

June 18, 2001

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met in special budget session at 2:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, County Office Building, 725 McDowell Road, Asheboro, NC. Commissioners Kemp, Frye, Davis, Mason and Holmes were present.

Randolph County Schools

Dr. Bob McRae, Superintendent, explained his capital outlay budget items, including a roof replacement at Ramseur, 8 additional buses, wastewater upgrades, relocating mobile units, routine building repairs, and HVAC, electrical, and plumbing work. Current expense increases are a result of opening two new schools, higher utility costs, additional staffing, and increases in health insurance.

Dr. McRae discussed the low supplement (1.5%) teachers in the County Schools system receive and asked the Board to consider providing enough additional funding to raise the supplement to 5%. This increase would cost \$1.8 million, over 24 on the proposed tax rate.

Asheboro City Schools

Dr. Diane Frost, Superintendent, reviewed continuation budget items causing an increase in current expense, including energy costs, health insurance, and state increase for teachers. Their expansion budget includes 5 teachers to lower class size, an elementary technology teacher, 2.5 custodial positions, and a preventive maintenance worker. Capital outlay items include replacing the HVAC system at NAMS, furniture, waterproofing and window work, and the Lindley Park construction project.

Dr. Frost stated that the School Board is requesting that their supplemental school tax remain at 14.54.

Randolph Community College

Dr. Richard Heckman, President, said they had seen an 18% increase in enrollment this past fall. Over 1900 certificate and degree credit students were enrolled and 9800 were enrolled in continuing education classes. He requested \$700,000 in capital outlay. He noted that their energy costs are projected to be up by 35-40% this year. The Emergency Services Training Center will be open by August.

Mental Health

Mazie Fleetwood, Director, stated that their budget is 7.24% less than last year. They are eliminating detox services with the closing of the Walker Treatment Center. Other programs will move into that facility, eliminating some rent expenses. She reported that the State is reclassifying some positions, which will increase salary costs. She asked that the County allocate enough funds to pay for these reclassifications and for a 22% cost-of-living raise for all employees.

Budget Amendment - Fire Districts

On motion of Mason, seconded by Frye, the Board unanimously approved Budget Amendment #52 to the FY 2000-2001 Annual Budget, to account for tax collections for Climax Fire District that exceeded the estimated amount, as follows:

GENERAL FUND - #52	
Revenues	Increase
<i>Climax Fire District Taxes</i>	<i>\$1,700</i>
Appropriations	Increase
<i>Climax Fire District Tax Collections</i>	<i>\$1,700</i>

Budget Amendment - Planning and Zoning

Jane Leonard, Deputy Finance Officer, advised the Board that the Planning and Zoning Department had received an invoice for \$6,705 in legal fees for the Mann Media, Inc. case that is awaiting a N.C. Supreme Court decision. This case began in 1998. Since any litigation can be prolonged for many years, the County does not routinely budget for this one-time expense. If funds are not available in the department=s current budget, the department has to request funds from the Commissioners. In this case, Planning and Zoning has \$351 remaining in their budget; the remaining \$6,354 will need to come from fund balance.

On motion of Frye, seconded by Holmes, the Board unanimously approved Budget Amendment #53 to the FY 2000-2001 Annual Budget, as follows:

GENERAL FUND - #53	
Revenues	Increase
<i>Fund Balance Appropriated</i>	\$6,354
Appropriations	Increase
<i>Planning and Zoning</i>	\$6,354

Budget Amendment - Tax Department

Ms. Leonard explained that several years ago we entered into a contract with Tax Management Associates to conduct business personal property audits for the County. Even though the contract period ended June 30, 2000, we had a number of accounts that were unresolved at that time. We have now completed most of these accounts and have collected \$234,500 additional revenue due to these audits. The contract fee was \$71,011. Businesses were also refunded \$37,797 for accounts that were overstated in reporting business personal property.

On motion of Holmes, seconded by Davis, the Board unanimously approved Budget Amendment #54 to the FY 2000-2001 Annual Budget, as follows:

GENERAL FUND - #54	
Revenues	Increase
<i>Ad Valorem Taxes</i>	\$58,813
<i>Sales & Service</i>	49,995
Appropriations	Increase
<i>Tax Department</i>	\$108,808

Fire Districts

Neil Allen, Emergency Services Director, distributed a spreadsheet for all special tax districts, which detailed last year=s rate, this year=s requested rate, the revenue-neutral rate, the value of each district, and the percentage increase over the revenue-neutral rate if the requested amount is approved. It also showed what the new tax rate would be with increases from 5% up to 40%, at 5% increments.

The Board discussed fire district tax rates and asked Mr. Allen to bring back to them a simplified form to

review at their June 25 meeting.

Randolph County Heritage Committee

Mary Joan Pugh, Chairman, stated that the Heritage Committee had been working in the areas of heritage site protection, historic preservation, and a recreation master plan. She said the Recreation Subcommittee today has a recommendation for a parks and recreation master plan.

Allen Oliver, Recreation Subcommittee Chairman, reported that this committee had explored the feasibility of a countywide parks plan, had investigated the methods and costs for development of a parks master plan, and had identified the benefits that are derived from the plan. Kathy White, Recreation Resource Service of the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, provided the committee with an in-depth overview of the process for developing such a master plan. She offered her expertise in the planning process if a master plan is approved. Mr. Oliver stated that Guilford County has been successful in the development of passive recreational activity sites without the actual creation of a county parks department. Their program could serve as a model for Randolph County. He outlined goals and benefits for a master plan.

Mr. Oliver requested that the Commissioners fund \$40,000 for the development of a comprehensive parks and recreation master plan. The approximate cost would be \$50,000, and the Randolph County Tourism Development Authority has pledged \$10,000 for this project.

Budget Discussion

The Board discussed funding requests made by various departments and agencies. Upon their request, Kim Newsom, Personnel Director, reviewed the requests he had made earlier for cost-of-living increases, market adjustments, and reclassifications for Randolph County employees.

The Board recessed the meeting until the 7:00 p.m. public hearing on the proposed budget.

Public Hearing on the 2001-2002 Proposed Budget

Chairman Kemp opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m. The following persons spoke to ask the Commissioners to provide sufficient additional funds to the Randolph County Schools to increase that system's teacher supplements from 1.5% to 5%:

Fred Cole, 1342 Arrowwood Road, Asheboro (citizen)
Deborah Strauss, 930 Country Place Road, Asheboro (teacher)
Beverly Nelson, 3765 Nelson Road, Sophia (Archdale-Trinity Chamber of Commerce))
Reid Pollard, 901 Greencastle Road, Asheboro (parent)
Joanna Peterson, 5325 Snyder Country Road, Trinity (teacher)
Ed Todd, 5469 Doc Hayworth Road, Coleridge (principal)
John Maddocks, 3863 Fox Meadow Road, Trinity (principal)
Paul Guthrie, 4701 Colonial Circle, Trinity (teacher)
Bonnie Snyder, 1676 Harvest View Drive, Randleman (teacher)
John Hulin, 3088 Bethel Friends Road, Asheboro (citizen)
Matt Dunn, 3115 Creek Ridge Drive, Asheboro (teacher)
Lane Moore, 2352 Spoons Chapel Road, Asheboro (teacher)
Debbie Johns, 1195 Camelot Drive, Asheboro (teacher)

No one else spoke. Chairman Kemp closed the public hearing at 7:50 p.m.

Commissioner Frye responded to a comment made by Mr. Hulin during the public hearing that the County had increased its budget far more for human services than for education in the last 10 years.

Commissioner Frye explained that the area of human services is made up of 3 agencies--Social Services, Public Health, and Mental Health. The budget figures Mr. Hulin quoted for those 3 agencies include a great deal of federal and state dollars, whereas the budget figures he quoted for education reflect only County dollars. Also, those education figures did not include the \$100 million the County spent in the last 10 years for 13 new schools and major renovations and expansions to other schools.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Phil Kemp, Chairman

Darrell L. Frye

J. Harold Holmes

Robert D. Davis

Robert O. Mason

Alice D. Dawson, Clerk to the Board