

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 29, 2003, 5:30PM
SPECIAL MEETING – BUDGET WORK SESSION

PRESENT: Chairman Talmage S. Baggett, Jr.
Commissioner J. Breeden Blackwell
Commissioner Kenneth S. Edge
Commissioner John Henley, Jr.
Commissioner Billy R. King
James Martin, County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager
Cliff Spiller, Asst. County Manager
Amy Cannon, Asst. County Manager
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney
Marsha Fogle, Clerk to the Board
Mitzi Champion, Public Information Officer
Budget Staff

ABSENT: Commissioner Jeannette Council (family medical)

1. Presentations by department heads

A. Register of Deeds – J. Lee Warren, Jr.

Mr. Warren asked the Board for four new deputy 1 positions. Mr. noted that the Register of Deeds office lost positions a couple of years ago when the county went through a reduction in force. These 4 new positions would allow his office to operate more efficiently and effectively. Cost: \$109,136.

B. Library – Jerry Thrasher – Director

Mr. Thrasher asked the Board to approve a 4-step program over a 4-year period to increase hours at the regional and community branch libraries. The program includes adding employees and other operating expenses. Cost as follows:

FY04	\$533,228
FY05	\$564,421
FY06	\$359,209
FY07	\$468,995
TOTAL COST:	\$ 1,925,853

Commissioner Blackwell, commissioner liaison to the Library Board of Trustees, suggested the Library be allowed to keep fees collected, which would help the library in funding the above request.

The Board inquired if a Law Library is mandated by general statutes. The County Attorney will research and respond to the Board at the next budget work session. The budget for the Law Library is \$65,796.

C. Planning/Inspections Department – Nancy Roy, Director

Ms. Roy asked the Board to approve additional money (\$55,000) for a deputy director for this department. She indicated that with the additional position, she would be able to focus on such things as a 2030 Plan, revamping the 1972 zoning ordinance, improve technology and provide additional training for planning board members.

The Board asked Staff to research counties of comparable size to Cumberland, i.e., Gaston, Guilford, Forsyth, to ascertain if those counties have a deputy director and the salary.

D. Sheriff's Office – Sheriff Earl (Moose) Butler

The Sheriff asked the Board to consider the following new positions:

Restore 1 part-time deputy to supervise Sheriff's Office volunteers - \$18,193;

Restore 2 narcotic deputies at a cost of \$77,754

Restore 1 property crimes deputy at a cost of \$38,994

Restore 1 deputy for child support enforcement – County's cost would be \$14,535. The State will reimburse the rest of the cost for this position (66%)

Commissioner Henley inquired how annexations will affect the Sheriff's office in the next 6-10 years. Would those annexations decrease the need for more deputies, and if deputies were hired now, would they be laid off when annexations occur. He said he would like to look at the areas to be annexed and property crimes associated with those areas to determine if annexation will decrease property crimes that have to be worked by the Sheriff's Office.

2. Continuation of discussion of the Proposed FY04 Budget

Staff reported information regarding cost of living increases for county employees:

3% with a floor of \$1,000 would cost an additional \$370,000

3.5% (no floor) would cost an additional \$319,000

The Board discussed asking the ABC Board for additional money. Commissioner Breeden Blackwell noted that one ABC Board member called him and said he would like to use the ABC Board general fund monies to build a new store, which in the long run, would allow the ABC Board to generate more funding, which in turn would be more money for the county.

James Martin, County Manager, indicated he has drafted a letter to the ABC Board requesting more money.

Commissioner King suggested that the Board of Commissioners may be able to address the department head requests received this evening as follows:

Register of Deeds – approve 2 new positions (approx. 55,000)

Library – approve \$250,000

Planning/Inspections – approve deputy position - \$55,000

Sheriff's Office – approve 1 deputy for child support enforcement (\$14,535)

3.5% COLA for county employees - \$319,000

The above could be done if additional money is received from the ABC Board, and with a little additional county money.

Commissioner Henley also suggested that the county come up with a net amount of \$25,000 for economic development.

County Manager Martin cautioned the Board that the requests above are all recurring costs and money will have to be found in future budget years to maintain.

Chairman Baggett noted that Richard Parks, CEO, Cape Fear Valley Hospital System, asked the Board to consider allowing the hospital to phase out the \$3 million it gives us each year.

The Board concluded that an op-ed piece by the new public information officer, Mitzi Champion, regarding property taxes, tax base and how revaluation will affect property owners, would inform county residents as to what they can expect when they receive their tax bills.

Commissioner Baggett noted he had received some calls regarding drainage issues since the heavy rains this past week. He inquired about the mission of the Storm Water Department. The Board suggested that the Manager invite Greg Caision, Director, Storm Water Department, to the June 2 meeting, to give a report on the activities in the Storm Water Department.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 7:35PM

Clerk to the Board