the trash collection area;
3. We did recommend a 2% COLA or \$500.00 for our employees;
4. We did note that our retirement contribution has increased for approximately \$88,000 in additional funding;
5. We noted that we still have a hiring freeze on new positions;
6. We had a 5 1/3% increase in our health insurance, however, we did have to increase our co-pays and deductibles;
7. No increase in water district rates;
8. We have a 5% increase across the board for all school systems, both in operations and in capital outlay;
9. Bobbie has handed out some corrections to the budget;
10. We have handed out a list of the capital outlay broken down by what was recommended to be funded, what was not funded and what was requested; **and**
11. You also have some pie charts on where the revenues, and where the expenses come from.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Bullard: What type of formula did you use to figure the indirect cost to the General Fund?

Bobbie Faircloth: We actually have a company, Maximus, Incorporated, that gets the information from us and then they process this and then let us know the results

Commissioner Bullard: So, we really don't know the actual formulas that they are using.

Bobbie Faircloth: No, Actually, the formula they use is listed in the book they give us and we have an agreement with them to do this work.

Commissioner McDowell: How many positions do we actually have that have gone unfilled because of the last few budget years?

William S. Clark: We have not created any new positions. We have filled vacant positions.

Commissioner McDowell: So, you have not cut staff.

William S. Clark: We have had a few positions that were vacant that we have not filled, but if a manager comes and states that it is a critical position, we need to fill it, and we can afford to do it, then we fill it.

Chairman Byrd: The number of employees reported at the May 16, 2011 Board Meeting varies from the number that is being stated tonight. Where is the difference?

Bobbie Faircloth: The number reported could have included the budgeted positions but not filled. At this time, we have 505 full-time positions.

Commissioner Bullard: The COLA that is recommended, the \$500 or the 2%, do you have a figure on each one of these of what it would cost the County?

Bobbie Faircloth: The total cost will be \$332,878.51.

Chairman Byrd: I would like to know how many employees will be getting more than the \$500.00. I think we need to know because we are trying to help the lower paid employees. Last year, it was across the board. This year, it is recommended both ways, and I think we need to focus on what is the 2% going to do for x number of employees and what is the \$500.00 going to do.

Commissioner Bullard: I want the cost of the \$500.00 per employee and I want the cost of the 2% above the \$25,000.00.

Bobbie Faircloth: For the employees that make \$25,000 or less who will get the \$500.00, it would be \$84,000.00 of additional cost. For those that make \$25,000.00 or more, who will get the 2%, the cost will be \$239,878.51.

Chairman Byrd: In numbers, how many employees fall in the \$84,000.00 and how many employees in the \$239,878.51?

Bobbie Faircloth: There is 168 employees that will be receiving the \$500.00, and there are 378 that will be receiving the 2%.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: I know this budget is tight but I believe in compensating our employees with the monetary amount, and I support it. This will give us an opportunity to catch up with some of the surrounding counties. Our employees deserve this, and if we can afford to do this, we need to do it.

Commissioner Bullard: Bobbie, what is the figure if you do \$500.00 for every employee of the county?

Bobbie Faircloth: The cost would be \$252,500.00.

Chairman Byrd: This additional cost of the increase for the employees does not include longevity pay.

William S. Clark: The figure provided to you for the cost of the longevity pay is incorrect, and the cost is running approximately \$480,000.00 annually.

Chairman Byrd: I understand that some counties are no longer giving longevity pay. They are doing this as a budget cutback.

Commissioner Bullard: How much has our revenue increased over the last 2 years from the tax we collect here in the County?

Bobbie Faircloth: I would have to get you that information.

Commissioner Bullard: You have a certain amount of growth you will have each year from new homes being built, etc., and this gives me an idea of how much extra money we will have instead of pulling out of the General Fund, from the profit the County makes from one year to the next. How much extra property tax money are we bringing in from one year ago to this one?

Bobbie Faircloth: I can give you an estimate of this year that we are in now, but last year the actual figure that we brought in was \$26,843,247.00.

Commissioner Bullard: I am asking how much more money have we brought from one year to the next. How much growth in tax money have we brought in from 2009-2010.

Bobbie Faircloth: I don't have that figure right now, but I will get that figure for you.

Commissioner Bullard: I would like to have it. I would like to have the growth for the last 3 years.

Commissioner Prevatte: I have 2 questions. Did I understand you to say \$332,873.51 before? Is that what you said?

Commissioner McDowell: \$332,873.51.

Commissioner Prevatte: If you will refer to page 23 . . .

Bobbie Faircloth: That is just the salary COLA portion of it. That is not adding the additional FICA.

Commissioner Prevatte: On page 23, you said the salary total was \$336,796. You also said there were \$25,765 for FICA Contribution.

Bobbie Faircloth: That is just the actual COLA for the salaries. That is not including the increase that you will have to pay for the retirement, etc.

Commissioner Prevatte: If you look at the whole thing, you are looking at \$400,000.00.

Bobbie Faircloth: With the FICA, the salaries, the longevity, the retirement.

Commissioner Prevatte: Last year, when we gave the \$500.00, I think I misunderstood something that was in The New Reporter, at least I hope I did, because my understanding was when we gave the \$500.00, it went the employee's base salary. The purpose was to move the schedule a step up. I read somewhere in the paper that it was a one-time thing. It is not a one-time thing. Once it goes in and added to that step, it raises that step. It will be in addition.

William S. Clark: It was not a one-time bonus.

Commissioner Prevatte: The following handout distributed by Mr. Clark/Bobbie Faircloth needs to be addressed.

CAPITAL OUTLAY REQUEST

DEPARTMENT	ITEM	COST FUNDED	COST UNFUNDED
Courthouse & Grounds	Roof at DA's Office	28,000	
Public Bldgs-All Others	Paving of Library Parking Lot	32,000	
Sheriff's Department	6 Vehicles @ \$20,756	124,536	
	6 Vehicles @ \$20,756		124,536
	Equipment for 6 vehicles	30,000	
	Equipment for 6 vehicles		30,000
	8 in-car videos @ \$6,000	48,000	
	8 in-car videos @ \$6,000		48,000
Emergency Services	3/4 Ton 4WD extended cab pickup	35,000	
Soil & Water Conservation District	Used 4 WD vehicle	8,000	
Health Department	Air Conditioner (5 Ton)	7,000	
Department of Social Services	1 Van @ 25,000	25,000	
	1 Van @ 25,000		25,000
Parks & Recreation	Carver Community Park	7,500	
	Mt. Olive Community Park		7,500
Department of Aging	Used Van	10,000	
	Building lease		60,000
Water & Sewer Districts I-V	2 Trucks @ 16,900	33,800	
	2 Trucks @ 16,900		33,800

DEPARTMENT	ITEM	COST FUNDED	COST UNFUNDED
	Weedeaters	600	
	Mower	3,500	
	1 Ton utility truck		31,000
	Decrease in cost of mower		2,385
Solid Waste	Tractor	26,000	
	2 30-Yard Containers for recycling (2 @ 5,000)	10,000	
	1 30-Yard Container for recycling		5,000
POTW	Truck		15,000
	Radio System		800
	Lights		500
	County Logo		120
	Toolbox		150
Fire Marshal	3/4Ton 4 WD Extended cab pickup		35,000
Building Inspections	Ford Ranger Ext Cab		17,200
TOTAL:		428,936	435,991

Emergency Services:

Commissioner Prevatte: Emergency Services is requesting a 3/4 ton 4 WD extended cab pickup at \$35,000.00, and I understand it is to pull a disaster trailer. That is a big truck for no more disasters than I hope we have. Is somebody going to be driving that truck around all the time when we are not having a disaster?

Chairman Byrd: My understanding of that is the truck will pull a command center, but my question was doesn't the Sheriff have a bus, etc., that goes to any emergency like that?

Jeremy Jernigan: This truck is not just for pulling a trailer. A lot of times our trucks who run department supplies, we haul foam, fuel, water and fire-fighting gear, fire-fighting trailers at different locations. The reason we are looking for an extended cab truck is a lot of times I wind up hauling fire fighters' equipment to other counties. On several occasions, we end up having to enter into a swampy area to look for people. On fire investigations, the roads are often very bad.

Commissioner Bullard: What will this vehicle be doing when you are not rescuing people?

Jeremy Jernigan: It will be used as a day-to-day vehicle.

Commissioner Bullard: Are you looking at diesel or gas?

Jeremy Jernigan: We are looking at what will give us the best gas mileage. The vehicle itself will cost \$25,000. The remaining \$10,000 will be for the radios and lights on it that we need.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: You will not be able to purchase a diesel vehicle like this for \$25,000.

Commissioner Bullard: When you are not using this vehicle for its purpose and just day-to-day usage, that is where I have a problem with it, because you are looking at using more gasoline, more expensive tires, higher service bills.

Jeremy Jernigan: We do have one in operation right now, but when it is out of town, we have to find another vehicle to use.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: If you do have a vehicle like this, it needs to be driven because it is not good to just let it sit.

Commissioner Prevatte: I agree with what you are saying, but it is embarrassing for an employee to be seen driving a vehicle like this with only one person involved and they are eating lunch.

Sheriff's Vehicles:

Chairman Byrd: Have we discussed the Sheriff's Department's Vehicles?

Commissioner Bullard: How many vehicles did the Sheriff's Department get last year, Mr. Clark?

William S. Clark: The Sheriff's Department received 4 from the County, and two vehicles were

received from the Governor's Safety Program.

Commissioner McDowell: Are the maintenance and durability of the different makes comparable? Are there vehicles, quite frankly, that are better vehicles that we can get versus being less attractive as driving down the road. I think we need to buy the most durable, longest lasting vehicle that we can. Do we have this type of record keeping that would tell us this.

Lewis Hatcher: I don't have the records with me, but the Chargers we have are fairly new and are maintenance free. We had some problems with the rollers when we first got them, and that was a factory defect and they replaced them. The Fords that we have are ranging from 150,000 to 250,000 miles and they are killing us on maintenance and repairs. The Chargers, we don't have any problems with those.

Chairman Byrd: How many vehicles do you have with 175,000+ miles on them?

Lewis Hatcher: Quite a few.

Chairman Byrd: Have you checked into buying extra vehicles through utilization of used highway patrol cars?

Lewis Hatcher: I have checked into this and they do not have any. Agencies are actually buying these vehicles before they are taken off the road.

Commissioner Prevatte: How is this different from the ones we looked at before because we were doing lease agreements.

Bobbie Faircloth: I have recommended that we purchase the vehicles and not lease them.

Commissioner Bullard: What is the difference?

Commissioner McDowell: I was looking at durability from the auction at the State, because we might be able to buy extra vehicles versus new vehicles.

Chairman Byrd: What about from other states?

Lewis Hatcher: The State contract vehicles are Dodge Chargers. The Crown Victoria will be no more. Chevrolet is coming out with a new rear-wheel drive car. I have done some checking on it, and it is a nice car, and it will cost you more than a Dodge Charger will. The Dodge Charger is a State contract vehicle as of right now.

Commissioner Bullard: What does the equipment for 6 vehicles at \$30,000.00 include?

Lewis Hatcher: The light bars, videos, sirens, cameras, etc. that it will take to get a car ready to put on the road.

Commissioner Bullard: Can the money that is seized during drug activity be used to purchase any of the cameras for these other cars?

Lewis Hatcher: No sir. It can be used to buy surveillance equipment for drug activity for the drug division. We can't use it to buy patrol cars, uniforms, any cameras for patrol cars and that type of thing.

Soil & Water Conservation District:

Chairman Byrd: Tell us about this.

William S. Clark: This is for Edward Davis. The model he has is old, and he has a need for this vehicle going onto farms and traveling along river beds. This will be a used vehicle equivalent, or a little better than the one he has now.

Health Department - 5 Ton Air Conditioner:

Chairman Byrd: Is this replacing the outside unit or additional duct work?

Bobbie Faircloth: This is for the replacement of the one they have now.

Chairman Byrd: This is expensive for this size unit especially if we have someone working for the County to replace it.

Water & Sewer District I, II, III, IV and V:

Chairman Byrd: What type of trucks are we looking at? Are these going to be used for meter reading?

Kip McClary: These will be used to replace vehicles we currently have that are in disrepair. We have one pickup completely out of service right now with 270,000 miles on it, it is a service truck. We have another one with high mileage as well. I have one pickup with 274,000 miles that is completely out of service now. I have another truck with 227,000 miles on it, a 2004 model, and I have a small pickup with 243,000 miles and the transmission is about to fail on it tonight. We would work these in and take the two that is in most need of being disposed of.

Chairman Byrd: What type of truck are you looking at?

Kip McClary: They will be a 6-cylinder engine, short bed with an extended cab.

Commissioner Prevatte: You stated you had a small one, is it the Ford or the Sonoma?

Kip McClary: It is the Ranger.

Commissioner Prevatte: Those were bought used. Could you get by with a used one again? You

could buy two (2) for the price of one.

Solid Waste:

Chairman Byrd: What kind of tractor are you looking at?

Kip McClary: We have not yet identified that tractor. We have looked at different makes. This is a ball-park range price we were getting on a new tractor, 40 or 50 horse, that will be used for mowing and maintenance at the Landfill, with four-wheel drive and a front loader.

Commissioner Bullard: Why will you need a bucket if you are just going to use it for mowing?

Kip McClary: This will be for maintenance that they have to do.

Commissioner Bullard: I thought you had a backhoe for that type work.

Kip McClary: We do, but the backhoe is a lot of times tied up on water calls somewhere. This will allow them to be able to do patching and repair with dirt and fill material on the berm.

Chairman Byrd: You are referring to slopes, etc. I will say that you need it.

Mower (Water Districts I, II, III, IV and V):

Chairman Byrd: What type lawn mower are you looking at \$3,500.00?

Kip McClary: This will be for the Utility Department. This year, we will no longer be contracting that service out. That will be used for all the well sites, tank sites, and wherever needed.

Commissioner Prevatte: What brand?

Kip McClary: We had originally priced out a commercial grade Snapper at \$5,500.00, and internally that got questioned. We went back to a residential-type grade at Lowe's at \$3,600.00.

Commissioner Bullard: What are you mowing the Landfill with now, if you need a new tractor?

Kip McClary: A rented tractor.

Commissioner Bullard: How much does it cost to use that tractor?

Kip McClary: \$800.00 Per month. The one tractor we could use that is Public Utilities, the front axle went out.

Third Page

Personnel Salary Survey \$28,200.00:

Chairman Byrd: Why do we need to do this now. We can't afford to do anything with the salaries anymore than what we are able to do right now. Any study that we would do would be obsolete. My question is why do we need to do this at this time.

Commissioner Bullard: That is my question also, It will just show that we are behind.

Commissioner McDowell: That is my question also.

The general consensus of the Board was to take this out of the budget.

Wellness Program - \$46,000.00:

William S. Clark: As you know, our health insurance cost is \$3.5 million per year, and it keeps going up. This year we had to raise our deductibles and co-pays for our employees. This is not something we have to do, but if we are going to get our hands around this problem, or this health insurance issue, we need to become proactive and do something for our employees to help try to control these costs. The program that we are looking at, and by the way, this is a budgeted number and my go lower than that, we have not negotiated the contract or anything.

Chairman Byrd: Don't we have someone already working with the Health Department that is heading that up.

William S. Clark: We had a program at the Health Department and it just didn't sail well.

Kimberly Smith: There was no cost to it. The only cost to it is the cost of Sarah's time.

Chairman Byrd: At most of the meetings, there was very little attendance, if any at some of the meetings.

Kimberly Smith: The attendance was not mandatory, it was voluntary.

Chairman Byrd: Can we make it mandatory? We don't want to make it mandatory if we are going to have to pay the employees to go do it during working hours or allow them to accumulate compensatory time. It will always be a voluntary program, whether they want to be healthy or not.

Commissioner Bullard: The thing is if that was volunteer, and they would not participate to encourage their own health, you can't make a person be healthy.

Chairman Byrd: Why should we need this when they will not volunteer to do it themselves.

William S. Clark: Let me explain it further. This would be mandatory for all employees. There will be a baseline study that would include lab work on employees and get their basic health, and then if they were in a high-risk area, based on their profile, they would receive some coaching from

a registered nurse. If they were in a moderate risk category, they would receive some coaching, but not as much. The health insurance will just keep going up. This will not pay for itself now, but in the long run, I personally think it will. If we sit back and not do anything, it will just get worse and worse.

Chairman Byrd: That employee that is overweight, and knows they are overweight, I do not think someone sitting up here telling them they need to lose weight will be very effective, because if they go to their own personal doctor, he/she will tell them, they need to exercise more, they need to quit eating so many certain types of food.

William S. Clark: We could start out and add some incentives to it down the road, maybe.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: Are you saying that if a healthcare provider should find out that we do not have a wellness program, it could cause our premiums to go up?

William S. Clark: Most of your big companies are providing wellness programs for their employees. We can sit back and do nothing, or we can be proactive and try to address the problem. You are right, it is very difficult to measure. You have got \$3.5 million of insurance costs, and you are taking \$46,000.00 to try and move the bar just a little bit. You are not going to get results overnight, and will not be a great change overnight, but over time, it will pay for itself.

Charles McDowell: Being retired from the State, we have Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance which has a Wellness Program written into our basic insurance, so I would assume our insurance for the upcoming year, will have no wellness clause to it. Is that true, or are we duplicating services?

Virginia Taylor: It does have a wellness clause.

Commissioner McDowell: If the coverage that we are going to have has a wellness clause within it, if indeed we want to move the bar forward, couldn't we take some of this money and use it as a bonus, like we did last year, for people who lost weight, or something along those lines, but maybe not to this magnitude of \$46,000.00 since we are duplicating a service.

William S. Clark: It is your decision?

Commissioner McDowell: Do you mind explaining as far as the Wellness coverage in this upcoming insurance? What do they do? Do they offer coaching for diabetes, obesity, etc.?

Virginia Taylor: It does. It also sends out a calendar each month and supplies the times and date the employees can actually go into the system and retrieve all that information, with telephone numbers the employees can call if they need to talk to someone about a certain issue. All that is provided.

Commissioner McDowell: Mr. Clark, what would this program add that the insurance doesn't have?

William S. Clark: This goes a step further. That is all voluntary. This will be mandatory, and if you have an employee that fell in the high-risk category, they would get coaching, one on one. It is coaching, one on one, and there are no guarantees there.

Commissioner McDowell: You can't hold them to the bar, so to speak. You can't threaten termination if they don't lose weight or get the sugar level right.

William S. Clark: You could eventually add it into their health insurance rate.

Chairman Byrd: Mr. Clark, this point system that I am aware of that we are using in hiring new people to the County. Let that be a point if they are overweight and already unhealthy. If they are practicing unhealthy habits, and this is what we are trying to curtail and make better for the County, don't hire them.

Commissioner Prevatte: The State takes this a little further. If you smoke or if you are overweight, you get a 70/30 policy, or if you prove that your mass body weight is less than 40, or if you are on a cessation program for tobacco, then you can get the 80/20. They go a step further. They do not make you do it, but you got a choice of how much you want to pay when you go to the doctor. If you state incorrect information, they can call you at any time and have you tested.

Chairman Byrd: That might be something we need to start doing.

Commissioner Bullard: That way you can save money and get them healthy.

Commissioner McDowell: This is going to happen due to all the electronics with the healthcare records. It is just a matter of time before it makes it to us.

Kimberly Smith: We are number 100 out of 100, and if somebody doesn't start, then you can pack up and go home. It will not make any difference. We are not getting any new industry here. How many days of lost productivity has the County lost because we have unhealthy workers?

Commissioner McDowell: I understand what you are saying, and I agree.

Chairman Byrd: How many of your workers at the Health Department that are overweight?

Kimberly Smith: I have plenty.

Chairman Byrd: We are allowing exposure to the employees of unhealthy snacks in the workplace. The requested change at our level would be cost to the taxpayers of Columbus County.

Commissioner McDowell: We can't legislate health

Kimberly Smith: We can do the same thing the State has done with 80/20 and 70/30 health insurance policies. If an employee has to pay more at the doctor's office, they will consider making

some changes to improve their health.

Commissioner McDowell: Somewhere along the line, a person has to be accountable for their own health. No one else can be accountable for your health.

Commissioner Bullard: Everybody has to be conscious of their own health, and we can't do it for them.

Commissioner McDowell: If we could utilize what we have and go that step further, and somehow hold everyone accountable for themselves in some way. If we should identify someone that needs coaching and they refuse the coaching, are we going to go a step further and require them to take the coaching.

William S. Clark: We could certainly revisit this and bring it back. I personally think this is needed, but there be some other ways to accomplish this.

It was the general consensus of the Board for this to be revisited and brought back for discussion and consideration.

Finance Office:

The Becker Review for CPA and CPA License:

Chairman Byrd: What is this?

William S. Clark: This is training for Bobbie Faircloth, Finance Director, to work on her CPA exam, and we have talked about this earlier, and Bobby is certainly willing to make a commitment to the County, and if she would leave the County, then she would be willing to pay the County back.

Chairman Byrd: This is something that we need to make sure that we start doing because I know several other employees that we have allowed them to better their education, we paid them, etc., and then the next month or two, they are gone. We need to look at this and if the County pays for any employee to better their education, they need to work for the County under the agreed length of time or reimburse the County for the said amount.

Commissioner Prevatte: An intern cannot be paid during their internship. They cannot do their internship in their own department. They have to do their internship on release time, comp time or vacation time. It has to be in a different department.

Commissioner Bullard: Will this be daytime school, night school or what?

Bobbie Faircloth: Usually the Becker Review is offered on weekends, and it would take a day away from work to do, and it is usually Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It is usually a three (3) day course. This is a review course to prepare you to take the CPA exam.

Commissioner Bullard: How long does the course last?

Bobbie Faircloth: Usually, one weekend, and it's usually to get your books, your flash cards and everything, and in that one weekend, they are drilling you to be able to take the State CPA exam.

Chairman Byrd: Mr. Clark, how long were you wanting to say that the commitment is if we pay for this or allow this to be done on County time? I think we will need something in place before this can be allowed..

William S. Clark: We will come back with a policy.

Animal Control - Add Cost of Spaying and Neutering:

William S. Clark: This is revenue neutral. That is the cost that we had to add to the budget, but we are going to get the revenue. This is for the program that the veterinarian is going to do for us.

Sheriff Department - 38 Tasers @ \$8.15 each and 15 Radio News Systems:

Lewis Hatcher: We are trying to get some tasers for the Detention Center. We have got some SRO's and some guys in the patrol Division that don't have tasers. The taser in the Detention Center is the only thing they have. They do not have anything else. They don't have batons or anything. We are trying to get enough tasers so we will have enough to go around, especially in the Detention Center.

Chairman Byrd: When you change shifts, do they reuse them?

Lewis Hatcher: They have to be re-charged.

Commissioner Bullard: Are they going bad, or you just need 38 more?

Lewis Hatcher: We do have some, but we do not have enough for every officer in the Detention Center to switch them out.

Commissioner Bullard: Will this fully staff all the officers with tasers?

Lewis Hatcher: Yes.

Commissioner Bullard: Could you decrease this into half?

Lewis Hatcher: No.

Planning - Co-ordinated Service for Abandoned Structures Enforcement Cleanup:

William S. Clark: This is for cleanup of the abandoned structures in the County, and we should get that money back in fees and fines, and as you know, that might be a tricky situation.

Social Services:**3 Possible Work Stations @ \$2,500.00 Each:**

Denna Hatcher: We are at a point now where we are bursting at the seams. We have individuals that are coming in from other agencies. We need to renovate one area that we have to try to accommodate those individuals that we would have coming in.

Commissioner McDowell: Would these stations be used by multiple people in lieu of you giving up a station?

Denna Hatcher: Yes.

130 Printers:

William S. Clark: We replaced out their computers this past year.

FIVE (5) MINUTE BREAK:

At 7:55 P.M., Chairman Byrd stated there would be a five (5) minute recess.

NEXT SCHEDULED BUDGET WORKSHOP:

After discussion by the Board, it was the general consensus to schedule the next Budget Workshop to be held on June 13, 2011, at 6:00 P.M.

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS:**Fire and Rescue Audits:**

Chairman Byrd: Are all of the rescue squads now submitting to an audit, and are we getting those reports?

Bobbie Faircloth: They submit their audit to us before we release their check. We have some that have not had their audit done yet, some are two years behind, and they have not received their funding. The contract that we have with them states that we have to have their audit before we release the funding.

Chairman Byrd: I have spoken to some of the departments and the cost of getting the audits done is staggering, and they have stated they could not afford to get an audit done. I was thinking that one auditing firm could do all of the departments at a group rate.

Bobbie Faircloth: We have discussed the possibility that instead of having a full-blown audit for each department, maybe doing a letter from an auditor that will just quickly show that everything is in order.

Commissioner Prevatte: I don't know if I go along with that, because we have had some of these departments that have experienced embezzlement.

Chairman Byrd: I think if it is possible, we need to contract with an auditing firm to do the audits with each and everyone of those departments. Let the department fund the cost. We do need to get something in place better than what we got.

Commissioner Prevatte: We need to ask Jeremy Jernigan, Emergency Services Director, to meet with the chiefs to see if they would be willing to come together through the Association and see if they could get a group rate. We need to also look at the contracts for the rescue departments because they are required to be at the intermediate level within two years, and if they are not, then we don't pay. There is one department that will not meet this requirement.

Article in May 30, 2011 Issue of The News Reporter:**Rent for Whiteville Depot:**

Chairman Byrd: After reading an article in the May 30, 2011 issue of The News Reporter, I have received several calls relative to the \$17,000+ rent we are paying on the Whiteville Depot. What is that money being spent for and why is Columbus County paying \$17,000+?

William S. Clark: That was done before my time.

Chairman Byrd: The people want to know how this money is being spent - for salaries or what?

Arts Council, One-on-One Program and RSVP:

Chairman Byrd: the people want to know what this money is being used for? What we would like to have is a copy of their budget or audit to let the people know how the money is being spent.

Another question that I have been asked is does the Columbus County Board of Commissioners have an appointment on the Whiteville Depot Board?

Commissioner Bullard: There is someone in Whiteville that is in charge of the rent for the Whiteville Depot.

Chairman Byrd: Faye Smith. These are some questions that were presented to me and I wanted to bring them to the Board. If we are funding these agencies with County tax money, then we need to know where this money is going and how this money is being spent.

Commissioner Prevatte: You are right, Mr. Chairman. In this budget, I saw where we were paying for utilities that the Committee of 100 owns property for at the Industrial Park, and I don't think that is right.

William S. Clark: Let me say this on the Special Appropriations. We have tried to fund the organizations that are already getting money. We have continued to give them money at the same level, but we have not funded new requests.

On-the-Spot Raises:

Chairman Byrd: There are three (3) other things, Mr. Clark that you requested because there are three (3) raises that you had put in that are more than we had talked about earlier for different departments. Personally, out of 505 employees, I don't think that we can pick out just three (3) employees and say we are going to do this. I don't think we can do this.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: In fairness to the County Manager, we explained that because we have a specific purpose behind that.

William S. Clark: There is, and I would be happy to explain it to you if you want to wait until the next meeting, I can do that too. There was a justification for that.

Commissioner McDowell: First of all, I would like to thank you for putting in the 5% increase for education, I appreciate that personally. I think it is needed, We need to look out for our children. The second thing that I am going to ask is the funding for the municipal recreation centers and youth organizations . We have proposed not to fund. I would like to request, if at all possible, that we at least come up with some funding for those programs.

Commissioner Bullard: In the Capital Outlay Requests for Parks and Recreation, one park has been funded and the other has not been. I think we need to fund both parks or none.

William C. Clark: That request came from Julie, and we need to have Julie here at the next workshop.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:17 P.M., Chairman Byrd declared the Budget Workshop adjourned.

APPROVED:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

GILES E. BYRD, Chair