

Commissioners Meeting Minutes

June 15, 2009

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

Randolph County Schools

Donald Andrews, Randolph County Schools Superintendent, discussed the Randolph County Schools budget request. He said that with the current state of our economy, they are requesting that the Board accept the County Schools' budget request with no expansion items, only continuation costs (projected salary increases, fringe benefit increases and rising costs associated with insurance and utilities) and costs associated with the opening of Wheatmore High School. The FY 09-10 Current Expense request is for \$18,838,800, which is a 9.73% increase over the current year's funding. Mr. Andrews said that their Capital Outlay request is for \$2,733,744, an increase of 16.54%. The Archdale-Trinity Special Tax District requests that the current tax rate of \$.09 per \$100 valuation remains the same for FY 09-10.

Mr. Andrews answered questions from the Board concerning reduction in force actions and funding expectations from state legislative action.

Asheboro City Schools

Dr. Diane Frost, Asheboro City Schools (ACS) Superintendent, reported that Communities in Schools exceeded their expectations this past year and thanked the Board for funding this organization. She said that the ACS have equipped over 125 classrooms with SmartBoards, wireless laptops, and document cameras, and have 25 regular classrooms left to equip to reach their goal. She said that they have tried to keep their budget request to continuation items only, with no request for expansion budget items. Total Current Expense request is for \$4,125,000, or 3% over the FY 08-09 appropriation. The increase is due to salary increases and insurance costs.

Dr. Frost requested \$568,000 for Current Capital and \$430,000 for Construction Capital to fund the following projects: 1) replacement or renovation of Old Balfour School; 2) additions and renovations at Asheboro High School; 3) upgrades and replacements of out-of-date or worn out systems and improving energy efficiency; and 4) athletic upgrades.

Dr. Frost said that no increase in the current Asheboro City Schools Special Tax District rate of \$0.1385 is requested for FY 09-10.

Randolph Community College

RCC President Dr. Robert Shackelford said that the impact of the State budget on RCC has been devastating. Since 2000, enrollment is up 40%, but their equipment budget is down 52%; this is particularly significant since RCC is so technology driven. Teaching loads have increased without extra pay. The number of summer courses has been reduced because summer courses are not reimbursed by the State. Twelve-month teacher contracts have been reduced to six-month contracts. They continue to look for ways to conserve and cut, but their budget situation is dire. Dr. Shackelford reviewed their estimated future capital needs projects in order of priority: 1) upfitting of Klaussner building (\$6,460,000); 2) renovation projects (\$15,700,000); 3) Welcome/Student Services Center and renovation (\$12,000,000); 4) indoor firing range (\$4,800,000); 5) real property acquisitions (\$5,000,000); 6) emergency services training facility classrooms addition (\$750,000);

7) Health & Science Center addition (\$3,000,000); 8) Industrial Trades Center Phase II (\$2,500,000); and 9) Design Center addition (\$1,800,000). He said that the FY 09-10 request is essentially a flat budget at \$3,236,964, a 4.3% increase over the FY 08-09 appropriation, but 8.24% less than was requested last year.

Sandhills Center

Michael Watson, Executive Director, Sandhills Center, said that their budget request is the same as last year: \$1,001,565. He noted one major change: Daymark Recovery Services will assume management and clinical responsibility for the operation of Sandhills' outpatient clinics, effective 7/1/09. However, this change will be virtually unnoticed by patients because there will be no change in providers or services. He answered questions from the Board.

Recess

At 3:42 p.m., the Board took a short recess.

Regular Session Resumed

At 4:00 p.m., the meeting resumed.

Randolph Arts Guild

Phil Shore, Director, Randolph Arts Guild, thanked the Board for its support through the years and urged the Board to continue funding the Arts Guild.

Central Boys and Girls Club

Elbert Lassiter, Clarissa Flowers and Holly Ferree spoke on behalf of the Club and urged the Board to fund their request. They said that without the County's funding, they will not be able to keep their doors open.

Communities In Schools (CIS)

Sandi Norman, CIS Executive Director, spoke about the successes of CIS, saying that services had been provided to more than 7,847 students during the 2008-09 school year. She listed highlights of the past year, including the addition of the Asheboro City Schools and the hiring of an Archdale-Trinity Area Coordinator. She urged the Board to approve their funding request.

Regional Consolidated Services

Teri Mabry thanked the Board for its past support. She said that her agency would not be able to provide as many hours in citizens' homes without County funding and stated that this service is not a duplication of DSS services.

Randolph Vocational Workshop

Eddie Davis, Workshop Director, thanked the Board for previous funding and asked to be included in the FY 09-10 budget.

Recess

At 4:42 p.m., the Board recessed.

Regular Session Resumed

At 7:00 p.m., the Board returned to regular session.

Budget Public Hearing

At 7:00 p.m., Chairman Holmes opened the duly advertised public hearing on the proposed FY 09-10 budget.

Will Massie, Assistant to the County Manager/Finance Officer, briefly spoke about funding issues that the County is facing this year: 1) commitment to open Wheatmore High School; 2) the economic recession (sales and property tax revenues are down); and 3) probability of currently State-funded programs or services passed on to Counties by the State legislature. He said that \$1.2 million is needed to open Wheatmore High School in August. In FY 08-09, Fund Balance was used to balance the budget rather than increasing the tax rate more than the approved increase of 1 cent. Mr. Massie said that the State is probably going to take away school ADM money from Counties. He also added that since the State is proposing many changes that would affect Counties, the Board might wish to adopt an interim budget if the State has not adopted its budget by the end of June.

Faye Cox, 1211 Grantville Lane, Asheboro, said that she knows that the State and Federal government is hurting for money, but the taxpayers are too. She said that she doesn't know if County employees are getting raises, but she does know that they get free insurance. Taxpayers also feel the pressure of foreclosures and business closures. The Federal and State government is slamming the good people of Randolph County, who, as far as she knows, pay their taxes even though jobs are bad. She said that she read in the newspaper that Commissioner Haywood stated that taxpayers can't stand a tax increase and Commissioner Lanier stated that business owners can't stand a tax increase. People are stretching their money as far as they can. There has been no raise in Medicare. She pleaded with the Board to find somewhere to get the needed money other than raising taxes, because they don't have it to give to them. She also asked the Board not to slam taxpayers next year with a double tax increase. She's tired of paying every dime to someone else. She asked what vehicle fire tax is used for.

Commissioner Frye said that fire tax on vehicles goes directly to the fire departments to fund their budgets. He also stated that the proposed budget is less than last year's budget.

James Nance, Asheboro, asked why citizens were not allowed the opportunity to vote on the \$80,000 incentive that was given to the company north of town last year. He said that years ago, Commissioner Frye told him that when the County got computers, his taxes would go down. Mr. Nance said that they haven't gone down yet. He asked what County building inspectors are doing now since building is so slow.

Chairman Holmes said that County building inspectors are busy renovating the old Courthouse.

Commissioner Lanier said that the Board has worked hard to keep the budget down, but they keep getting pressure from the State. The State is taking money from the schools. He said that they try to be good stewards with the taxpayers' money.

Tom Foti, 628 East Main St., Seagrove, spoke representing Seagrove Fire Department. He said that with people losing their jobs, they're not feeling safe and secure. He asked that the Seagrove Fire Dept. tax rate stay the same. They keep losing more and more property to non-profits and, therefore, are losing revenue.

Brian Cox, Guil-Rand Fire Dept. Chief, thanked the Board for their proactive stand in adopting a resolution in opposition to draft 09-11 State biennium budget proposal to charge emergency personnel for continuing education courses.

Darrell Voncannon, 1003 Cagle Loop Rd., Seagrove, said that he had been with the Seagrove Fire Dept. for 40 years, and would like the Seagrove fire tax rate to remain the same. He wanted to remind citizens that the fire departments strive to make property owners' insurance rates lower. He also said that he would like the County to appoint a task force to determine the most cost effective water source for new subdivisions.

Tracy Boyles, 4104 Salem Church Rd., Farmer, said that he was the Farmer Fire Dept. Fire Chief, but was speaking tonight as the Farmer PTO President. He said that Farmer Elementary School had been named a School of Choice for several years, but Farmer is becoming overcrowded. He also said that "No Child Left Behind" has ruined our school system. He wants to keep Farmer an elite school.

Danny Shaw, 6820 Crow Creek Rd., Denton, and Chief of New Hope Fire Dept., said that New Hope is a small department. Resources are low, and he asked that the fire tax rate remain unchanged.

Hearing no further comments on the proposed budget, Chairman Holmes closed the public hearing.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

J. Harold Holmes, Chairman

Darrell L. Frye

Phil Kemp

Stan Haywood

Arnold Lanier

Cheryl Ivey, Clerk to the Board