

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA) OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS
) STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
COUNTY OF STOKES) DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA
) AUGUST 1, 2005

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a recessed session (recessed from the July 25th meeting) in the Commissioners’ Chambers of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administrative Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Monday, August 1, 2005 at 6:00 pm with the following members present:

Chairman John Turpin
Vice-Chairman Leon Inman
Commissioner Sandy McHugh
Commissioner Joe Turpin
Commissioner Jimmy Walker

County Personnel in Attendance:
County Manager Richard Morris
County Attorney Jonathan Jordan
Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins
Finance Director Julia Edwards

Chairman John Turpin called the meeting to order.

County Manager Rick Morris delivered the invocation.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT-GOVERNING BODY-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman John Turpin opened the meeting by inviting the citizens in attendance to join the Board with the Pledge of Allegiance.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT - GOVERNING BODY - FISCAL YEAR 2005-06 APPROVED BUDGET-DISCUSSION

Chairman John Turpin informed the Board that Commissioner McHugh had requested to be allowed to respond first concerning the 2005/06 approved county budget.

Commissioner McHugh expressed gratitude to Chairman John Turpin for allowing her to respond to accusations made at two public meetings and to the newspaper.

Commissioner McHugh read a lengthy response which is available in the Clerk to the Board’s office.

Commissioner McHugh stated that she felt these accusations could hurt services that save the lives of citizens of Stokes County.

Commissioner McHugh’s response referenced the following topics:

- Birth control practices at the Health Department
- Hiring of the new Health Director
- Recent detailed budget process of the 05/06 budget
- Funding needed by departments to provide services
- Tax Increase
- Revenue Neutral Rate
- Hold Harmless
- Recent Revaluation
- Emergency Communications - need for EMD
- Emergency Medical Services-shortage of ambulances
- Sheriff’s Department

- Volunteer Fire Departments
- Fire Marshal's office
- Prioritization of budget items requested
- Prioritization of equipment requested for safety reasons
- Assistance provided by the Finance Director
- New proposed compromise budget submitted on Wednesday- 7/29
- Further discussion of proposed compromise budget on Thursday - 7/30
- Compromise made on 7/30 to the proposed budget submitted on Wed. - 7/29
- Motions made to adopt the 2005/2006 county budget
- Compromise budget adopted on Thursday, June 30, 2005
- Final Budget Ordinance approved on Friday, July 1, 2005
- Possible cuts to the approved budget- elimination of services

GENERAL GOVERNMENT - GOVERNING BODY - CODE OF ETHICS VIOLATION

Commissioner McHugh filed with the Board of Commissioners the following alleged Code of Ethics Violation by Commissioner Walker:

I wish to file a Code of Ethics violation by Commissioner Walker according to Section 4.01.

Given that:

1. The Code of Ethics for Stokes County Commissioners clearly states (in the introduction) "PROVIDING FOR TREATMENT OF CITIZENS, EMPLOYEES, DEPARTMENT HEADS, COUNTY MANAGER AND ELECTED OFFICIALS;"

2. and Commissioner Walker was aware of the restrictions in the Code of Ethics by Section 3.01 "All County Commissioners, upon taking their oath of office to their current term, shall submit a signed statement to the County Attorney acknowledging that they have received and read the Stokes County Code of Ethics, that they understand it, and that they are bound by it."

3. Section 14.01 "It shall be the policy of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners to treat the citizens of Stokes County, Stokes County Employees, Stokes County Department Heads, the Stokes County Manager and Stokes County Elected Officials with respect and courtesy.

4. Section 14.03a. states that a complaint by a citizen shall be brought to the Board of Commissioners in closed session. Section 14.03g. states that a complaint by a County Commissioner shall be brought before the Board of Commissioners in closed session, except in the case of a complaint against a fellow commissioner, which shall be heard in open session.

Whether Commissioner Walker was bringing a complaint on behalf of a citizen or on behalf of himself Section 14.03 applies and should only be heard in closed session.

I believe that Commissioner Walker violated the Code of Ethics Section 14 when he made accusations against a Department Head (Health Department Director) in open session at the July 13, 2005 Health Board meeting and again at the July 25, 2005 Board of Commissioners meeting.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT - GOVERNING BODY - FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2005/06 APPROVED COUNTY BUDGET

Chairman John Turpin referenced the handout provided by Finance Director Julia Edwards which detailed corrections, compromises, and changes from the budget agreed upon on Thursday night to the final adoption of the budget ordinance on Friday, July 1, 2005.

Commissioner Walker expressed the following concerns:

- Questioned possible tax increase for the future resulting from current expenditures of Fiscal Year 2005/06
- Caveat included in motion to include Commissioner McHugh's recommendations

- Minimal amount in fund balance
- Possible cuts that could be made to the approved budget:
 - Additional ambulance for EMS
 - Vehicles for other departments
- Additional work needed for the Fiscal Year 2005/06 county budget
- Review each department for cost savings
- Review revenue projections
- Additional Increase of \$700,000 to fund balance

County Manager Rick Morris that in his opinion cutting expenditures to add an additional \$700,000 to fund balance requires cutting personnel and services to the citizens of the County.

County Manager Morris also noted that not all departments and/or line items could sustain across the Board cuts - insurances, dues, etc.

Chairman John Turpin requested each Commissioner to outline items in the approved budget for possible cuts and/or further discussion.

Chairman John Turpin noted the following:

- \$43,693 - Corrections and changes made to the approved budget after June 30th
- Additional ambulance - \$105,000
- Recreation - YMCA contract - \$123,764
- Congregate meals -mandates
- Senior Citizens Services

Commissioner Joe Turpin noted the following:

- Services provided at the Walnut Cove Senior Center
- Services provided to the residents by Senior Services Dept.
- Hold Harmless budgeting
- Possible 3% cut to each department
- Bioterrorism Department - Health
- Elimination of part time staff
- Renovations to 3rd floor
- EMD- Communications
- Capital Expenditures - vehicles, equipment, etc.
- Projected revenues

Commissioner Walker noted the following:

- Longevity
- Reclassifications
- Equipment
- Work toward additional Increase of \$700,000 to fund balance
- Fuel cost
- Services provided by Senior Services Department
- Capital Reserve

Vice Chairman Inman noted the following:

- Request salary line items
- 25% Increase of budget since 2002
- 10% Increase of budget from Fiscal Year 04/05
- Salary item lines adjustments per individual for each department specifying increases - Longevity, COLA, etc.

Commissioner McHugh noted the following:

- Paid insurance for Commissioners
- Calculation of % being cut from the adopted budget excluding school budget

- Calculation of same % if cut from the schools' budget current expense

Vice Chairman Inman expressed the following response pertaining to the adopted Fiscal Year 2005/06 County budget:

- Questioned the compromises made to the proposed budget that was adopted
- Questioned why copies of adopted budget were not passed out on Friday by the Finance Director before adoption of Budget Ordinance
- Apology to the citizens of Stokes County
- Continuation of work to the adopted 05/06 budget

Chairman John Turpin instructed the County Manager to provide the requested information to the Board at the August 8th meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman John Turpin entertained a motion to adjourn the recessed meeting.

Commissioner McHugh moved to adjourn the recessed meeting.

Commissioner Joe Turpin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Darlene M. Bullins
Clerk to the Board

John M. Turpin
Chairman