

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners reconvened the recessed meeting from June 17, 2013, on Monday, June 24, 2013, at 6:00pm in the Board Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, North Carolina.

Present: Chair Larry Cox, Vice-Chair Tom Smith, Commissioner Larry Davis, Commissioner John Goudreau, County Manager Don Adams, and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans. Commissioner Karen Leys was present but arrived late. County Attorney Donna Shumate was absent.

Chair Cox reconvened the budget meeting.

John Blevins, Social Services Director, came before the Board to discuss the mandated Social Services (DSS) services for parenting classes, supervised visits and transportation needs. He said that the Family Resource Center (FRC) received notice that they didn't win their appeal. He explained that he looked at other ways to provide these services including other entities and counties. He further explained that Daymark is going to offer all of the parenting classes. He explained how it will work with Daymark for people having Medicaid and for those who don't have Medicaid it will cost \$5 per class. He said that Daymark will take all of the referrals, which leaves the supervised visitation and transportation services. He talked about the number of supervised visits this year, and the transportation for these services. He stated that one solution to this is to hire a part-time person. He explained the case load of the current social workers.

Commissioner Leys arrived at 6:08pm.

John Blevins continued to explain he looked at surrounding counties and how they provided these services. He said that he is proposing to hire a part-time Community Social Services Assistant, pay grade 54. He explained that family reunification services funding is available from the State in the amount of \$5,709. He discussed the costs of the position to the County would be \$1,559 after the federal/state reimbursements. He talked about a location for this person, and explained that Bill Blevins has started to build a room onto the back of the DSS building, how this addition would work with the new file room and will have two offices next to each other for the supervised visits. He talked about other things that are needed to buy for the children like toys. He explained he can use the special adoption assistance program to purchase toys and video equipment but that funding is very limited for other uses. He talked about having additional monies to cover \$60 costs. He reviewed the proposed \$12,500 budget including the County's total costs being \$2,717. He talked about the need for the services plus the need for the services to be in the county. He stated that this isn't something he wanted to do to the Partnership for Children but wanted to offer options.

Commissioner Smith and John Blevins talked about whether the special adoption assistance monies could possibly be used for transportation but would have to clear that through the State. They talked about this would help to buy toys, and that the equipment at the FRC belongs to the Partnership for Children.

Commissioner Leys said that it is a shame that FRC lost their funding but this looks like a solution plus the County would save money.

John Blevins said he will come back in 6 months to report how it is going if the Board approves this option.

Chair Cox thanked John Blevins for the information. He asked if the County goes this way, are there services that would not get provided. John Blevins reviewed the services provided by FRC but he doesn't see anything right now that would not get provided.

Paul Crouse discussed the memo from Dr. Cox regarding the security needs for the schools. He explained that Dr. Cox is in Asheville. He discussed Sparta School's security and would like to have that level of security at all of the schools. He reviewed Glade Creek School and their current security. He talked about Alleghany High School (AHS) and Piney Creek School (PCS) have multiple entrances which makes it more difficult to secure. He explained their ideas for AHS and PCS to make the schools more secure including adding network access control for both schools. He stated that they are not asking for everything on the main list. He explained that these changes come up to about \$125,000, which was about the amount that was cut last year. He talked about coming up short on the exterior at AHS and science labs by \$90,000, which will have to come out of their fund balance. He said if the Commissioners could help with security it would help a lot.

Commissioner Goudreau asked about redirecting Golden Leaf monies for the science labs. Paul Crouse talked about the redirected money of \$125,000 to add to the \$300,000 and the bid came in at \$518,000, which leaves them short \$93,000 and looking at that coming out of the fund balance. Commissioner Goudreau asked about the impacts to the science lab. Paul Crouse talked about how they are going to have to spend the \$93,000 to get to the \$518,000. County Manager Don Adams talked about the \$125,000 redirected money was for equipment/supplies/materials for the science lab.

Chair Cox said basically the \$125,000 is for securing the schools. Paul Crouse agreed and stated that this is a good first step with several steps to go.

Chair Cox opened the budget public hearing open at 6:30pm. He asked for public comments.

Warren Taylor came before the Board on behalf of the Hospital. He said to follow up on Paul Crouse's comments that colleges have magnetic cards that the students have that opens doors, and he doesn't know how expensive those are. He thanked the Board for the continued support. He talked about the Hospital's excellent employees, having a totally voluntary board of directors and hard working foundation board plus having the thrift shop as a fundraiser. He said that they try hard to balance the budget but it is really tough because the consistency of the Hospital population is the key. He talked about recent population numbers. He said that we aren't the only hospital that struggles. He stated that he thinks they are doing everything right but it is hard to overcome \$600,000 of uncompensated care, and they can't turn people away. He said thank you again.

Paul Crouse talked about the ID cards mentioned by Warren Taylor are the same price but the ID cards wear out quicker.

Frances Buckle thanked the Board for allowing the opportunity to present the Hospital's case. She said she doesn't have to tell the Commissioners how important the Hospital is to the community. She talked about how they have cut costs as low as they can. She talked about cuts to Medicare/Medicaid and the amount of unpaid care. She explained that they are making strides and moving forward to offer more clinics within the next few months. She talked about partnering with several people trying to raise their bottom line. She explained that they have taken into consideration comments about the management company, and they have switched as of August. She talked about working together to make our hospital better. She stated her appreciation to the Commissioners to assist them. She said thank you to the Board for their time and consideration.

Chair Cox asked for additional public comments. None were received. He declared the public hearing closed at 6:41pm.

Chair Cox declared a brief recess at 6:42pm.

Chair Cox reviewed his opinion of where the Commissioners have gotten on the budget by following the budget message outline. He said he thinks the Board is down to the \$125,000 to be looked at for the Hospital, schools, and FRC. He asked if the \$125,000 is enough for the Hospital and school security, if so then ok and if not, where do the Commissioners get the money. He recapped where the Commissioners are on the budget. He asked for comments from the Board.

Commissioner Goudreau talked about schools should be the number one priority. He said maybe over the years we have neglected the maintenance, and he would like to do more. He talked about he would like to get the schools back to something to be proud of. He said he would want to look at other areas to make cuts for the additional money. He stated that he doesn't want to raise revenues to do that. He talked about there are some organizations that he doesn't think county government should fund. He further talked about we could even look at the veterans park money. He said that the schools are more important than the park.

Commissioner Smith explained that he had been hesitating to talk much until after the public hearing. He said that he feels good where we are in regards to the items mentioned by the Chairman. He stated when looking at the \$125,000, he feels like the schools should be a priority. He talked about the County has made an obligation to the Hospital in the past, and things occurring at the hospital give him optimism. He said the County's fund balance is 21.7%, which is healthy. He explained that one option would be adding an additional \$75,000 from fund balance to add to the \$125,000 then give \$100,000 to the schools and \$100,000 to the Hospital. He said he is comfortable with John Blevins' recommendation which would even save money.

Commissioner Leys stated that she concurs that the Hospital and schools should be top 2 priorities. She talked about how taxes were raised last year for Hospital and fire departments. She said that she concurs to use \$75,000 from the fund balance to make \$200,000 available and agrees to split it between the schools and the Hospital. She talked about saving \$5,000 on the DSS proposal. She explained that due to family circumstances she may or may not be able to be here on Thursday and asked about participating by phone.

Chair Cox talked about the rules of procedures including if a Commissioner isn't present then they just aren't present.

Commissioner Leys talked about personal circumstances may not allow her to be here on Thursday night. She continued to talk about taking \$200,000 to split between the Hospital and the

schools with labeling \$100,000 for school security. She talked about it is up to the schools about the additional \$25,000 needed. She stated that this would help AHS and PCS with security.

Commissioner Davis talked about out of the \$125,000 to give the schools \$75,000 and the Hospital \$50,000. Chair Cox clarified without any additional money. Commissioner Davis said that's right.

Commissioner Goudreau said he isn't for using the fund balance. He talked about looking at other cuts and could probably do that. He said he would want to earmark all of it for the schools and none for the Hospital.

Commissioner Leys said she believes the Hospital carries 40-50% of the local economy. She talked about her conversation with Rocky Proffit and the Hospital is better than it was but that could change. She talked about how that facility could save lives, which should be our highest priority. She mentioned about last year's raised taxes. She said in defense on the using the fund balance, using \$75,000 would still leave a good fund balance. She talked about having to protect AHS and PCS and the Hospital. She said she would consider this additional funding. She talked about the importance of the Hospital and their services. She talked about their forward thinking with the additional clients to bring up the revenues and additional things they are working on. She said things are moving in the right direction. She talked about the schools and the Hospital should be equal priority and this is a better use of the money. She used an example of the request for the school resource officers in regards to securing the schools.

Commissioner Smith said he is comfortable with the suggestion he brought up tonight.

Commissioner Goudreau agreed that the Hospital is important, but the need to look at the true role of government where schools are a mandated service and the Hospital isn't because it is a private business. He used another example of impacting the local economy. He said it isn't for the County to bail them out. He talked about not dipping in the fund balance because there are other cuts that can be made in the budget like the Wellness Center. He stated that he wants to do more for the schools, and would like to earmark more for the schools.

Chair Cox talked about taking the \$125,000 divide it between the schools and the Hospital. He said he liked the suggestion of keeping the fund balance above 20%, and is in favor of taking \$75,000 to make \$200,000 to divide equal between the schools and the Hospital. He stated that the Commissioners are trusted with a big responsibility to spend wisely, and are also trusted to take care of the people. He said he agrees that the Hospital is a private business but he wouldn't want to see it go away. He reiterated that he is comfortable with those suggestions.

The Board talked about ways to proceed with the budget.

Chair Cox asked about the FRC money.

County Manager Don Adams provided the history of the Family Resource Center's (FRC) \$100,000 to provide services including several years ago the County provided funding of \$10,000 which is now down to \$8,775. He said that without the \$100,000 he is not sure what they would do with the \$8,775. He reviewed his previous conversation about DSS showing an option to provide the mandated services along with Daymark having a less expensive way to provide those services. He reiterated that he doesn't know why the Board would keep it budgeted for FRC. He said his recommendation is to remove the \$8,775 then decide about funding DSS's request. He stated that as of today he is not aware that they can survive on \$8,775. He said that we could be talking about \$15,000 and a lot of the clientele would go to Daymark. He talked about the possibility of the FRC justifying the \$8,775.

Chair Cox asked if the Board is comfortable taking the Manager's recommendation.

Commissioner Leys said yes she is in favor of moving the money to DSS, which ends up savings \$5,000.

County Manager Don Adams reviewed what is in the budget for FRC is \$8,775. He explained it is proposed by DSS \$2,717, which saves \$6,058. He further explained that Mr. Blevins is a board member on Partnership for Children, and he didn't come here to hurt them. He reiterated that Alleghany County didn't take the \$100,000 from FRC. He stated that Mr. Blevins came up with an alternate solution to handle the mandated services.

Commissioner Smith talked about the difference between the money being \$6,058, which would make it \$68,942 rather than \$75,000.

Commissioner Goudreau, Commissioner Davis and Chair Cox discussed how they support that change.

County Manager Don Adams reviewed everything that the Board needs to pass in regards to the budget; FY 2012/13 year-end budget amendments, longevity personnel policy update, full-time/part-time pay plans, fee schedules and FY 2013/14 budget ordinance.

Chair Cox declared a brief recess at 7:34pm.

County Manager Don Adams reviewed the items that need to be adopted with the adoption of the budget. He started with the proposed longevity change in the personnel policy, section 11. He read the proposed change. He provided the proposed full time and part time salary pay plan. He reviewed the pay plans that include the 2% cost of living and the longevity increases.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the longevity pay policy change. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the full time and part time pay plans. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams discussed the fee schedules with no changes; recreation, fire inspections, EMS, Alleghany in Motion.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the fee schedules; recreation, fire inspections, EMS, Alleghany in Motion. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams reviewed the fee schedule change for building inspections regarding adding a category of Park Model RV Accessory Buildings for \$200 with accessory buildings over 1,000 square feet requires a 1 & 2 family dwelling permit.

Commissioner Leys and County Manager Don Adams talked about 7 inspection visits.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the inspections fee schedule with the proposed change. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams reviewed the proposed solid waste disposal fee schedule with the proposed change of brush/evergreen disposal. He read the proposed change. He discussed what we are permitted for at the Transfer Facility for brush.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the proposed solid waste fee schedule with the additional category. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams reviewed the draft version of the budget ordinance including reviewing every fund, property tax rate, special authorizations for budget officer, restriction for budget officer, capital project funds, utilization of budget and budget ordinance.

County Manager Don Adams reviewed the changes mentioned tonight and how the changes will be noted on the budget ordinance. He asked about a vote to allow John Blevins to hire a part time person and decreasing special appropriations down to \$2,717 and bring the budget amendment back at the next meeting.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to allow DSS to hire a part time worker at a grade 54 for 20 hours per week. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Cox declared a recess at 8:25pm to allow the County Manager and the Clerk time to update the budget ordinance with the changes discussed tonight.

County Manager Don Adams presented the updated FY 2013/14 budget ordinance. He reviewed the changes discussed by the Board earlier in this meeting. He reviewed other changes in the Ordinance; scattered site fund, register of deeds enhancement fund, revaluation fund, school capital project fund.

Chair Cox stated his appreciation for everyone working together on this budget.

Commissioner Davis talked about this has been a new and good experience for him.

Commissioner Goudreau thanked everyone for the work on the budget including Don Adams and Karen Evans along with the other Commissioners. He said he thinks the Commissioners have the best interest of the citizens, and he enjoyed working with everyone.

Commissioner Smith echoed Commissioner Goudreau's comments.

Commissioner Leys talked about this is a new experience to her too. She stated her appreciation to Don Adams, Karen Evans and Joy Hines. She said this is a conservative budget, and this is what we can do. She talked about how much work the Commissioners have done on the budget.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the FY 2013/14 budget ordinance. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 4:1 (John Goudreau).

Being no further business, Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to adjourn at 9:22pm. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Evans  
Clerk to the Board

Attest:

Larry Cox  
Chairman