

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners reconvened the recessed budget meeting from Wednesday, June 2, 2004, on Thursday, June 3, 2004, at 2:00pm in the Conference Room of the County Office Building, 90 South Main Street, Sparta, NC.

Present: Vice-Chair Warren Taylor, Commissioner Sandy Carter, Commissioner Patrick Woodie, County Manager Don Adams and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans.

Vice-Chair Warren Taylor called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

Linda Hash, Soil & Water Office, talked to the Board about adding a new person in the Soil & Water office to assist with the educational programs and other office and technical functions. She explained that when she first starting working with the County 15 years ago; the positions were a full-time administrator and full-time technician. She stated that Alleghany County is the only county where one person does both sides (administrative & technical). She outlined the programs that the Soil & Water office works with including the Enviroton programs that has grown so much in recent years. She explained more reasons for the need of additional assistance.

The Board of Commissioners and Linda Hash discussed funding options through the State and Federal governments that isn't available to the County at this time. Mrs. Hash explained that this new position would be 75% administrative and 25% technical. She further explained that the State would reimburse the County for 1/2 of the 25% of the technical position that she is requesting be added to her budget.

County Manager Don Adams stated that the position would cost approximately \$29,869 with the State reimbursing the County approximately \$3,700. He further stated that these costs include salary and all of the fringe benefits.

Linda Hash reviewed more programs that her office is associated with in assisting the farmers in the County. She further reviewed the interest in the Farmland Preservation Program and the lack of time she has to monitor this program and sign everyone up that is interested in participating in the program. She discussed the changes that the State has made that affect the Soil & Water office.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon and Linda Hash discussed the qualifications that this position would be required to have.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon asked if our Federal position person retires would our County employee move into that position and what the County employee's future looks like.

Linda Hash stated that the person in the Federal position in Avery County was hired from Avery County Soil & Water office. She discussed the differences between the qualifications in the three positions. She talked about the office being vacant while they are out in the field working on the projects.

The Commissioners thanked Mrs. Hash for coming to the budget meeting and stated that they will look at her request.

Joy Hines, Finance Officer, explained that she is asking for a new software package for her office. She further explained the purpose of looking at a new software package. She stated that she is looking at CSI for the new package and have Arena Youtz from CSI here to demonstrate the new system.

County Manager Don Adams explained the encumbrance process now and the amount of time that is spent on this process.

Commissioner Warren Taylor asked how the new package would work with the Tax Office.

Joy Hines explained that the Tax Office would be able to download their information into the appropriate line items for the Finance Office to review before it is posted in the General Ledger. She explained how the departments could look at their budget on-line rather than going through the Finance Office.

County Manager Don Adams explained the items that he thinks would help from the management side of the budget system.

Joy Hines explained other benefits of the system including voiding checks that doesn't follow-through in the current system, more networking capabilities, greater options on dealing with time-sheets and payroll issues.

County Manager Don Adams mentioned that this software package is in his recommendations.

Arena Youtz explained CSI's company background, Windows-based system, enter data one time and goes all of the way through the system, all public sector customers and offer turnkey solutions.

Commissioner Warren Taylor and Arena Youtz discussed the back-up system that has been quoted for this system.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon and Arena Youtz discussed the internet and intranet sides of the budget.

County Manager Don Adams and Arena Youtz discussed the firewall protection and the use of the back-up system.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie and Arena Youtz discussed the hardware section that is factored into the quote.

Arena Youtz illustrated the encumbrance process that the Department Head will have the ability to complete. She gave further illustrations of the software.

Vice-Chair Warren Taylor declared at 5-minute recess at 3:15pm.

Lizabeth Roupe, Register of Deeds, came before the Board to discuss her request of switching vendors for the management of the records at the Register of Deeds. She explained the reasons why she would like to change; such as support issues, putting information on the web, lack of security issues, high turnover rate and a one-man business. She further explained that the new vendor is a family-owned business being a father & two sons, excellent track record and has highly skilled technical staff. She explained that the current vendor charges \$26,000 and the new vendor, Logan Systems, will cost \$32,760; which includes microfilming that the current vendor charges at an additional amount. She further explained that this new vendor supplies all of the hardware for the operation of the new system.

County Manager Don Adams stated that he thinks the County will save money by switching vendors.

The Board of Commissioners and Lizabeth Roupe discussed the additional amount of money needed for the new vendor.

Vice-Chair Warren Taylor stated that the County Manager has this budgeted in his recommendations.

The Board of Commissioners and Lizabeth Roupe discussed the conversion time being one weekend.

Lizabeth Roupe talked about plats being scanned and putting the plats online. She talked about the plat system that Logan Systems will be taking over from her prior vendor.

The Board of Commissioners and Lizabeth Roupe discussed putting records online daily, weekly or monthly rather than sending them to someone else to post on the web. The Board of Commissioners and Lizabeth Roupe discussed how this year has been completed without a contract.

The Board of Commissioners thanked Lizabeth Roupe for attending this meeting.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie talked about a couple of issues that he would like to discuss about the budget that doesn't affect the tax rate. He stated that one issue is Alleghany County needs to have a full-time economic developer to further promote the County. He reminded everyone that this is the number one recommendation of the CEDS study. He further stated that the County Manager and Town Manager are really good at the economic development side of things along with himself, but the three of them have full-time jobs that don't include time for full-time economic development. He explained he thinks that this position should not be a county or town position, but funded partially by the county and town through another organization; such as, Alleghany County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC) or Blue Ridge Business Development Center. He talked about the need to restructure the ACEDC.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon talked about how the County Manager has done a great job of reacting on economic development issues rather than a proactive role that needs to be in place.

Commissioner Warren Taylor asked how many revenue sources that could be tapped into for this venture.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie discussed the use of the economic development fund as well as the Town providing some funding.

County Manager Don Adams discussed the need for a contract with the agency that will house this person to detail what is expected from this person as far as the County is concerned. He stated that this person needs to stay with the team concept that is already in place to be used when companies are looking at coming to Alleghany County.

Commissioner Warren Taylor discussed the level of experience and education needed for this position.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon talked about this person looking at other economic growth ventures rather than just industrial companies.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie discussed a road map that needs to be created to look at a broad picture of economic development. He further discussed that Martin Marietta, Wilkes Community College and Blue Ridge Electric has made great progress in less than 5 months in getting nation attention on the cluster development idea and has the lead role on cluster development in the nation.

Commissioner Warren Taylor asked if Patrick Woodie, Don Adams, and Bryan Edwards could work together about this concept and report back to the Board. He stated that he thinks the cluster development idea might have some have private funding available.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie stated that he would like to follow through with this idea and how it would not impact this year's budget.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie mentioned the property at the end of Atwood Street. He described the rundown house across the street from the Blue Ridge Business Development Center.

The Board of Commissioners discussed the property along Atwood Street with 3 ½ acres where the house sites, negotiations to rent the property if it was cleaned up, house is inhabitable, renting the property to keep it cleaned up, liability to the County's investment and additional parking space at the Blue Ridge

Business Development Center property.

County Manager Don Adams gave the Board a handout regarding the breakdown of the school's budget requests. He explained that is the regarding the difference between current funding, requested amount, additional amount requested, his recommendation and how much the tax rate would have to increase to fund the current expense. He further explained the capital request in the same format. He stated that if the Board gives the School system full funding, property taxes would have to be raised 2.4 cents or would have to cut other programs. He reminded the Board that this 2.4 cents increase is over the amount of his recommendation.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie and County Manager Don Adams stated that these numbers do not include any space needs issues or the school bus garage.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the General Fund fund balance number is estimated at \$2.4 million but is really \$2.9 million with \$250,000 for school bus garage and \$250,000 for the tax package already reserved. He reminded everyone that the school bus garage loan would be paid back by ADM money.

The Board of Commissioners and County Manager Don Adams discussed the short-term and long-term capital needs, temporary plan that doesn't utilize the entire space at the Springford building and the large amount of money needed to remodel another section of the building over several years, set costs of a contract for one year rather than over several years. They also discussed if it is economically feasible to do by a bond and what amount of money should the Board look at bond financing, bond financing being the most expensive, installment purchase to finance projects, reasons for a bond (bond rating effecting the interest rate and extend the time of the loan and guaranteeing the taxing power of the County versus a lien), amount needed to meet all of the capital needs, debt relief for the next five years, raising taxes to pay for loans for capital needs, space needs request from the Schools at tomorrow's meeting, purchasing the Springford building, school system looking at multiple needs and one cent is needed for the purchase of the building and to renovate some of the building.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie stated that he can't support buying a building and not knowing what the building will be used for.

Vice-Chair Warren Taylor recessed the meeting at 4:20pm until June 4, 2004, at 2:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Attest:

Eldon Edwards
Chairman