

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET WORKSHOP #2
Monday, June 13, 2011
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 a Budget Workshop.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Giles E. Byrd **Chairman**
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:

At 6:00 P.M., Chairman Giles E. Byrd called the June 13, 2011 Columbus County Board of Commissioners Budget Workshop Number 2 to order.

READING of WORKSHOP PROCEDURES:

Chairman Giles E. Byrd stated the following:

1. First, the workshop meeting is to inform the Board and permit discussion - no final action is taken; **and**
2. Second, the procedures are less formal that at a regular meeting, but such meetings are part of the decision-making process, deliberations are going on, and therefore, they constitute "official meetings".

INTRODUCTION:

Chairman Byrd stated that each Board member would be given a turn to ask questions until all questions of choice have been asked and answered.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Prevatte: Page 13 - Central Garage: Is this all the fleet vehicles that the County has?

Bobbie Faircloth: No sir, this includes all the vehicles the County has except what the Department of Social Services has and what the Sheriff's Department has.

Commissioner Prevatte: Page 26 - Court Facilities: What is the Principal - Leased Vehicles and Interest - Leased Vehicles for?

Bobbie Faircloth: this is the vehicles the Maintenance Department got for this fiscal year and last year.

Commissioner Prevatte: Page 28 - Office Rent: What is this for?

Bobbie Faircloth: This is for the Magistrate's Office in Chadbourn.

Chairman Byrd: Is that the only place we pay rent for?

William S. Clark: Yes.

Chairman Byrd: Why do we only pay rent in Chadbourn and we have magistrates in several other locations?

William S. Clark: I will look into this.

Commissioner Bullard: Page 26 - Court Facilities: What is the \$28,000 for?

Bobbie Faircloth: This is for the roof at the DA's Office.

Commissioner Bullard: Page 39 - Sheriff's Department - Gas \$300,000: I understand there are 66 cars being driven home. Do we need to allow the whole department to drive these vehicles home? Is it necessary?

Lewis Hatcher: You mean the patrol guys?

Commissioner Bullard: Yes. This is the way I have it broken down:

33 Deputies
8 Resource Officers
5 Court Deputies
9 Captains and Lieutenants
11 Detectives

TOTAL: 66

I think you need a certain number of vehicles driven home in case of emergency, but I don't see where all of them are required to be driven home. I think we could save some gas and miles off cars if they all were not driven home.

Lewis Hatcher: The school resource officers, now that school is out, those officers go to the Patrol Division, and those officers work just like the patrol guys do during the summer. The Bailiffs have cars, and when they are not in court, they actually come out and answer calls just like the other guys do. If they finish early in court, they go to the office and get civil and criminal process and go out on the road and they serve papers just like the patrol guys do. Captain Worley and Lieutenant Faulk are the two supervisors over the Patrol Division, they have take-home cars. They come out and monitor the patrol division, like myself, on the weekend, not every weekend, but periodically. The patrol guys work shifts. Six are on at one time, and six are off. Anything further than this, the Sheriff would have to comment on. I can say that none of these cars are actually just going and sitting and not being used. All during the school season, the School Resource Officers, they come out and work the games. When we are short or on a weekend, I call a bailiff and they work, and we give them their comp time back. At one time the Bailiffs did not have cars. We sat down and looked at it, and the Bailiffs are scattered all over the County, where they live, and a lot of times, I can call a bailiff and he can be at the scene of the crime before the patrol guys can. These are some cars, they are not new cars, we did it to help us out in case we had something going on and the patrol guys could not respond at that time.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: Do you think if the cars were left at the Sheriff's Department, would we save on gas?

Commissioner Bullard: If we could cut the number of cars being driven home by 10%, we would save on mileage and gas.

Commissioner Norris: If the patrol cars are parked at the Sheriff's Department, the deputies would have to leave their house, travel to the Sheriff's Department and get a car before they could respond to a call.

Lewis Hatcher: Let me give you a prime example. When the tornado hit in Bladenboro, and the Sheriff called and stated they needed some help, I had 14 officers in Bladen County within 20 minutes. All I had to do is call them. I had some Resource Officers, some Bailiffs, and the whole shift of patrol guys. If I had to call these guys to come in, they would have to get a car and then go to wherever needed, and that would involve a lot more time.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: Page 99 - Special Appropriations: Are we still funding CCAVE, and is it still alive?

Bobbie Faircloth: Yes.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: Are we still finding Governor's One-on-One Program?

William S. Clark: Yes.

Commissioner Prevatte: Page 33 - Public Buildings-All Other: Capital Outlay \$32,000: What is this for?

Bobbie Faircloth: The paving of the parking lot at the library.

Commissioner Prevatte: Page 39 - Sheriff's Department - Principal-Leased Vehicles: I did not think we were leasing the vehicles any more.

Bobbie Faircloth: This is the current lease payments for 4 new Dodge Chargers bought this year and 2 purchased in 2010.

Commissioner Prevatte: Page 46 - Emergency Services - Rental: \$17,000. What is that?

William S. Clark: this is for pagers and the rental on towers at the CCTV sites.

After discussion, William S. Clark stated he would find out more details about this.

Commissioner Norris: I can appreciate the Sheriff's Department because they have helped me tremendously. In my store robbery in years past, if the cars had not been at the deputies' houses, a lot more people would have been hurt.

Lewis Hatcher: Even though the cars are being taken home, the gas mileage is not being abused. I keep a close watch on the deputies and their activities.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: The Sheriff's Department is well known for taking care of situations within communities where a need exists. The Sheriff we have now will listen to you, and if you call him, he will call you back. If we want to feel secure in this county, we need to support our Sheriff's Department.

Chairman Byrd: Page 49 - Coroner/Medical Examiner - Professional Services: \$30,000. What is this?

Bobbie Faircloth: This is actually what we pay the State for autopsies.

Commissioner Bullard: Page 99 - Rent-Whiteville Depot: \$17,741. Is that a contract that is bound, and there is no changing it? How many years are on this contract?

Michael Stephens: This is a 20 year contract, and can be renewed for 10 years.

William S. Clark: Do you know when the 20 years is up?

Mike Stephens: I think it is 2019, but I am not sure.

Chairman Byrd: Page 99 - Special Appropriations: Lumber River Council of Gov: \$6,302. What is this?

William S. Clark: This is for a study of the aquifers and water quality in our county and region and it is a cooperative effort where all the counties give money. It involves one full-time employee. Its responsibility is to monitor the aquifers and make sure we have an adequate supply of water and they do long-range planning for water.

Chairman Byrd: How are we coming along on the audits on the fire and rescue squads? Has that been discussed?

Bobbie Faircloth: We still have some that have not turned in their audits.

Commissioner McDowell: Page 72 - Home Health Expenditures: Indirect Cost: \$79,750. What is this for?

Bobbie Faircloth: This is one of the accounts that she actually accumulates a fund balance on. That is why she is charged an indirect cost on. This is for the work we do for them.

Chairman Byrd: Page 72-Home Health Expenditures: Professional Services: \$102,860. What is this for?

Bobbie Faircloth: This is for a cost report they have to do. Consulting, billing and computer information for the Care Anywhere system software, and they have a consumer assessment SHP contract.

Chairman Byrd: Page 72-Home Health Expenditures: Contracted Services: \$1,150,000. Do the CNS's fall under this?

Bobbie Faircloth: The CNA's, Dr. Thigpen and health services for the RN's.

Chairman Byrd: Page 72-Home Health Expenditures: Medical: \$243,695. What is this?

William S. Clark: Medical supplies.

Commissioner Bullard: Page 72-Home Health Expenditures: Gas: \$300. The Travel is listed at \$80,180 and the gas at \$300.

Bobbie Faircloth: The CNA's are paid under travel for mileage. The Health Department does not have that big of a fleet to allow CNA's to drive vehicles, so they have to drive their own personal vehicles.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: Page 99-Veterans of Foreign Wars - Requested \$3,000, Approved \$1,000; Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 962 - Requested \$2,500, Approved None, American Legion 137 - Requested \$2,150, Approved None. Anytime our Veterans request a monetary sum, we should consider at least giving them something. They indeed risk their lives for our safety and freedom. I recommend that we give the Veterans of Foreign Wars \$1,000, the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 962 \$1,000 and American Legion 137 \$1,000.

William S. Clark: On the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 962, this is a match for awnings for the ramp at the Columbus County Veterans Office.

Robert Adams (private citizen): On the Veterans of Foreign Wars, this is used for mailing packages to the soldiers in foreign lands, and the people who carry this task out never have enough money for the postage and is forced to take their own personal money to ensure these packages are mailed out.

Discussion was conducted and discovery was made that American Legion 137's request was not Veterans related and was for the payment of electricity at a ball field.

It was the general consensus of the Board to appropriate \$1,000 to Veterans of Foreign Wars and appropriate \$1,000 to Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 962.

Chairman Byrd: Page 99 - Regional Penalties Program - \$4,500. What is this?

Bobbie Faircloth: This is the Cape Fear Sentencing Services that is run out of Brunswick County. They help the criminals from having to go completely through the court system, and they may give some type of drug rehab to those in need.

William S. Clark: These services are done through the Cape Fear Sentencing Services for Baden, Brunswick and Columbus Counties. This is our portion of the money.

Commissioner Bullard: Are we sure the other counties are paying their portion? I recommend that we hold these funds until we receive confirmation that the other counties are paying.

Commissioner Prevatte: I hope the idea of a central garage has not been forgotten. Last year, we discussed using the old fuel tank that was replaced at the Airport and locating it at the Sheriff's Department to enable the County to buy gasoline by the tanker load instead of purchasing from a local station and paying pump prices. Has anything come out of this?

Stuart Carroll: The old tank is there but it is only a 3,000 gallon tank, and in order to get a tanker load of gas, you must have at least a 7,500 gallon tank.

Chairman Byrd: You will need at least 10,000 to 12,000 gallon tank in order to receive 7,500 gallons.

Commissioner Prevatte: Let's don't give up on the idea of a central garage.

Commissioner Prevatte: Page 48 - Fire Marshal Expenditures: Salaries/Wages - P/T - \$20,500. This position was for a part-time inspector to help catch up some inspections that were behind. He was working part time with the County and part time with Whiteville Fire Department. He went out on a back disability. I wonder if he is back now.

William S. Clark: Shannon is the Deputy Fire Marshall. We have Scott who is the Fire Marshall and there is money in the budget for a part time person as well. That was recommended by Jeremy.

Chairman Byrd: I do not think we need three, and the Board should have been consulted before the other person was hired back due to previous issues he had before.

Commissioner Bullard: Is this a new position?

William S. Clark: We have always had a part-time position, and at one time Shannon was the part-time position, and Shannon moved into the full-time position. This part-time position is not a new position, it is a position that has not been filled, and Jeremy would like to fill it.

Commissioner Bullard: I would like to hear from Jeremy before I can make my decision.

Commissioner Prevatte: I would like to hear from Jeremy also. My last question is on Page 59 - Economic Development: Utilities - Industrial Park - \$3,000. I must have known it, but I did not realize we were paying the utilities at the Industrial Park. The Committee of 100 owns the Industrial Park, the County does not. They need to pay their own utility bills.

William S. Clark: That goes back a long way. At some point in time, the County agreed to do it and we have always done it.

Commissioner Prevatte: When I first came on the Board, we were paying \$47,000 in interest on that Shell Building, and it took 2-3 years to get it off.

Chairman Byrd: We really need to rework the Committee of 100. I am hearing a lot of complaints about this committee, and comments.

William S. Clark: We support the Committee of 100, but we don't have any control over their board.

Commissioner Prevatte: The Committee of 100 sends out all of their correspondence through the Economic Development Department at the County's expense.

Commissioner Bullard: I don't think we should donate taxpayer's money to a private entity.

Chairman Byrd: Mr. Clark, will you check on this and let us know.

Commissioner Bullard: Page 59 - Existing Industry - \$2,500. What is that about?

William S. Clark: We do networking with existing industries. It has increased \$500 over last year.

so we can do more this year. They do networking with the plant managers to discuss issues, joint efforts. It is a good part of economic development.

Commissioner Bullard: Kip McClary's Salary - Where is it coming from now?

Kip McClary: My salary is spread over 5 water districts and solid waste.

Commissioner Bullard: Is your salary being divided equally over the 5 water districts?

Kip McClary: No sir. We use a percentage plan which makes our total customer base of approximately 4,600 customers and then divide it by the number of customers in each district to get a percentage of the customer base for each district and then we set the percentage of all of our overhead.

Commissioner Bullard: How are you dividing your salary with Solid Waste?

Kip McClary: My salary has always been split 50% Solid Waste and 50% Water.

Commissioner Bullard: How about the \$6,100 retiree's insurance I was questioning?

Kip McClary: That is spread over all 5 districts and solid waste.

Bobbie Faircloth: That needs to be adjusted to apply a portion to maintenance.

Commissioner Bullard: The 3 salaries that you talked about increasing \$3,000 each. I see it for one person, in my view, is making less than some of his employees, Mr. Soles. The other two, I don't see how you can justify doing the other two no different than the other employees that deserve raises.

William S. Clark: In their defense, they both have passed significant certifications. In the Tax Office, the gentleman got his real estate certification, and he is helping Richard in a significant way in this tax revaluation, and saving the County a lot of money by doing this in house. The other position, Kip McClary has passed five certifications since he has been our director. These are all certifications that he has to have. He has passed the C-Distribution exam, the B-Distribution exam, the C-Well exam, Cross Connection Certification and the Solid Waste Certification. That is the reason I recommended the increase.

Commissioner Bullard: What were the certifications he had to have in order to obtain that job after he got it. I know he had to get the certifications and we gave him time to do it.

William S. Clark: We did, and he passed them. He has got all the certifications that he needs to get.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: Mr. Clark, the increase you recommended for Tony Soles, would you explain.

William S. Clark: He has one employee that is higher up on the salary scale than he is as the Director, and personally I think it is a mistake that we made that should be corrected, but that is the reason.

Commissioner Bullard: How do you come up with this amount?

William S. Clark: Richard recommended the amount for the employee at the Tax Office, so we did salary surveys and even in Richard's case, even with the increase, his employee will be making less than employees in surrounding counties, same with Kip. With Tony, I came up with that number just to get him above the employee making more than him.

Chairman Byrd: Page 20 - Elections - Staff Development - \$13,730: What is that?

Carla Strickland: This is for the State Board training, educational training of our staff members.

Chairman Byrd: I see a significant increase in your travel.

Carla Strickland: Basically, we have a couple of establishments of training, and we have a possibility of two elections for the upcoming year, and we scheduled for a special election in case we do have one. We budgeted at a county-wide range.

Commissioner McDowell: Last time we met, I recommended some possible funding for our recreational areas. Were you able to look into that?

William S. Clark: Yes sir I did. Julie and I discussed it. We feel like we done the right thing leaving it the way it is. If you want to get back into it, it is up to you. If you do it for one, you will need to do it for all the others.

Julie Strickland: Mr. Clark and I talked. The money that is given to the municipalities is used at their discretion, and we have no control over it. If the money is earmarked for the rural areas, I would be in favor of that, but handing the money over to municipalities to use at their will, even though they requested it for recreation funds, there is no way to determine how the funds are being used.

Commissioner McDowell: Maybe, I don't understand the past history with the problems that we have had. I know with the small rural areas, \$1,000 would go a long way. I would love to see us help the rural areas that really struggle. I would love to see us offer some amount of money for the

rural areas and set a certain amount and not go beyond.

Commissioner Prevatte: Let's put \$25,000 extra into the Parks and Recreation Budget and let Julie oversee these funds.

Julie Strickland: We have a high number of ball teams utilizing these fields in 7 different areas. We supply the field marking painting, a certain amount of balls if they are willing to come pick them up, and we do all the mowing of the grass.

Chairman Byrd: This type of thing could easily mushroom with us with this number of teams.

Commissioner Bullard: I misunderstood what Julie is doing. The \$7,500 for Carver Creek Park is being used for a fence that is badly needed.

Commissioner McDowell: I would still love to see us allocate something. If \$25,000 is appropriate, and let it be requested, and trust our director to use it as it needs to be used.

After additional discussion, the general consensus was to place \$25,000 in the budget for this purpose as a startup.

Julie Strickland: You need to be specific about what you want this money used for.

Commissioner Bullard: I am a little undecided about this now.

Vice Chairman McKenzie: I think this should be at the Parks and Recreation Director and the County Manager's discretion.

Commissioner Bullard: When we come back, I would like to bring up the Wellness Program again.

Commissioner Prevatte: There should a \$1,000 maximum amount on the Parks and Recreation Grant.

Julie Strickland: Per organization or per team?

Commissioner McDowell: Per organization.

Julie Strickland: I think they should write a mini grant and base this on participation.

BUDGET WORKSHOP NUMBER 2 RECESSED:

At 7:33 P.M., Chairman Byrd stated the Budget Workshop was recessed until June 20, 2011, at 5:30 P.M..
