

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
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COUNTY OF STOKES)
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OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS
STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA
JUNE 21, 2010

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Budget Work Session in the third floor conference room of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administration Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Monday, June 21, 2010 at 2:00 pm with the following members present:

Chairman Jimmy Walker
Vice Chairman Ernest Lankford
Commissioner J. Leon Inman
Commissioner Ron Carroll
Commissioner Stanley Smith

County Personnel in Attendance:
County Manager K. Bryan Steen
Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins
Finance Director Julia Edwards

Chairman Jimmy Walker called the Budget Work Session to order.

Commissioner Inman delivered the invocation.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT-GOVERNING BODY-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Budget Work Session

The Board unanimously agreed to discuss the items that had been marked for further review and discussion.

Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins noted the following items had been marked for further review and discussion:

- EMS - Convalescent Transports
- EMS – Purchase of Quick Response Vehicle
- Environmental Health – Salaries
- Governing Body – Salaries for Board of Commissioners
- Walnut Cove Lions Park
- Home Health – Roof at former day care facilities
- Recreation – Further concerns
- Sheriff’s Department – SROfficers (positions at Piney Grove and Chestnut Grove Middle Schools)
- EMS – Bariatric Stretcher at other locations in the county
- DSS – New fraud investigator position recommended by the manager
- EDC – Contingency line item

County Manager Bryan Steen noted he thought members of the Board wished to discuss DSS-purchase of vehicles.

Chairman Walker requested to add DSS-purchase of vehicles and salary increases for all county employees to the list for review and discussion.

Commissioner Carroll requested to add the following to the list to review and discuss:

- Contingency – Hospital Capital Outlay
- Departmental reclassifications requested, but not recommended by the manager (Fire Marshal, Health, Home Health, Public Buildings, Sheriff's Department, and Tax Administration)
- DSS – new positions not recommended by the manager (Processing Assistant III-50% and Social Worker III)
- Community College Architect
- Libraries
- Schools – Discuss at the joint meeting with the Board of Education scheduled for June 22nd

Commissioner Inman requested to add the following to the list to review and discuss:

- Appropriation of \$2,159,266 Hold Harmless funding, specifically funding being used for recurrent expense in the recommended budget
- Increase of \$1,464,212 from fiscal year 2009-10 final budget

Commissioner Carroll noted the following:

- The figures included in the recommended budget are somewhat misleading
- The final budget in the amount of \$40,608,384 ceased to exist once the first budget amendment was adopted
- To date, there have been 97 budget amendments adopted that have changed the 2009-10 budget total
- Current 2009-10 budget is \$42,472,572
- Manager's recommended budget is \$42,072,596, which is actually a \$399,976 cut

The Board briefly discussed the increase from the final adopted budget amount total of \$40,608,384 to the current budget amount total of \$42,472,572.

EMS Quick Response Vehicle (Recommended by manager -\$80,000)

The Board continued discussion regarding the EMS Quick Response Vehicle, bariatric stretcher possibly at the King/Pinnacle station, and a possible F250 truck with cover.

Board members expressed the following:

Vice Chairman Lankford – recommended vehicle will get very poor gas mileage and economically not the year to buy a new vehicle

Commissioner Smith – feels a smaller vehicle would serve the purpose (\$40-\$45,000), purchase of this vehicle will keep the EMS vehicle purchase rotation on schedule

Commissioner Carroll – agrees with Commissioner Smith – can go up to \$50,000

Chairman Walker – supports the purchase of the Quick Response Vehicle, agrees with the \$40,000-\$45,000 price range (smaller vehicle)

Commissioner Inman – can't see purchasing an \$80,000 response vehicle, price has to be lower

Chairman Walker noted the item remains in the budget, but purchase must be a smaller vehicle at a lower price.

EMS Convalescent Care (Not recommended by the manager)

Commissioner Smith noted the following:

- New revenue stream
- Several convalescent beds in the county
- Currently, an ALC truck runs the calls for convalescent transports such as doctor visits
- Need for a dedicated truck for convalescent calls
- The ALC truck does not pick up the patients in Winston Salem
- Makes good sense to consider the option

Manager Steen noted that information from Director Stevens indicates that if the County can't transport both ways, it may not be cost effective.

The Board discussed adding an additional unit for convalescent transports.

Chairman Walker agreed to the concept, but not sure this the right time, suggested maybe looking at the item later in year.

Vice Chairman Lankford reiterated that Director Stevens had noted that if the County can't transport both ways, it may not be cost effective.

Commissioner Carroll requested to review the information submitted by Director Stevens before making any final decision.

The Board agreed to leave the item on the list pending another review of the numbers submitted by Director Stevens.

Environmental Health - Salaries

Chairman Walker confirmed that the salary increases for Environmental Health is consistent with the longevity step program.

Employee Salary Longevity/Increases

Commissioner Carroll reiterated that all salary line items have been adjusted by the approval in Feb. 2010 of the longevity steps for fiscal year 2009-10. Commissioner Carroll asked what would be the savings if the longevity increases (recommended in the budget) were taken out of the budget. Finance Director Julia Edwards noted that approximately \$42,179.66 would be saved if the longevity increases were taken from each department's salary line item.

The Board discussed the longevity increases and the increase in the employer retirement contribution estimated at \$150,000.

Chairman Walker asked if there was any action any board member wished to take regarding employee salary increases.

Board members expressed the following:

Commissioner Carroll – not at this time
Chairman Walker – willing to look at the topic again
Vice Chairman Lankford – not at this time
Commissioner Smith – not at this time
Commissioner Inman – need to discuss the proposed budget

Chairman Walker noted that longevity step increases remain in the budget at this time.

Governing Body-Board of Commissioners' Compensation

Commissioner Carroll noted the following regarding compensation received by Board members:

- Proposal does not have anything to do with the amount paid to BOCC, it is the way it is calculated
- Proposal: regular members would receive \$400 per pay period, chairman would receive \$500 per pay period, each member would receive an additional \$100 for every meeting that official minutes are kept by the Clerk
- BOCC members would not be compensated for other outside meetings
- Other outside meetings would be taken care of with the base pay

The Board discussed the concept presented by Commissioner Carroll:

Board members expressed the following:

Vice Chairman Lankford – opposes the change, even though it would not be an increase for the Board, it would appear to be
Commissioner Smith – agrees with Commissioner Carroll
Commissioner Inman – agrees with Commissioner Carroll, but feels not the right time to put a perception out that the Commissioners are trying to take care of their own salary and no one else
Chairman Walker – opposes the concept at this particular time, feels that Commissioners should be compensated for other meetings which assist the member in fulfilling his duties as a Commissioner, not fair for one Commissioner who attends no other outside meetings to get the same pay as the Commissioner attending outside meetings

The Board briefly discussed other outside meetings attended by Board members.

There was no consensus or majority to discuss the item any further.

Walnut Cove Lions Park

Commissioner Smith noted that he had been informed that there were some repairs needed to the building located on the property at Lions Park.

County Manager Steen noted the following:

- County owns the land
- Lions Club built the building
- Did not have any request for funding for the repairs of the building

The Board discussed the ownership of the building, ownership of the land, amount of funding needed for the repairs, and who looks after the property.

Commissioner Smith noted that he would provide the Board with the amount needed for repairs at the next Budget Work Session. Commissioner Inman noted that the County

had done some minor repairs in the past.

Board members expressed the following:

Vice Chairman Lankford – opposes funding for repairs – feels there are numerous other organizations in the county that also need repairs to their facility

Commissioner Inman – explore the amount of funding needed before making a final decision

Commissioner Smith - explore the amount of funding needed before making a final decision

Commissioner Carroll – explore the amount of funding needed before making a final decision

Chairman Walker – proceed cautiously, concerned with the number of requests that might follow

Chairman Walker noted there was a majority that wished to explore the funding request further.

Home Health – Renovations (\$20,000 recommended by Manager)

Manager Steen noted that there might not be a need for the recommended \$20,000, due to not being sure a new roof (recommended in the proposed budget) is needed. Staff will not be able to start work on the facility (if needed) until late July, early August.

Board members expressed the following:

Vice Chairman Lankford – take out

Commissioner Inman – leave in for now

Commissioner Smith - leave in

Commissioner Carroll – leave in until the facility is evaluated

Chairman Walker - leave in if the roof is absolutely needed

Chairman Walker stated the item would remain in the recommended budget at this time.

Recreation

Chairman Walker noted the need to explore recreational opportunities in the County.

Chairman Walker noted the County currently pays YMCA \$117,484 per fiscal year.

Manager Steen noted the information regarding the program, number of children served, etc. had been emailed to each member.

Chairman Walker noted the possibility of bringing some of the services back in-house to be managed by the County, points on grant applications deducted due to not having a recreation director, and children still having to pay the YMCA a fee to participate in programs.

The Board discussed termination of the contract which requires a 6 month notice, programs being offered by YMCA, and the facility in Danbury.

Board members expressed the following:

Vice Chairman Lankford – county getting an exceptionally good deal, can't bring in-house for the same money and receive the number of programs being offered by the YMCA – leave as is

Commissioner Inman – do a comparable study/analysis before changing anything, consider changing sometime other than budget time
Commissioner Smith - willing to look at later
Commissioner Carroll – willing to look at later
Chairman Walker – take a look at this item in the future to see if the current arrangement could be improved

Chairman Walker noted no action would be taken now, but the item would possibly be reviewed at a later date.

Sheriff's Department –SRO – Middle Schools

Clerk Darlene Bullins explained that the Board of Education did not include the SRO positions at Piney Grove and Chestnut Grove Middle Schools in their budget request, but Manager Steen recommended \$61,825 be placed in a Contingency account for the SROfficers at Piney Grove and Chestnut Grove Middle Schools if “At Risk” funding was not received by the Board of Education.

Chairman Walker noted the recent email received from the Chairman of the Board of Education stating the Board of Education did not support staffing these two positions.

Commissioner Carroll requested to hold off on and discuss the item with the Board of Education. Commissioner Inman agreed with Commissioner Carroll.

The Board discussed the item being discussed with the Board of Education at the June 22nd joint meeting.

The Board unanimously agreed to discuss the item with the Board of Education at the June 22nd joint meeting.

County Manager Steen noted that the recommendation was based on one of the Board's adopted goals which was to assist, if possible, agencies being affected by State cuts.

EMS – Bariatric Stretcher

Commissioner Smith noted the possibility of purchasing another bariatric stretcher to be placed at the new King/Pinnacle Station, with the purchase of the first bariatric stretcher being housed in Danbury.

Commissioner Smith noted two of the bariatric stretchers would provide coverage to the entire county.

The Board discussed the purchase of another bariatric stretcher.

Board members expressed the following:

Commissioner Carroll – would not rule the item out at the present time
Commissioner Inman – not in favor of including the purchase of another bariatric stretcher in this year's budget
Commissioner Smith – consider the request later

Chairman Walker – consider the request later

Vice Chairman Lankford – do not need another stretcher with all of the mutual aid agreements with other EMS agencies (Surry, Rockingham, Forsyth)

Chairman Walker noted the item would be further reviewed.

DSS- Fraud Investigator (Recommended by the Manager)

Chairman Walker noted this is the only new position recommended by Manager Steen and this position would pay for itself.

County Manager Steen noted the following:

- Information from DSS Director Spencer does definitely indicate that the position would pay for itself
- County funding would be \$10,903
- Poverty level will be increased, more applicants will be applying
- Last year, DSS received approximately \$20,000 from the small amount of fraud claims process
- Not all of the fraud is criminal, very rare

The Board discussed the item.

Board members expressed the following:

Commissioner Carroll – leave it in for now

Commissioner Inman – open mind – not sure at this time

Commissioner Smith – leave the request in for now

Chairman Walker – leave it in for now

Vice Chairman Lankford – some of the counties have tried the position, but found it was not cost effective, not interested in adding a new position

Chairman Walker stated the item would remain in the recommended budget at this time

DSS- Purchase of Vehicles

Chairman Walker noted his support for the purchase of (9) nine vehicles (Ford Fusion) at a cost of \$56,514 (county funding).

Chairman Walker noted the following:

- Reiterated (9) vehicles for a cost of \$56,514
- Cars would replace the newer Crown Vics
- Better gas mileage
- New cars – less maintenance
- Possibly selling the Crown Vics between \$4,000-\$4,500
- Must be used at DSS for five years, then can be put in other departments
- Ford Fusion will save a nickel per gallon

The Board discussed the item.

Commissioner Inman requested information regarding the number of vehicles and their assigned departments.

Board members expressed the following:

Commissioner Carroll – open mind – not rule out at this time

Commissioner Inman – need to see the inventory before making a decision

Commissioner Smith – leave the request in the recommended budget

Chairman Walker – open mind - leave it in for now

Vice Chairman Lankford – Crown Vics would probably not sell for \$4,000-\$4,500 - opposes purchase of new vehicles for DSS, can't justify buying new vehicles in such an uncertain economic time

Commissioner Smith reiterated the amount of county funding being \$56,514.00

with Federal/State funding being \$73,986.

Chairman Walker noted the item stays in the recommended budget at this time.

EDC – Contingency Line Item

Commissioner Carroll noted the following regarding a new Contingency Line Item for EDC:

- Prompted by the request from the King Chamber of Commerce
- This fund would assist other like organizations, even municipalities, that may want to undertake some economic development initiatives and this funding could provide a little bit of assistance (seed money)
- Funding would come from Hold Harmless – possibly allocating \$15,000

Chairman Walker noted that he agreed with Commissioner Carroll and would agree to possibly allocating \$15,000 to \$20,000. Chairman Walker stated that the King Chamber of Commerce for many years had been doing things for the county (making and answering calls, providing information, etc.) since they were the only Chamber in the County without any compensation from the County.

Commissioner Inman noted the following:

- Spoke to the Economic Development Director on Friday and he had concerns regarding an allocation to the King Chamber of Commerce
 - This might start a precedent
 - Might want to talk with the Director before making a decision
 - Feels the EDC is doing what the Chamber is doing

The Board discussed the item.

Board members expressed the following:

Chairman Walker – supports allocation to King Chamber of Commerce and Commissioner Carroll's request for a contingency line item for Economic Development

Commissioner Inman – feels if the allocation is approved, the EDC should be involved in making recommendations regarding the allocation to individual organizations, not sure at this particular moment about Commissioner Carroll's suggestion

Commissioner Smith – supports the concept of the contingency line item readily available if there is a need, but not sure about the allocation to the King Chamber of Commerce

Commissioner Carroll – clarification that it is not a line item for the King Chamber of Commerce, but the request from them could be entertained, Board of Commissioners would make the final decision

Vice Chairman Lankford – can't support the concept at this time

Chairman Walker noted the item has support for further consideration at this time.

Hospital – Capital Outlay

Commissioner Carroll proposed the following:

- Amend the current year's budget and transfer \$240,050 appropriated in the current budget in Contingency to Capital Reserve for this line item
- This removes \$240,050 out of the recommended next year's budget
- Hospital Board of Trustees has approved a \$700,000 capital needs list
- Contingency in the past years has been transferred each year to different areas (dedicated fund, hospital, etc.)

The Board discussed the item.

Board members expressed the following:

Commissioner Inman – can consider the proposal

Vice Chairman Lankford – can keep an open mind about the proposal if this cuts the budget by \$240,050

Commissioner Smith – can support the proposal

Commissioner Carroll – reduces the recommended budget by \$240,050

Chairman Walker – supports the proposal

Chairman Walker noted the item has support for further consideration at this time.

Finance Director Edwards noted a budget amendment would need to be approved.

DSS- New positions (Processing Assistant III and Social Worker III)(not recommended)

Commissioner Carroll noted the request from the DSS Board for further consideration regarding the requested two new positions.

Commissioner Carroll noted the following included in Chairman Culler's letter:

- Clerical unit currently averaging 60 hours of overtime per pay period which would equate to the requested .50 position (start position in October) (County share = \$3,396)
- 70 children are eligible to receive services, but don't have a social worker to spend time to assist this population (group of children struggle to stay out of jail and keep jobs) (start position in July) (Social Worker III – county share = \$16,334)

Commissioner Carroll noted that the first item on the Board's goals was to provide a safety net to prevent individuals from "falling through the cracks".

The Board discussed the item.

Board members expressed the following:

Commissioner Carroll – thinks there is merit to look at the request favorably

Commissioner Smith – not off the table at this time

Commissioner Inman – can't deny the need is there, but at this time would consider the request if the Board would assess all departments and look at the other side to see if there are any departments overstaffed

Chairman Walker – supports looking further at adding the positions into the budget

Vice Chairman Lankford – can't support adding new positions

Commissioner Inman expressed concerns with the small amount of job sharing being done at this time and employees who are not willing to participate favorably in the program.

The Board discussed the need to continue to job sharing especially since some departments

are still not as busy due to the economy.

The Board discussed the new positions given to DSS in previous years (3) new positions given in the 2008-09 budget.

Vice Chairman Lankford expressed concerns with adding new positions, continuing to borrow more money, adding more expenditures, and loss of sales tax revenue.

Chairman Walker noted the item has support for further consideration at this time.

Reclassifications

Commissioner Carroll would like to review the reclassifications that have been requested in this year's budget: Fire Marshal, Health Department, Home Health, Public Buildings, and Tax Administration.

Commissioner Carroll noted the need to look at each individual reclassification.

Commissioner Carroll expressed concerns that employees are already performing the additional duties of the job and not being compensated. Commissioner Carroll noted that at the last meeting the Board approved an increase for an employee who would be taking on more duties (pretty much the same thing as a reclassification).

The Board discussed the item.

Board members expressed the following:

Vice Chairman Lankford – oppose funding for any reclassifications this year

Commissioner Inman – keep an open mind – need more information about the reclassifications

Commissioner Smith – warrants further looking at the reclassification

Chairman Walker – needs more information

Commissioner Carroll – needs more discussion (supports Health, Fire Marshal, Home Health, need more information about Public Buildings and Tax Administration, not sure about the Sheriff's Department due to the request being across the Board)

Chairman Walker noted the item has support for further consideration at this time.

Community College Architect

Commissioner Carroll stated that he would vote to fund to hire an architect to design a community college as long as it is part of the financing for the total project. Commissioner Carroll continued to state that he would not vote to hire an architect to design a plan that is just going to gather dust.

Commissioner Carroll proposed to fund the hiring of an architect to design a community college as long as it is part of the financing for the total project.

The Board discussed the item.

Board members expressed the following:

Vice Chairman Lankford – can't see leaving it on the table at this time
Commissioner Inman – agrees with Commissioner Carroll's concept, but not ready to finance a community college this year
Commissioner Smith – agrees with Commissioner Carroll, would agree to further discussion
Chairman Walker – can consider the concept if the funding is allocated from Hold Harmless
Commissioner Carroll – further discussion

Finance Director Edwards noted that only \$286,400 is coming from General Fund (Hold Harmless) with the remaining \$13,600 from capital reserve.

Chairman Walker noted the item has support for further consideration at this time.

Libraries

Commissioner Carroll proposed the following:

- Give a special one time allocation from Hold Harmless to each library in the County for the purchase of books (\$12,000 to \$15,000)

Board members expressed the following:

Vice Chairman Lankford– can't support at this time due to the current budget issues
Commissioner Inman – keep an open mind
Commissioner Smith – keep an open mind
Chairman Walker – keep an open mind

Chairman Walker noted the item has support for further consideration at this time.

Hold Harmless – Allocation of \$2 Million

Commissioner Inman expressed the following concerns:

- Tax collection rate changed from last year (95.5% to 96.25%)
- Need to budget revenue conservatively
- Using Hold Harmless to offset a loss of \$749,000 (sales tax reduction)
- Try to structure a budget without using Hold Harmless to fund recurring expenses

Board members expressed the following:

Vice Chairman Lankford– support further discussion
Commissioner Inman – support further discussion
Commissioner Smith – support further discussion
Chairman Walker – support further discussion
Commissioner Carroll – support further discussion

Chairman Walker noted the item has support for further consideration at this time.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Walker adjourned the Budget Work Session.

Darlene M. Bullins
Clerk to the Board

Jimmy Walker
Chairman