

The Honorable Board of County Commissioner met in their said office at 9:30 a.m.,<sup>✓</sup> to hold a public hearing to allow the public to be heard concerning the proposed budget estimate.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD PRESENT:

C. Waldo Marlowe, Chairman

Junior W. Dew, Vice-Chairman

Edward W. Williamson

L. A. Hinson

David L. McPherson

James E. Hill, Jr., Attorney

Emogene W. Suggs, Clerk

Also present were approximately forty citizens, including the County Board of Education Members.

The Chairman announced that any citizen present could be heard and Mr. Jim Rabon, Supt. County Schools made a short statement saying that he commended the Board of Commissioners because they had done well by the Board of Education but that they still needed \$163,000.00 added to their budget or they would have to cut some existing programs and personnel. He emphasized that this was a factual plea for the schools. No other person wished to be heard at this time.

The Chairman stated that this request would be considered later in the meeting. David Small, Board of Education Chairman, stated that they were in recess waiting for an answer.

Commissioner McPherson suggested that the Board of Education submit a requisition for their pro rata share of \$100,000.00 which had originally been approved as a loan to the Columbus County Schools to purchase fuel oil in advance of rising oil prices.

Commissioner Williamson and Dew expressed support of the schools and their programs.

Commissioner McPherson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Dew and Commissioner Williamson, at the same time, to base the budget for 1979-80 on \$390,000,000 valuation, with a tax rate of \$1.20 and a collection rate of 90% and that \$100,000.00 be appropriated from Surplus and pro rated to the County and City School units in addition to the appropriation already included in the budget being considered today for Current Expense.

Chairman Marlowe reviewed the appropriations made to the County School Unit for the past three years and pointed out the increase each year. He expressed concern in decreasing the County's surplus because of a tight budget for all departments and that the County will soon be applying for a bond rating if they decide to grant the request from the Board of Education for a bond referendum for Schools capital outlay fund.

Supt. Rabon stated that he felt they had given until it hurt and expressed appreciation.

The Budget Hearing was adjourned at 10:00 a.m. and the Board convened in regular session.