

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners reconvened the recessed budget meeting from Tuesday, June 5, 2007, on Wednesday, June 6, 2007, at 5:00pm in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, NC.

Present: Chair Ken Richardson, Vice-Chair Warren Taylor, Commissioner Doug Murphy, Commissioner Milly Richardson, County Manager Don Adams and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans. Commissioner Randy Miller was present but arrived late. County Attorney Donna Shumate was absent.

Chair Ken Richardson reconvened the recessed meeting at 5:00pm.

Joe Potts came before the Commissioners regarding the Wellness Center. He talked about the Wellness Center's pool is now being used as the community pool since Duncan Recreation Center is being renovated. He updated some information that he presented in April including upcoming events. He talked about an increase in activities.

Commissioner Randy Miller arrived at 5:07pm.

Joe Potts continued updating the Board about the Wellness Center's activities. He talked about a grant through the schools regarding school safety. He further talked about a project with a developer that will tie a Wellness Center membership to people who purchase lots that will be paid on a monthly basis through a homeowners association. He stated that they are continuing to work on increasing revenues and decreasing expenses. He thanked the Commissioners for their time.

Kate Cosner, Elections Director, gave information to the Board. She came before the Board to formally request the position of Deputy Director. She talked about her assistant works 60 hours per period. She stated that she is requesting to make the position full time at a grade 57 or full time at a grade 59 as Deputy Director. She talked about laws that have come down in 2006, and she will be out of the office a lot; therefore, the need for someone to be in the office full time who is knowledgeable about the elections office. She gave examples of Jenny Billings' work experience plus her knowledge of the equipment and being a rover on Election Day more than qualifies her as a deputy director. She gave the Board figures in regards to how much this position change would cost. She talked about election expense requested versus the recommended amount. She further talked about probable elections that are being discussed in the General Assembly and the likelihood of having a second primary. She explained reasons that will likely cause a second primary. She reminded the Board that the County is reimbursed for the municipal election, and if there is an election in November, it will be reimbursed by the State. She talked about if the November election money is included in the budget, the request doesn't have to come back before the Commissioners. She further talked about if they find out an election will not be held then the money will be turned back over to the County.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the election expense spreadsheets that were turned in by the Board of Elections for the different elections.

Kate Cosner explained the expenses for the elections: municipal election, \$1,205; primary election, \$4,440; November 2007 referendums, \$2,940; presidential preference primary election, \$4,440.

Commissioner Doug Murphy and Kate Cosner talked about the spreadsheet format was received from the State Board.

County Manager Don Adams clarified the number that she is asking for the election expense line item.

Kate Cosner stated that they are requesting \$18,000, and they are estimating to have 6,000 voters.

County Manager Don Adams referenced a cover letter from Kate Cosner explaining the requested election expenses.

Kate Cosner stated that they need a minimum of \$15,000 for the primary with their preference being \$18,000. She explained the difference with the bulk being the increase in the ballots. She talked about the upcoming year will be a very intensive election year, and she is anticipating major growth in voter registration. She stated that the money will be used for elections.

Rudy McKnight, Election Board Member, reemphasized the need to have Jenny Billings put on full time. He talked about things that have come from the State, and two people aren't enough. He further talked about things that will be added to directors and deputy directors. He stated that he thinks that Kate Cosner put together a straight-forward budget request. He requested that the Board take a close look at their requests. He talked about Jenny Billings was instrumental in putting together the Kids Vote program through the schools. He said that Kate Cosner is recognized as a leader in the State. He reiterated the importance in keeping staff.

Ed Adams, Chairman of Elections Board, talked about several law changes since the 2000 elections including the touch-screen machines not having a paper trail. He stated that North Carolina has a good state board of elections. He explained that county boards report to the state board. He informed the Board that the county is going to get laptops that will replace the sign-in books at the elections and the need to train prescient officials to operate them. He talked about Kate Cosner's responsibility to train them for the next election. He reminded everyone that this budget request has to cover the Spring primary. He talked about one-stop voting means elections will last almost a month. He further talked about the wonderful situation for one-stop voting now in this building, and they are grateful for that. He talked about referendums being decided on by the General Assembly. He further talked about laws put a lot on county boards and staff. He requested that the Commissioners look at the pay-grade plan in regards to the elections supervisor, which title has been changed to elections director, at a grade 66. He listed out a couple of positions on the grade 66. He stated that this election position is misclassified. He talked about she has to keep the Board of Elections on cycle with the elections, and the Commissioners need to seriously consider reclassifying this position at a higher level. He stated that they are very proud of her. He thanked the Commissioners for their time.

John Hedrick, Library Director, came before the Board to discuss the establishment of a pay plan for the library system. He explained that they have never had a pay plan. He further explained that over the last 13 months they have had 30% turnover. He stated that the MAPS group has done an independent study in Alleghany County showing library personnel are almost 23% below. He explained that they would like to complete this proposed plan in two years; 50% this year, 50% next year. He further explained that 78% of their request is going for salaries. He stated that Surry County is going to fund the pay plan, and if not put in place, turnover will get worse. He further stated that they are not getting quality people because of the pay. He explained a spreadsheet regarding salaries. He stated that he hopes the Commissioners will read and consider this.

Commissioner Doug Murphy asked if any other counties have agreed.

John Hedrick stated that Stokes County will probably go forward with it, and he is unsure about Yadkin County. He further stated that if all of the counties don't sign on, that the monies will be given to the counties that agree. He talked about ways to cut their budget in order to provide the pay plan like their book budget but they don't want to go that route.

Sandy Carter stated that she has been on the library board since 2002. She further stated that people don't have the skills needed because of the pay. She spoke of the importance of the library in this county. She reiterated that Alleghany County money stays in Alleghany County. She talked about the need to do exactly what has been done for the county employees. She respectfully asked that this request be considered. She thanked the Commissioners for their time.

John Hedrick provided library statistics for Alleghany County.

Joan Sherill talked about libraries are on the cutting edge for technology and the

need for someone trained.

County Manager Don Adams stated that the difference is \$4,300 from the requested to the recommended.

Jane Phipps Boger with Wilkes Community College thanked the Commissioners for the continued support. She handed out a list of their accomplishments in 2006-2007. She reviewed the highlights of the accomplishments.

Commissioner Doug Murphy and Jane Phipps Boger talked about the trend is growing regarding high school students taking courses and getting college credit. She gave examples.

Jane Phipps Boger talked about an additional line in their budget for maintaining the facility.

Dr. Gordon Burns, President of Wilkes Community College, talked about the value of the College to the region and the county. He applauded the Commissioners for the reappointment of Dr. Irwin on the Board of Trustees. He stated that Jack Martin and Suzanne Irwin are excellent leadership people. He talked about college staff has fallen behind in salaries and community college salaries lag behind universities and public schools. He further talked about the need to retain staff, be able to replace retiring personnel with qualified people and the need for the salaries to be kept up. He provided statistics on the community college salaries versus statewide salaries. He talked about Wilkes Community College's plan regarding salaries. He urged the Commissioners to consider $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1%; \$1,738. He stated that he is confident that Wilkes County will approve 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ %. He further stated that they have tried to keep personnel alike across the board regardless of which counties they work for or money comes from. He stated that Alleghany County money goes to Alleghany County employees. He talked about 5% parity. He stated that Ashe County has approved the 5%. He further stated that Wilkes is at 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ %, and Alleghany County is at 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ %.

Commissioner Warren Taylor, Dr. Burns and Jane Phipps Boger talked about the additional \$1,738 will make Alleghany County 2%.

Dr. Burns stated that all they ask for is to get all counties to 5%.

Commissioner Milly Richardson stated that the College does a good job.

Dr. Burns and Jane Phipps Boger talked about working very closely with Ashe County. She explained that they are trying to offer as many classes here as possible.

Dr. Burns talked about Wilkes Community College two-year transfers have a higher success rate.

Jane Phipps Boger thanked the Commissioners for the continued support.

Gerald Leftwich, Emergency Management Coordinator, gave the Board information about the fee schedule for fire inspections. He explained the North Carolina General Statutes regarding fire prevention inspection schedule, and each county must have a fire inspector. He gave background information about fire inspections. He explained the schedule of inspections according to the fire code. He gave examples of what he does regarding inspections. He described the fees and continued providing examples of his fire inspections work.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the request before the Board regarding fire inspections fees. He stated that the Board has three choices; leave as is, adopt a blanket fee schedule or a fined schedule. He asked does the County stay with the current schedule or change it.

Commissioner Warren Taylor and Gerald Leftwich talked about the building was completely in use at the time of the inspection. Mr. Leftwich explained that if part of the building is used for storage then that part can be defined as storage.

County Manager Don Adams stated that the request is asking why pay such a high fee if nothing is wrong. He further stated that if the Board is concerned about fees charged to larger industries, the Board needs to look at whether to change the fee schedule to a fined schedule.

Chair Ken Richardson, Commissioner Warren Taylor and Gerald Leftwich talked about capping the size of buildings and the fee schedule formula was followed. Mr. Leftwich talked about how often inspections must be performed for different types of businesses.

Chair Ken Richardson and Gerald Leftwich talked about they have been told that it helps with the businesses' insurance rates. Mr. Leftwich talked about the minimum standards and minimum codes.

Gerald Leftwich stated that his recommendation is to leave the fee schedule as it is.

Commissioner Doug Murphy, Commissioner Warren Taylor and Gerald Leftwich talked about changing the fee schedule, and how it affects businesses.

Gerald Leftwich gave the Board statistics regarding the number of inspections.

The Board thanked Gerald Leftwich.

County Manager Don Adams stated that he will ask tomorrow for the Board to schedule more meetings to work on the budget.

Chair Ken Richardson recessed this meeting at 6:44pm until Thursday, June 7 at 5:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Attest:

Ken Richardson
Chairman