

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 9, 2015

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Public Hearing regarding the Proposed Fiscal Year 2015-16 County Budget in Courtroom "A" of the Governmental Complex located in Danbury, North Carolina on Tuesday, June 9, 2015, at 7:00 pm with the following members present:

Chairman Ronda Jones
Vice Chairman Jimmy Walker
Commissioner J. Leon Inman
Commissioner Ernest Lankford
Commissioner James D. Booth

County Personnel in Attendance:
County Manager Richard D. Morris
Clerk to the Board Darlene M. Bullins
Finance Director Julia Edwards

Chairman Ronda Jones called the Public Hearing to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Chairman Jones delivered the invocation.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT-GOVERNING BODY-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Public Hearing

Chairman Jones opened the Public Hearing for the Proposed Fiscal Year 2015-16 County Budget.

Chairman Jones also reminded those speaking that there was a three (3) minute time limit.

The following spoke during the Public Hearing regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2015-16

County Budget:

Eddie Horn

Fire Chief for the Town of Rural Hall
177 Rural Hall/Germanton Road
Rural Hall, NC

Fire Chief Horn presented the following comments:

- Appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight
- It has been a pleasure to work with the county through the budget process
- Any consideration regarding the county manager's recommendation will be greatly appreciated in this matter and will greatly help our department and our surrounding departments

Amos Elvis

1250 Carson Watts Road
King, NC 27021

Mr. Elvis presented the following comments:

- Appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight
- Here to speak tonight about the proposed tax increase that you guys are trying to impose on the citizens of Stokes County
- I did not get a raise this year
- Most of the people in Stokes County are on a fixed income; I am on a fixed income
- If you go to the grocery store and you have 4-5 kids to feed and you want a steak, you may have to buy hamburger because you don't have the money to buy steak
- Saw in the paper where the manager said it was a "Perfect Storm"
- Citizens of this County are the "Perfect Resistance"
- According to the information that I have looked at, the manager is asking for a 7.5 cent tax increase
- That is going to make the county's tax 84 cents per \$100
- In Forsyth County, it is currently 71 cents per \$100
- We can't try to be like every other county
- We are a small county, a rural county
- We have farmers
- I can't see that much of a tax increase right now
- We are in a failing economy
- We need jobs in our county
- Not a good time for a tax increase
- The way I see it, you are going to have to "tighten up your belt" "sharpen your pencils" and go back to the drawing board and figure this thing out
- We, the citizens, do not want this
- You might not have just a handful of people here tonight, but a lot could not be here

- Tried to call everyone I knew to come over here tonight, only got one patriot to come tonight
- Would like to have a raise, too, but I did not get one
- Don't like a surprise attack
- This is the way I see this, a surprise attack
- Did not know anything about this until yesterday
- Hope you will take notice and be on notice that we don't want it

E. A. "Buddy" Timm

708 Summit Street
Walnut Cove, NC 27052

Mr. Timm presented the following comments:

- Would just like to say that I was born and raised in New Jersey
- There were several farms around the area which I lived
- The farm across the street from where I lived had to get a special exemption to keep it as a historical site so they could continue to raise vegetables and sell at the roadside
- This is what I am afraid will happen with taxes going up and up and up, just as they have gone up throughout the eastern coast of our country
- At times, the road to destruction is paved with good intentions
- You work hard trying to keep taxes down, but the problem is that our whole financial system in the United States is based on progressive socialism
- Friedrich von Hayek wrote a book called *The Road to Serfdom* which explains the downward spiral is caused by socialism
- People with jobs are having them undermined by the federal government's immigration policy – allowing skilled workers in legally and illegally for special exemption to replace engineers in factories
- Social Services increases the burden on the taxpayer for the welfare of another
- Besides, the Federal Government is printing \$85 billion to keep America afloat which is increasing our debt and devouring our money
- What is going to happen when our dollar collapses?
- Somehow we must live within our means
- Property tax alone should be for securing that property
- Social Services and other things should be paid for by sales tax where everyone pays
- It is unjust to have a law that takes from my property and gives it to another
- You make a law that says "thou shall not steal" yet you take it out of our property tax to pay for another's welfare

Clerk Bullins called time, three minute limit had exhausted.

Mike Orr
2522 Flat Shoals Road
King, NC 27021

Mr. Orr presented the following comments:

- First of all, I am going to admit ignorance, just found out about this a couple of days ago on Channel 14 – Carolina which is not a great source of news
- Would like to confirm with Manager Morris that he is asking for a 6 cent tax increase on top of the current 60 cents tax which would be 10%

Manager Morris noted that no questions are answered during a Public Hearing, but would be happy to discuss the budget at a later time.

Mr. Orr continued his comments:

- Previous speaker noted that he did not get a raise this year, I was lucky, I got 2%; in a couple of years, I will catch up with our property tax
- I am here to complain a little bit, but I am here also to offer a solution
- I am a property tax holder
- I have lived in Stokes County for 11 years, fairly new to the County; I have paid \$25,000 in property taxes
- I have paid them every year and on time
- I believe in supporting our county and the services that we have
- While during some business dealings, I have come across an individual who is three years behind on his property taxes to the tune of \$2,163.67 which would cover my property taxes for one whole year
- I spoke to Tax Administrator Oakley about his procedures related to when he goes after people who do not pay their taxes
- I did not receive any details from Administrator Oakley except that the “County has people who are 10 years behind on their taxes”
- Here is my solution – go collect the overdue property taxes
- I see some foreclosures at times
- Every year, the County publishes two to three pages of delinquent taxpayers in the local paper
- There is never a listing published that list previous years or a total amount due, only the current year
- Collect those old taxes and you would not have to raise taxes
- Thank you for your time

Chairman Jones expressed the Board’s appreciation for the comments provided at tonight’s

Public Hearing.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Jones entertained a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Booth moved to adjourn the Public Hearing. Commissioner Lankford seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Darlene M. Bullins
Clerk to the Board

Ronda Jones
Chairman