

June 13, 2016

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m. for a special budget session in the 1909 Randolph County Historic Courthouse Meeting Room, 145 Worth Street, Asheboro, NC. Commissioners Frye, Kemp, Haywood, Lanier, and Allen were present. Also present were County Manager Hal Johnson; Finance Officer Will Massie; County Attorney Ben Morgan; County Staff Attorney Aimee Scotton; Amanda Varner, Clerk to the Board; Dana Crisco, Deputy Clerk to the Board.

Communities in Schools (CIS)

Paula Owens, Communities in Schools Executive Director, informed the Board that Communities in Schools National, which they are governed by, has set new standards to be labeled as a “CIS Model” that go into effect July 1. They now require paid CIS staff to be in the schools they serve a minimum of 20 hours per week. This data will be tracked at a more intense level. A “tiered” system of support replaces the former “level” system and aligns with the State Department of Public Instruction’s tiered levels, increasing accountability.

Ms. Owen said the vision is “to increase intentional intervention in schools and move the needle for student success.”

She stated their request of \$70,000 is the same amount as last year. Of that, 36% will be used for salaries. Through reallocation of their agency funds, they are planning to increase hours for all staff currently under 30 hours, thus increasing the direct impact of their staff in the schools. The remaining 64% of request would be applied directly to programs and student needs.

They were able to serve 668 students through the Back Pack Pals program; 195 of them in Asheboro City Schools and the rest in Randolph County schools. (Eastern Randolph, Southwestern, and Randleman areas only. Another nonprofit serves Archdale/Trinity area.) Of the students served, 95% have improved or at least maintained attendance rate and 94% improved or maintained academic standing. She said they continue to aggressively seek additional community partners to help facilitate and support this program. They were able to add two new faith-based partners for the City Schools and two individual volunteers that shop, pack, and/or deliver for Randleman and Ramseur area schools allowing staff more time to work in the schools.

As a pilot project this summer, they plan to distribute 60 bags of food per week over a six-week period at two summer sites: McCrary Elementary and the Dream Center. The Randolph Public Library has partnered with CIS to include a book in each of the bags this summer and will also provide a book talk weekly at each of the summer sites. Several community partners, both civic and faith-based, have underwritten this project.

They currently serve 338 students in the Project Mentor program; 75.5% are progressing academically and behaviorally. Ms. Owen said their goal is to increase the numbers of mentors/tutors in the schools. There is a high demand for this service and there are many opportunities for volunteers. She said this goal aligns with the Well-Being goal (Quality of Life, Goal #2) in the Randolph County Strategic Plan: Encourage educational practices that will lead

to an engaged citizenry of lifelong learners who have the ability to change and innovate. Mentor programs provide an excellent opportunity for experienced citizens to affect growth and change in their younger, less-experienced mentees. She said they are making strides to increase tutoring and other small group academic services in after-school settings. They have added two such programs with plans to expand to more schools for 2016-17.

Other Programs CIS provides:

- Literacy—book clubs, reading buddies, reading tutors, book giveaways.
- Transitions—multiple programs that target middle and high school students, keeping them engaged and productive in school. Includes Reality Store—financial literacy for all 8th graders in Randolph County Schools and 9th graders in Asheboro High School.
- Student Assistance—school supply drive that provides much-needed supplies to each school in the Randolph County and Asheboro City Schools; emergency assistance for food or clothing to school students.
- Fitness—GO FAR program now in A/T area—running club with healthy lifestyle choices curriculum, culminating in 5K run. Expansion of this program to other schools/areas is their goal. This program also aligns with the Randolph County Strategic Plan: Public Health—(Community Health Goals 1 and 2).

Ms. Owens said it was their goal to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. The prevention of drop-outs begins at an early age, therefore, they intentionally intervene early to serve and enhance the educational process for many at-risk students in Randolph County.

Randolph County Senior Adults

Martha Ogburn, Executive Director Randolph County Senior Adults Association, said she has had the pleasure of going out into the community and meeting with some of the citizens that are directly affected by the programs provided the Association. On their behalf, she thanked County management for including their request of \$267,585 in the proposed budget and asked the Board to approve. She said much of it is used as a match for other grants.

Family Crisis Center

Dare Spicer, Executive Director of the Randolph County Family Crisis Center, thanked the Board for the many years of support and the requested allocation. She said the amount requested helps provide critical positions for their agency that allow them to meet N.C. General Statute requirements for the Center. It also serves as a match for other grants.

Ms. Spicer said there is a shelter in both Asheboro and Archdale. So far in 2015-2016, they have served 706 women and 580 men who have been affected by domestic violence, family violence, and sexual assault. The total number of clients has decreased and Ms. Spicer attributes their success to the prevention efforts made to educate the community. Services provided have increased and they average 700 services per staff member.

She thanked the Board for being a partner and asked the Board to approve their requested \$41,000 in order to continue to fulfill their mission.

Central Boys and Girls Club (CBGC)

Angie Orth, Chairperson for the CBGC, spoke about the work of the Club. She said she has seen the impact they are having with the youth in the community. They served 149 students during fiscal year 2015-2016 by giving them safe venues while developing leadership capabilities, character skills and life skills. She thanked the Board for their continued support.

Thomas Falgout, President/CEO of CBGC, thanked the Board for their years of support. He said 95% of the students do not participate in any other youth programs; some reasons may be costs or transportation issues. Attendance numbers were down due to sport facility renovations during last summer but expect the numbers to increase in 2016-2017. Funds from the County assist with after school and summer participation needs. The club exposes them to more opportunities than they would have if the Club was not there. He said they are also fed meals through other grant funding. Some may not eat if it were not for the Club.

Randolph Vocational Industries (RVI)

Michael Ayers said that they have asked for \$20,000 this year and it has been included in the proposed budget. He thanked the Board for their generosity and provided some statistics. He said in this current fiscal year they have placed 51 people in jobs in the community, have 39 clients in house, and currently working to place 31 additional clients. Most of these would be on welfare or getting some type of assistance. They did have to replace a fork lift and it was a \$12,000 expense they were not prepared for.

Mr. Ayers asked again this year if the Commissioners would consider changes to the policy which requires them to provide a certified audit. Instead, he suggested they accept a certified review which would cut their costs in half. He said it would help every nonprofit making a request to the County. It costs RVI a little over \$5,000 to have a certified audit prepared. They get funds from other sources but do not have to submit a certified audit.

Randolph Arts Guild

Diane Villa, President of the Randolph Arts Guild Board, provided a PowerPoint presentation requesting the same amount as last year: \$20,000. She said the Guild serves as the arts council for Randolph County and it works to create art opportunities for citizens. They do that through classes, exhibitions, lectures, special events, the Fall Festival and the Carolina Potters Conference. For the first time in 43 years the 2015 Fall Festival was cancelled due to inclement weather and lost a significant amount of revenue. Thanks to the generosity of the community and steady fundraising efforts they were able to “weather the storm” with the revenues of two other fundraisers: an annual rummage sale and the Art Affaire.

She said funding from the County is vital to the Arts Guild’s ability to leverage other grant sources. The Arts Guild operates on a \$300,000 budget, thus the County allotment accounts for 7% of their budget. Ms. Villa stated cultural resource related events not only have a large economic and tourism impact on the community but also provide quality of life benefits for many.

Ms. Villa then announced that a new director has been named and would be in the office soon.

Commissioner Kemp suggested that the Board consider an increase to the Arts Guild agency request for this year due to the loss in revenue of the cancelled 2015 Fall Festival.

Shelter of Hope

Eleanor Yates, spoke on behalf of the Shelter of Hope, a homeless shelter for men that opened in 2010. It was formerly an outreach ministry of a church and became a non-profit through the State as of February 10th. They are working with the IRS to become a 501(c)(3) and hope to have the paperwork back soon. Their first fiscal year ends June 30, 2016, and then will have their first audit. They are seeking funding to complete the renovations to the former Senior Adults Association building they have recently occupied. It will provide emergency housing for 32 men for up to 120 days. The prior facility held 19 men. She said Asheboro has a lot of homeless individuals now and many just need a “leg up.” This place will give them a bed and two meals. Staff will assist with finding employment, transportation, counseling, and securing permanent housing through the rapid re-housing program.

Chairman Frye asked if this was a one-time funding request. Ms. Yates, said yes, in order to complete the renovations. He also asked if the men are allowed to stay there during the day. She said, “No,” they were to be out looking for employment, if not currently employed.

Commissioner Kemp asked if any veterans were staying there and Paulette Handy, who was in attendance with Ms. Yates, replied, “Yes.”

Commissioner Allen asked if the construction pricing presented had been negotiated for the lowest price and Ms. Handy responded that they had been negotiated.

Bennett Fire Department

Keenan Jones, Chief of Bennett Fire Department, requested a one cent tax increase to .09. Bennett Fire Department serves taxpayers in Chatham and Randolph counties with equal protection. The requested amount would match the rate already assessed in Chatham County.

Bennett Fire Department is already rated with an ISO Rating of 6 in their fire district located in Randolph and Chatham Counties. He said they are actively training and progressing to lower their rating to an ISO Rating of 5 at their next inspection in 2017-2018. Water supply is a major issue for this rural department and due to that they have ordered a 3,000 gallon tanker to increase their sustainable flow at a fire scene. Chief Jones said the extra water supply will help them to better serve their community as well as helping them in their attempt to lower the ISO rating.

If approved, this increase in funds will also enable them to add an additional twenty-hour a week employee to aid in preparations for the upcoming inspection. They currently have one forty-hour a week employee.

Farmer Fire Department

Tracy Boyles, Chief of Farmer Fire Department, asked for a fire tax increase from .0769 to .09 for the upcoming fiscal year. He said the department had come a long way in its 47 years of existence but has started to fall behind. They have answered 325 calls this year and there has been a 25% increase each year. Over the last 47 years, their call volume has increased by 131%,

but their tax rate has not. He said the department membership has fallen off each year. The average age of their department is becoming older at an alarming rate: male average age is now 46 years old, female 34 years old, and junior firefighter average age is 16 (have to be 18 to be official firefighter). The number of people responding to calls has also decreased over time. They have taken steps to curb the decreases by hiring a full-time chief and two part-time firefighters to cover the district during daytime hours. Personnel costs are 46% of their budget. There is concern that people lose interest in responding over time. In the future, the department may have to hire more employees and develop a plan to house them 24 hours a day in order to respond and address the declining number of volunteers.

Chief Boyles said even with the reduction of volunteers, they are still rendering good service to their community with an average response time of 6.9 minutes. He said the only way Farmer Fire Department can improve their services to the community is with more financial support since savings has been depleted to keep things updated. In 2007-08, they voluntarily requested reduction of their rate. In 2008-09 they had to ask for an increase due to the high price of gas. Chief Boyles said if they get behind on purchasing new equipment, renovations, and hiring paid firefighters, the burden will be greater to the department and their citizens.

Northeast (Liberty) Fire Department

Matt Talbot, Chief of Northeast Fire Department, is seeking a tax increase to .12 from the current .09. They are going to use this additional tax increase along with the additional funding from the Town of Liberty to hire two full-time firefighters. This will allow them to have 24-hour a day fire and emergency services protection in the fire district. Their call volume has increased 43.06% in the last eight years.

They currently have one full-time fire chief who works Monday through Friday, one full-time firefighter who works Monday through Thursday, and one part-time firefighter that works Monday through Friday. In addition to the three paid staff, they rely heavily on a declining number of volunteers and their resident firefighters.

Westside Fire Department

Recil Williamson, Chief of Westside Fire Department, is requesting an increase in taxes to .12 due to the number of calls increasing by 20% over the prior year. They will also be losing revenues due to the NCDOT acquiring some properties for the new 64 bypass loop around Asheboro but anticipate an increase in call volume and responsibilities once the road is open.

Chief Williamson said Westside is one of the bigger fire departments in the County. They also respond with eight other departments under a mutual aid agreement; “When they roll, we roll,” and an expense for those calls has to be considered as well.

He said volunteer firefighters are hard to come by and citizens in their district want to make sure there is someone to fight a fire so the requested increase would add additional paid personnel. There are currently five paid firefighters and they are all stationed at the base located on Highway 64 west. The station near Caraway has the most need for volunteers at this time. They are looking for creative ways to find youth interested in firefighting.

Chief Williamson said he and other departments have farms in their district with a farm deferred tax rate, therefore, reducing the revenues the department receives. He stated most of those farms still have barns and other structures that need fire protection.

Franklinville Fire Department

Kyle Dixon, Chief of Franklinville Fire Department, asked for a tax rate increase from .10 to .12 cents. He said his staff covers 62.4 square miles and has managed to lower its ISO rating to the point where most all areas in the Franklinville District coverage have seen a decrease in their fire insurance. Very few properties are more than six miles from a station and still have a 9 ISO rating. Those properties are along Henley Country Road. Inside the Franklinville city limits has dropped to a 4 and others to a 5 or 6 rating.

Fire calls have decreased but other calls have seen an increase. Chief Dixon said these calls are getting a little more dangerous due to mental health and domestic issues. He said it worries him for someone to run a call alone for these reason or even to have a witness in case of an incident.

The district had to add two new sub-stations: one on N.C. 22 South and one on Walker Store Road. The substation on Walker Store Road is in a leased building. Dixon said in order to get a Certificate of Occupancy, the district promised to construct a new building within four years. The anticipated cost is \$190,000. The main reason for the increase in the rate is for capital outlay to construct a base within two years to replace the leased building and get all residents within a 6-mile radius.

In addition to the cost of construction and equipping firefighters, he said the department needs to employ more full-time employees due to the same staffing issues other departments have mentioned. "During the day, it is hard for volunteers to get off work and run fire calls, so we are limited in having enough help, during daytime hours," he said. There are three full-time firefighters that work a rotating 24-hour shift. Chief Dixon is a full-time Chief during the week. They have another firefighter that works seven days a week, eight hours a day and a part-time administrative assistant. They have also been using a resident live in program to attract people; they receive training, live at the station, and respond to calls at night. Adding additional employees guarantees at least three people on a truck to respond to calls.

Chief Dixon stated they still need to replace a vehicle to run calls that are not fire related. Using the fire truck is very expensive and costs of maintenance on those continue to rise. They continue to write grants in hopes of funding some capital needs.

Public Hearing – Appropriations for Economic Development

Chairman Frye said appropriations and an expenditure of \$234,500.00 in County funds for economic development to the Randolph County Economic Development Corporation requires a public hearing, pursuant to Section 158-7.1 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Bonnie Renfro, President of the Economic Development Corporation, said the EDC is in its 31st year of operation. This public hearing is a new requirement by general statute that requires all economic development appropriations by local governments be preceded by a public hearing.

The EDC's total operating budget is \$365,000 (85% from the County and its municipalities, 15% is private funds from members/partners who pay annual dues). She reviewed the services provided and projects by the EDC.

At 7:13 p.m., the Chairman opened the public hearing and invited citizens to speak. Hearing no comments, Chairman Frye closed the public hearing.

Proposed Budget Public Hearing

At 7:14 p.m., the Chairman opened the public hearing and invited citizens to speak concerning the Proposed Budget. Hearing no comments, Chairman Frye closed the public hearing.

Discussion

Chairman Frye thanked those that were in attendance for their interest in the budget process.

He reminded the Board that positions, systems, and equipment had been requested from departments; schools had presented their needs, outside agencies and fire departments had made requests. He asked if there was any additional discussion about these requests. Hearing none, he reminded them of the June 20th meeting to adopt the final budget.

Adjournment

At 7:15 p.m., on motion by Allen, seconded by Kemp, the Board adjourned.

Darrell L. Frye, Chairman

Phil Kemp

Stan Haywood

Arnold Lanier

David Allen

Amanda Varner, Clerk to the Board