

**COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
BUDGET WORKSHOP**

**June 05, 2008**

**5:30 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 holding a Budget Workshop.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

James E. Prevatte **Chairman**  
Bill Memory, **Vice Chairman**  
Lynwood Norris  
Ricky Bullard  
Ronald Gore

**APPOINTEES PRESENT:**

William S. Clark, **County Manager**  
Steven W. Fowler, **County Attorney**  
June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**  
Bobbie Faircloth, **Deputy Finance Officer**

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

Amon E. McKenzie  
Sammie Jacobs

**RESUMED BUDGET WORKSHOP CALLED to ORDER:**

At 5:30 P.M., Chairman Prevatte called the June 05, 2008 Budget Workshop, which was resumed from May 28, 2008, to order, and stated the purpose of this Budget Workshop was to continue the discussion of the Proposed 2008 - 2009 Columbus County Operating Budget with the County Manager and the Deputy Finance Officer until 6:00 P.M. Four (4) departments have requested to be heard tonight, as follows:

Sheriff	6:00 P.M.
Southeastern Community College	6:30 P.M.
Columbus County Board of Education	7:00 P.M.
Soil and Water Conservation	7:30 P.M.

**DISCUSSION and QUESTIONS:**

Chairman Prevatte stated the procedure that would be followed for the first thirty (30) minutes in this Budget Workshop was for each Commissioner to ask one (1) question each, relative to the Budget, until everyone had their turn, and then the cycle would repeat itself until all questions needed had been asked.

The line items that presented questions are as follows.

<b>PAGE #</b>	<b>LINE ITEM</b>	<b>BUDGETED AMOUNT</b>
112	Foster Care Special Child Adoptions	\$20,000 \$20,000
44	How many employees are in the Budget now? How many employees do they have now? The request that has been made is for eight (8) more employees - two (2) per shift.	N/A
99	St Aid Foster Care - Is this the projected increase?	N/A
112	Emergency Food Program Cape Fear River Assembly	\$5,000 \$462
51	Salaries and Wages - Overtime	\$75,000
100	Contracted Services	\$152,000
100	Travel	\$75,000

<b>PAGE #</b>	<b>LINE ITEM</b>	<b>BUDGETED AMOUNT</b>
74	Rent	\$27,150
N/A	Why is Boardman not using County Water?	N/A
100	Rental - Equipment	\$42,000
78	Salaries and Wages Regular	\$50,000
101	Capital Outlay	\$300,000

**COMMENTS by BOBBIE FAIRCLOTH:**

1. **Fire Marshal’s Office:** the two (2) full-time positions was a decision that Mr. Varner made.
2. **East Columbus Senior Center:** the rent includes the cost of the utilities.
3. **School Inspections:** Ray Reeves has stated the time and costs involved of doing these inspections would be too much for his department to do.

**COMMENTS by DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

1. **Sheriff Christopher Batten:** stated the following:
  - A. I am a sworn officer of the law and it is my duty to protect the citizens of Columbus County to the best of my ability;
  - B. I do understand the financial restraints this Board is experiencing, and my department will be very grateful for any additional funding we receive; **and**
  - C. I have requested a total of eight (8) additional positions which will equate to two (2) additional positions per shift.

Vice Chairman Memory asked Sheriff Batten if he could manage with less than eight (8) additional employees. Sheriff Batten replied stating the following:

- We get in trouble when our employees take time off for vacation and sick leave;
- Supervisors can’t do their jobs like they should when they are filling in for other employees; **and**
- In the soft-booking area, the law officers are not allowed to take their weapons in by General Statute, and we desperately need an additional position in this area.

Commissioner Gore asked Sheriff Batten how many employees did he have now. Sheriff Batten replied stating he has one hundred seven (107) employees in all. The breakdown of the Detention Center is as follows:

- 28 Working Positions for Detention officers
- 2 Receptionists
- 2 Administrative Supervisors

Mr. Clark asked Sheriff Batten how many pods are open at the jail. Sheriff Batten replied stating there are a total of eight (8) pods and all of them are open.

Commissioner Bullard asked Sheriff Batten if the salaries for the additional eight (8) positions were included in this proposed budget. Sheriff Batten replied stating yes they were, and there should be nine (9) positions included and they are eight (8) positions for the jail and one (1) maintenance.

Chairman Prevatte stated that twenty-nine (29) additional positions had been approved for the Sheriff’s Department over the last four (4) budget years, as per the following breakdown:

<b><u>BUDGET YEAR</u></b>	<b><u>POSITIONS</u></b>	<b><u>EMPLOYEE TYPE</u></b>
2004 - 2005	6	4 Jail 2 Transport Officers
2005 - 2006	13	Detention Center
2006 - 2007	5	Detention Center

2007 - 2008	5	4	Detention Center Addition
		1	Drug Detective

Commissioner Gore asked Sheriff Batten about the officers attending the school-sponsored ball games. Sheriff Batten replied stating the Sheriff's Department had entered into an agreement with the school system where they would reimburse them for their time and time and one-half.

Lengthy and in-depth discussion was conducted relative to the continuous increase in the Sheriff's Budget and the number of employees.

Sheriff Batten stated that any additional position(s) that he received would be appreciated and helpful and he would check into the number of additional employees over the last four (4) years.

2. **Doctor Kathy Matlock (Southeastern Community College):** stated the following:
- A. We are teachers and have been teaching since 1969;
  - B. We are here to advocate for the college and the citizens of Columbus County;
  - C. We have made several accomplishments over the years;
  - D. I have with me tonight the following employees:
    - Dr. Phillips, Instruction;
    - Beverlee Nance, Continuing Education and Economic Development;
    - Matlan Yeoman, Student Development;
    - Betty Jo Sanders, Finance and Operations; **and**
    - Mr. Sasser, Chairman of the Board of Trustees;
  - E. Since 2000-2001, our appropriation from the County has either decreased or has been flat funded;
  - F. I would like for you to review General Statute § 115D-32 Local financial support of institutions and General Statute § 115D-6 Withdrawal of State support;
  - G. We have a total of one hundred ninety-nine (199) employees;
  - H. For your review, I have provided to you colored photographs of the condition of our buildings; **and**
  - I. We are in great need of additional funding from the County.

**Betty Jo Sanders:** stated the following:

- A. The county-funded employees include eight (8) full-time, seven (7) part-time, three (3) partially funded full-time, and four (4) contracted services staff;
- B. The county-funded employees have not received pay increases due to no additional funding by county government;
- C. Nine (9%) percent of the colleges' financial support comes from the county, and the average county support is 15.4%, across the State;
- D. We rank 53<sup>rd</sup> out of 58 community colleges in the State;
- E. The Cartrette Technology Building is coming on line, and we will need additional funding for this;
- F. Our request for the 2008-2009 Budget Year is \$2,457,862 for Total Current Expenses, and \$1,068,600 Total Capital Funds.

Lengthy and in-depth discussion was conducted relative to the need for additional funding, the ability of County government to allocate additional funds, the manner in which the previously allocated funds had been spent, the desire of County government to increase funding and the limited funds County government has to divide between all the entities that are in great need.

3. **Carla Strickland (Board of Elections):** stated the following:
- A. The run-off election cost Columbus County thirty thousand and 00/100 (\$30,000.00) dollars;
  - B. The elevation in this budget is due to a Presidential Election;
  - C. I budgeted for a Special Election, if one is necessary;
  - D. The thirty-one thousand and 00/100 (\$31,000.00) dollars is for coding that we need;
  - E. I have budgeted twenty thousand and 00/100 (\$20,000.00) dollars for increased equipment that we need;
  - F. We now need two (2) laptops at our one-stop voting places;
  - G. The State has agreed to forego the re-classifications;

- H. The voters have increased from twenty-one thousand (21,000) to thirty-seven thousand (37,000);
  - I. We have double the equipment;
  - J. We have seventeen (17) different programs to work with; **and**
  - K. I need this additional employee at eighteen thousand and 00/100 (\$18,000.00) dollars, per year, to help me.
3. **Edward Davis (Soil and Water Conservation):** stated the following:
- A. We have three (3) County employees, one (1) Federal employee and one (1) State employee;
  - B. I contacted our local engineer, Dean Bingham, on the Livingston Creek Project, and he has sent some estimates to me for this cleanup, at \$261,417.33;
  - C. I am recommending that we look at cleaning out the worst portion from US 74 to the Cape Fear River mouth, at an estimated cost of \$36,407.46; **and**
  - D. This amount of money has not been included in my budget.

**BUDGET WORKSHOP RECESSED:**

At 8:49 P.M., Chairman Prevatte announced the June 05, 2008 Budget Workshop was recessed until June 09, 2008, at 5:30 P.M., and to schedule two (2) department heads for presentation.

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