

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners reconvened the recessed budget meeting from Wednesday, June 6, 2007, on Thursday, June 7, 2007, at 5:00pm in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, NC.

Present: Chair Ken Richardson, 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. Vice-Chair Warren Taylor and County Attorney Donna Shumate were absent.

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

Linda Hash with the Soil and Water office gave the Board additional information regarding the Soil and Water budget. She came before the Board to discuss her concern about the new position and gave a brief description about their need.

Commissioner Randy Miller arrived at 5:06pm.

Linda Hash continued explaining the brief description of what this position would do in regards to job duties. She further explained what the Federal employees do in relation to the Alleghany office, and Alleghany employees are taking up the slack where the Federal budget has been cut. She reviewed their programs. She talked about the coop line item and the EEP line item. She further talked about using these monies as the district board elects to do so. She explained that these lines rollover each year. She talked about their technical and educational programs.

County Manager Don Adams and Linda Hash talked about the rollover lines and the amount needed to rollover for the upcoming budget year. She talked about the increasing workload for both staff members.

Commissioner Milly Richardson and Linda Hash talked about the number of people assisted during the year, the number of children participating in educational activities, Farmland Preservation Program and federal helpers.

Commissioner Doug Murphy talked about the balance between farm and development.

Linda Hash talked about her duties and Janie's position was added two years ago.

The Board of Commissioners thanked Linda Hash.

Stacy Henderson, Captain of the Rescue Squad, talked about receiving grants to assist with last year's funding needs. He stated that they are a volunteer organization, and they are trying to replace the first-out truck. He further stated that the price of the truck is \$162,000. He said that they have applied for numerous grants but hasn't heard back. He talked about they had a RV donated, and it will be used as a command post. He stated that the recommended 3% increase won't take care of their fuel costs. He talked about their membership numbers and losing members in the upcoming year. He further talked about the number of hours that are required which makes it harder on people to volunteer for the rescue squad. He said that he knows it is out of the realm to ask for \$235,000, but anything received would greatly be appreciated.

Commissioner Doug Murphy, County Manager Don Adams, Stacy Henderson and Brandon Jones talked about a USDA loan.

County Manager Don Adams reminded the Board that he recommended 3%. He talked about the release of 911 funds to be used on safety. He further stated that the 3% does not meet the needs of the fire departments and the rescue squad but is a starting place.

Stacy Henderson talked about future building expansion.

County Manager Don Adams stated that the Board will be seeing a lot more

requests from the fire departments. He talked about the need to have a master report.

Chair Ken Richardson and Stacy Henderson talked about having to have eight people to maintain certification. Stacy Henderson stated the number of people that will be leaving in the fall and the spring will leave three.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the impact to EMS in regards to the rescue squad providing backup services for EMS.

Commissioner Doug Murphy and Stacy Henderson talked about volunteer hours are running people off.

Commissioner Milly Richardson and Stacy Henderson talked about one rescue squad covers five fire departments plus provide mutual aid for other counties. Mr. Henderson reminded everyone that the rescue squad has the only dive team in Northwest North Carolina.

Commissioner Milly Richardson stated that they do an excellent job.

Tommy Sports with the Forestry Service gave the Board information regarding the proposed forestry service budget for 07/08 and 06/07. He reviewed the differences between the two proposed budgets. He explained that he cut where cuts could be made on the expenses. He reviewed his budget explanation including telecommunications and other equipment needed. He talked about operational costs that are an added benefit that are not incorporated in the budget and come without any additional costs to the county. He asked the Board to compare the 06/07 budget and the proposed 07/08 budget.

Chair Ken Richardson and Tommy Sports talked about the County provides 40% of the funding and the State provides 60%.

Chair Ken Richardson asked what happens to money that wasn't spent on the County Ranger position. Tommy Sports stated that it should not have been billed. County Manager Don Adams stated that they didn't request it.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the amount of his recommended budget versus the requested budget.

The Board of Commissioners and County Manager Don Adams talked about how monies are calculated that haven't been spent.

Bob Bamberg provided the Board publications from the Chamber of Commerce. He described the publications. He gave the Board information about their budget. He talked about areas in their budget that are increasing; people want the office open on holidays and Saturdays, so they put in a part-time position and put in five hours a month for Peggy Choate to assist with their finances, medical insurance premium increases and increased utilities. He talked about occupancy tax monies and restrictions on the occupancy tax monies. He reviewed the Chamber's total membership numbers.

Chair Ken Richardson asked about becoming more of a tourism industry.

Bob Bamberg talked about Alleghany County being a weekend getaway or a day-trip place. He stated that the other demand is from people buying second homes or weekend homes here. He agreed about becoming more of a tourism industry.

Chair Ken Richardson stated that out of a \$131,000 budget, the County funds \$24,000 of that.

Bob Bamberg agreed and stated that the Town provides \$9,000.

The Board took a brief recess at 6:10pm.

Randy Blankenship, Chief Building Inspector, gave the Board information

regarding his personnel request. He explained his first request is regarding the Administration Assistant's position. He gave reasons for increasing the pay grade to 61. He further explained that the construction industry is booming. He talked about the request of adding an additional inspector. He further talked about he recommended revising the fee schedule to accommodate some of the increase of costs. He explained the changes in the fee schedule.

Commissioner Milly Richardson and Randy Blankenship talked about the total in fee increases will not cover the entire costs by approximately \$10,000-\$12,000. He stated that the fees were last raised in 2005.

Commissioner Doug Murphy and Randy Blankenship talked about fees still being lower than the surrounding counties. Randy Blankenship explained his meeting with the construction industry, and stated that he recommends if the position isn't approved that the fees aren't raised.

Commissioner Milly Richardson asked about raising the rate this year to prepare to add the position next year.

Randy Blankenship talked about the amount of backlash that would be received from the construction industry.

Chair Ken Richardson and Randy Blankenship talked about the amount of training required to become a Level III inspector.

Commissioner Milly Richardson and Randy Blankenship talked about taking six years of training, and he has around 7½ years until he can retire.

Randy Blankenship stated his appreciation to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Randy Miller asked about the meeting in April, and if the health issue is getting better.

Randy Blankenship stated that it is getting better.

County Manager Don Adams stated that it is approximately two to three weeks out.

Commissioner Randy Miller and Randy Blankenship talked about problems with well issues.

The Board of Commissioners stated their appreciation for Randy Blankenship.

Chair Ken Richardson stated that David Higgins will not come before the Board to discuss his budget request. He talked about meeting again on Tuesday to have another budget meeting.

Commissioner Doug Murphy and County Manager Don Adams talked about researching the forestry service.

The Board of Commissioners talked about holding the next budget meeting on Tuesday at 6:00pm.

Chair Ken Richardson recessed this meeting at 6:40pm until Tuesday, June 12 at 6:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Attest:

Ken Richardson
Chairman