

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in special session on Wednesday, May 31, 2006, at 9:00am in the Conference Room of the County Office Building, 90 South Main Street, Sparta, NC.

Present: Chair Eldon Edwards, Vice-Chair Warren Taylor, Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon, Commissioner Ken Richardson, County Manager Don Adams and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans. Commissioner Graylen Blevins was presented but arrived late. County Attorney Donna Shumate was absent.

Chair Eldon Edwards called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

County Manager Don Adams explained the items in the budget books; meeting schedule, budget message, requested and recommended budget, budget to actual for the current year, budget worksheets. He reviewed the budget book layout.

County Manager Don Adams started reviewing his budget message for FY 06/07. He explained the revenues and expenditures of the General Fund in the amount of \$13,808,510. He talked about how the sales ratio affects property taxes collected from the utility companies. He continued reading his budget message explaining the grants and reimbursements.

Commissioner Graylen Blevins arrived at 9:14am.

County Manager Don Adams continued reviewing his budget message. He talked about EMS is recommending to increase mileage rates by \$2 per mile. He stated that Linda Edwards will present the request during the budget meetings. He explained graphs showing the revenues and expenditures for the General Fund. He reviewed the expenditures of the General Fund in the amount of \$13,808,510. He explained the 7¢ proposed property-tax increase.

Ralph Castillo with Alleghany Memorial Hospital gave the Board handouts regarding the Hospital's \$500,000 budget request. He reviewed the handouts describing the Hospital's activities.

John Miller, Hospital Board Chairman, talked about not letting the Hospital close. He further talked about they have taken a lot of steps to improve their financial situation. He explained the importance of medical services. He stated that he hopes the Hospital won't have to ask for more financial assistance.

Dr. Denise Absher, Chief of Staff, stated that she is representing the doctors in today's presentation. She explained her experience with the Hospital. She talked about the major impact on employment that the Hospital has and the improvements made in the last five years. She talked about physician recruitment and obtaining critical access status. She explained that the community needs to support Alleghany Memorial Hospital during this time.

Linda Smith stated that she is speaking on behalf of the Hospital's employees. She further stated that she has been an employee for almost 40 years. She talked about employees' benefits have been cut because the employees want the Hospital to strive. She stated that they need financial help, and it is hard to ask for the help.

Chair Eldon Edwards expressed his appreciation for everyone coming to this meeting.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon stated that she is overwhelmed by the support of the employees.

Linda Tucker explained her positive experiences with the Hospital and the support of their staff.

Chair Eldon Edwards talked about his experiences that show the dedication of the staff.

George White talked about the accreditation rating and rating by patients. He stated that as a trustee, he would like to thank the employees.

Chair Eldon Edwards called for a brief recess at 10:35am.

County Manager Don Adams explained the purpose of Amy Pardue coming to this meeting. He talked about this will explain the line items in the Recreation budget.

Amy Pardue, Recreation Director, explained the revenues and expenses for each sport that the Recreation Department offers.

County Manager Don Adams stated that these are only the costs that are associated with offering each sport, and it doesn't include any costs for Amy Pardue or Tabetha Williams.

Amy Pardue explained the revenues and expenses for the sports according to location. She reviewed the amount of personnel needed for the recreation program. She further reviewed the fee schedule for recreation.

County Manager Don Adams explained that the fee schedule will be presented with the other fee schedules in the future.

Commissioner Warren Taylor and Amy Pardue discussed the fee schedule for area pools.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon and Amy Pardue discussed what the business sponsorship fees cover and the tremendous support from the businesses.

County Manager Don Adams stated that they aren't recommending changing the fees especially since the seasons are already starting. He further stated that would be a discussion for the Fall.

Martha McKnight came before the Board to talk about the Wellness Center. She gave the Board health statistics for Alleghany County. She discussed the importance of overall well being. She informed the Board about the Wellness Center's activities, local agencies using the Wellness Center, hours of operations, working on cutting expenses, 10% of population is served, daily usage and membership fees. She asked the Board to be aware of the services that they offer and look into joint ventures with the Wellness Center. She talked about the need to offer the most services to the citizens with the least costs. She further talked about the economic value to having a wellness center. She gave the Board information packets regarding the presentation. She thanked the Commissioners for their time.

Joe Potts briefly described the Wellness Center's financial situation. He explained ways they have reduced costs including reducing payroll by 45% and reducing hours of operation. He talked about consultants are looking at other ways to reduce costs. He further talked about they are ready and willing to partner with the County and to be a part of the County's recreation program. He stated that the Wellness Center's audits are available for the Commissioners' review

at any time.

Wendell White explained his background, concern and interest in the Wellness Center. He talked about the facility being an asset to people in Allegheny County, the need for the facility and hope the Commissioners can do something to help the Wellness Center. He talked about the Wellness Center being part of the community and working with the County to think of ways to review the partnership between the Wellness Center and Recreation Department.

Martha McKnight stated her appreciation to the Commissioners for listening to their presentation. She talked about Allegheny Memorial Hospital is important and the Wellness Center is too. She stated that she would like to see the facility stay open. She invited the Board to come to the Wellness Center on Tuesday for a personal tour of the facility.

Mary Walker, Tax Administrator, talked about the collection rate for real property is 97.43% and vehicles is 80%. She explained how the vehicle collection rate changes each month with the billing. She thanked the Board for their time today. She stated that she is asking the Board to consider a personnel change for the Tax Office. She explained that in October 2004 the Commissioners agreed to hire a full-time temporary person to help with revaluation, and that person was hired in December 2004. She stated that Mrs. Smith is a great employee. She further stated that she is asking the Board to make that position a permanent full-time position. She explained the changes that will be going on in the Tax Office including new software, collecting the Town of Sparta's taxes, additional new construction and the new motor-vehicle law. She talked about revaluation is on an eight-year cycle currently. She further talked about discussions with the Department of Revenue and the consideration of going to a four-year cycle. She stated that most counties have gone to a four-year cycle, what is involved to go to a four-year cycle and doing revaluation in-house. She talked about Rita Miller is working on her certification as an assessor. She reiterated that Missy Smith is a great asset to the Tax Office.

County Manager Don Adams and Mary Walker talked about the costs for the position for the remainder of 2006/2007. Mary Walker explained that currently they have to enter deeds into three separate computer software systems.

Chair Eldon Edwards stated that the Board will consider Mrs. Walker's request.

Mary Walker stated her appreciation for everything the Board does for the County.

Chair Eldon Edwards recessed the meeting for lunch at 12:10pm.

Chair Eldon Edwards reconvened the meeting at 1:00pm.

Stacy Henderson, Captain, came before the Board to discuss the Rescue Squad's request. He explained the number of current members, decline in membership, hours required for fundraisers, upgrading equipment during the last two years and State-mandated calibration tests. He talked about the dive team and the need to upgrade the dive team. He asked the Board for a little more help with their expenses. He talked about the need to attract more members.

The Board of Commissioners and Stacy Henderson discussed the Rescue Squad's request and amount of shortfall projected.

County Manager Don Adams and Stacy Henderson discussed the budget request being a difference of \$5,900 plus \$3,700 for the calibration test for a total of \$9,600.

Darlene Douglas and Becky Higgins with Alleghany Group Homes gave a brief background of Alleghany Group Homes. Ms. Douglas explained the reason for needing additional revenue is related to the mental health reform. She reviewed the projections for 2006/2007 and their budget request of \$40,000. She explained costs increases in the upcoming budget. She stated that they will greatly appreciate anything the Board could provide to Alleghany Group Homes.

County Manager Don Adams continued reviewing the budget message. He reviewed the revenues and expenditures for the following; Transfer Facility Fund in the amount of \$679,598, E-911 Fund in the amount of \$219,235 and Transportation Fund in the amount of \$388,107. He explained the Transportation Fund is projected to lose \$3,410 in 2005/2006. He talked about their grant sources. He talked about the Fairgrounds Fund, and the Fairgrounds have requested that the additional parking be finished.

The Board of Commissioners and County Manager Don Adams talked about the request and the Fairgrounds Fund.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon asked how many events need additional parking.

County Manager Don Adams stated that he will find out.

County Manager Don Adams reviewed the other funds and topics for further discussions.

Chair Eldon Edwards and Commissioner Ken Richardson thanked the County Manager and staff for their work on the budget. Commissioner Richardson stated that this is a very good budget report and is convinced that the 7¢ that the County Manager is recommending is needed. He stated that the Board needs to decide on today's issues.

The Board of Commissioners and County Manager Don Adams discussed how they wanted to proceed with the budget information and meetings.

County Manager Don Adams explained a sheet detailing additional monies needed for new or changes in personnel for Board of Elections, Tax Office, Veterans Service and Social Services.

The Board of Commissioners discussed the personnel requests.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the Tax Office looking at doing in-house revaluation and putting the pieces in place to work towards that. He talked about if the additional position is approved then the Board could have as a condition that we will do in-house revaluation.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon stated that she supports that.

County Manager Don Adams talked about fee schedules with Linda Edwards coming before the Board on Friday to discuss a \$2 per mile increase, Building Inspections Permit Fees having no recommended changes and no changes this year for the Solid Waste Fee Schedule. He explained that the costs have been increasing at the Transfer Facility and the costs are close to exceeding the revenues. He talked about a fee increase may have to be considered in the next few years.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon asked how solid waste fees are charged on mobile homes.

County Manager Don Adams stated that he would have to check with Mary Walker.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon, Commissioner Warren Taylor and County Manager Don Adams discussed Building Inspections fees, adjustments made over the last few years, inspections department being revenue neutral, fees being in line with surrounding counties the last time fees were increased, increases in septic tank fees and well inspections.

Chair Eldon Edwards recessed the meeting at 2:08pm until June 1, 2006 at 5:00pm at the County Office Building, Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Attest:

Eldon Edwards
Chairman