

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JUNE 10, 2014 – 5:30 PM
117 DICK STREET, 5TH FLOOR, ROOM 564
DEPARTMENT HEAD APPEALS/BUDGET WORK SESSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Commissioner Jeannette Council, Chairman
Commissioner Kenneth Edge, Vice Chairman
Commissioner Charles Evans
Commissioner Jimmy Keefe
Commissioner Billy King (arrived 5:35 p.m.)
Commissioner Ed Melvin
Amy Cannon, County Manager
James Lawson, Assistant County Manager
Quentin McPhatter, Assistant County Manager
Rick Moorefield, County Attorney
Melissa Cardinali, Finance Director
Kelly Autry, Accountant
Bob Tucker, Accountant
Todd Hathaway, Finance Department
Deborah Shaw, Finance Department
Jeffery Brown, Engineering and Infrastructure Director
Bobby Howard, Solid Waste Director
Jody Risacher, Cumberland County Library System Director
Earl “Moose” Butler, Cumberland County Sheriff
Lisa S. Blausen, Accountant Cumberland County Sheriff’s Office
Ennis Wright, Chief Deputy
Sally Shutt, Public Information Director
Candice White, Clerk to the Board
Kellie Beam, Deputy Clerk to the Board
Press

ABSENT: Commissioner Marshall Faircloth

1. MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Council called the meeting to order and stated the purpose of the meeting is for department head appeals and a budget work session. Commissioner Evans provided the invocation.

2. DEPARTMENT HEAD APPEALS

A. JODY RISACHER – CUMBERLAND COUNTY LIBRARY

Chairman Council recognized Jody Risacher, Cumberland County Library Director, who introduced Library Board of Trustee members in attendance and briefed the Board on new developments and programs at the Cumberland County Library. Ms. Risacher stated her appeal was not related to the budget. Ms. Risacher stated her request was that the Board to use their influence to advocate for public libraries at the State level and work to make it one of the NCACC’s priority legislative goals. Ms. Risacher stated this is critical because the Cumberland County Library receives State Aid to Public Libraries to help meet the needs of the community. Ms. Risacher stated this aid has been cut several times during the last few years and there is a 2% on the table right now; however, Cumberland County has been written in as not being cut this year. Ms. Risacher stated the 2% cut could affect Cumberland County next year.

Ms. Risacher responded to questions. Commissioner Edge explained the NCACC’s legislative goals process and how the library could get on the legislative agenda. Chairman Council asked Ms. Risacher and Sally Shutt, Public Information Director, to coordinate the effort and stated a resolution adopted by the Board may be needed to present to the NCACC this year as a proposed goal.

B. "EARL" MOOSE BUTLER – CUMBERLAND COUNTY SHERIFF

Chairman Council recognized Earl "Moose" Butler, Cumberland County Sheriff, who introduced staff in attendance from the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Butler stated he appreciated what the Board has done for the Sheriff's Office over the years and asked the Board to consider funding the following three items as part of the FY15 budget.

1. Organized Crime Lt. Detective to supervise people and deal with matters for which he cannot provide details,
2. Security equipment at the courthouse; not personnel,
3. One Civil Section position to serve civil papers (47,272 civil papers served last year; 1,950 domestic violence papers served last year; collected approximately \$200,000 in fees 2011-2012; collected approximately \$117,000 in fees 2012-2013)

Sheriff Butler responded to questions and asked the Board to consider at least one position to help take the pressure off because the demand has grown and will continue to grow. Sheriff Butler stated fees are generated and the fees collected go to the General Fund.

3. PRESENTATION BY STEVE YOST, NORTH CAROLINA'S SOUTHEAST

Amy Cannon, County Manager, stated Steve Yost is President of North Carolina Southeast. Commissioner King inquired regarding the presentation. Ms. Cannon stated N. C. Southeast is a public/private economic development organization that provides corporate location/relocation services and serves as a regional point of access for companies wanting to relocate or expand in southeastern North Carolina. Ms. Cannon stated she invited Mr. Yost to the meeting since this is a new organization and a new funding request so he could provide a brief presentation and respond to any questions that may arise.

Commissioner Evans inquired regarding the amount of funding budgeted for The Alliance Economic Development. Ms. Cannon stated recommended funding for FY15 is \$410,000. Commissioner Evans asked whether The Alliance Economic Development was providing funding to N. C. Southeast. Ms. Cannon explained N. C. Southeast is requesting \$20,000 from all fourteen counties in the region and public companies/private organizations and businesses are also making contributions.

Commissioner Melvin stated he understood N. C. Southeast, what it does and its goals. Commissioner Melvin stated he would like to see a spreadsheet of the fourteen counties for the last three years to see what Cumberland County has received from by N. C. Southeast as compared to the other thirteen counties. Additional questions and discussion followed regarding regional versus Cumberland County economic development growth efforts.

Due to a delayed arrival time, Mr. Yost was not available to provide a presentation.

Ms. Cannon stated she did not recommend funding for the Fort Bragg Regional Alliance because their lease agreement with the county has not been fully fulfilled this year.

Commissioners King and Evans asked that consideration be given to a salary increase for county employees. Chairwoman Council stated additions to the budget could be proposed but only if cuts could be identified to come up with the money.

Commissioner Edge stated one of the top priorities of the Board is to try to do something for county employees; however, the proposed budget includes \$1.2 million for health insurance in order to avoid passing projected increases in employee health insurance costs on to county employees. Commissioner Edge stated that is the equivalent of slightly more than a 1% raise for county employees. Commissioner Edge stated rationally speaking, help with health insurance costs means more for lower-paid employees than a 1% salary increase. Commissioner Edge stated to budget a salary increase for county employees would mean cutting the budget. Commissioner Edge stated the largest part of the budget is personnel costs and he did not think the Board was ready to send any employees home.

Commissioner Jimmy Keefe stated everyone needs to be reminded that the county sales tax revenue is down 4.5% or \$2 million. Commissioner Keefe stated it is amazing that Ms. Cannon has been able to present a balanced budget, and what has to be established is whether this is a new normal.

Chairman Council stated the county can analyze sales tax receipts for the next two and then see whether anything can be done for employees.

Commissioner Edge recalled the 5% - 7% increases in salary that were given to employees over the last year or two as a result of implementation of the classification and pay study.

Commissioner Evans stated it would be in the best interest of employees to go back through the budget to determine cuts that would afford employees an increase. Commissioner King stated he felt \$2 million for employees raises could be found in a \$300 million budget.

MOTION: Commissioner Keefe moved to accept the budget as presented by the county manager for FY15.

SECOND: Chairman Council

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Evans stated other things need to be addressed in the budget such as the requests made by individuals during the budget public hearing.

VOTE: PASSED (4-2) (Commissioners Keefe, Council, Edge and Melvin voted in favor; Commissioners King and Evans voted in opposition)

Ms. Cannon stated the budget ordinance would be placed on the Board's June 16, 2014 agenda.

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Keefe moved to adjourn.

SECOND: Chairman Council

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (6-0)

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Approved with/without revision:

Respectfully submitted,

Candice H. White
Clerk to the Board