

June 9, 2003

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met in special budget session at 4:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, County Office Building, 725 McDowell Road, Asheboro, NC. Commissioners Kemp, Frye, Davis, and Holmes were present. Commissioner Mason entered the meeting where so noted later in these minutes.

Randleman Lake Road/Bridge Closing Update

Commissioner Frye stated that County Commissioners had received several phone calls from citizens living in the area of the Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority's Randleman Lake project. The Department of Transportation has closed some roads and bridges already, making it difficult for area residents to travel without lengthy detours. Mr. Frye said that the Water Authority has written a letter to D.O.T. asking them to reopen the bridge on Walker Mill Road and stating that the Water Authority will pay for D.O.T. to reinspect the bridge. D.O.T. has agreed to do this.

Budget Presentations

Chairman Kemp announced that any department head satisfied with his/her budget could leave. Others were welcome to stay to discuss their budgets as proposed by the County Manager.

Sheriff and Jail

Major Allen McNeill stated that they had requested a \$10.1 million budget and that it was cut back to about \$9.5 million. Items cut included 4 patrol officers (\$140,000), a records assistant supervisor (\$40,000), a civil deputy (\$35,000), holiday pay buy back (\$80,000), several new vehicles (\$210,000), and jail improvements (\$60,000). Major McNeill urged the Board to reinstate all cut items and to give a substantial pay increase to officers, even if it means raising taxes. He said the growing population of this county means more calls to respond to, more paperwork documenting those calls, and more civil papers to serve.

The Board asked Major McNeill to prioritize his requests and bring them back to the Board. (*See this item later in the minutes.*)

Computer Services

Annette Crotts, Computer Services Director, noted that \$62,000 had been cut from her budget, which was for changing a part-time position to full-time and for networking and equipment upgrades. She said she needs this full-time position for backup of the networking equipment and the phone system. This change would require \$25,004 to be put back into her budget. She told the Board that the new phone system saved the County \$183,982 over the cost for the old system the previous year. Ms. Crotts said Randolph County employees' pay is behind what other counties are paying and asked the Board to include salary increases in the final budget.

Tax

Ben Chavis, Tax Administrator, asked the Board to give him more money for postage. The proposed budget has \$114,000 for this item. This year the department has spent \$125,000, and he projects they will need \$138,000 for the coming year. He also reiterated the plea for increased employee pay.

Commissioner Mason entered the meeting during Mr. Chavis's presentation and was present for the remainder of the meeting.

Elections

Mark Coakley, Elections Supervisor, stated that he was not asking for any additional funds; he just wanted the opportunity to alert the Board that there will be new regulations affecting elections next year. These new regulations are part of HAVA (Help America Vote Act) and deal with voter disabilities. These new regulations may necessitate additional spending.

Library

Richard Wells, Library Director, informed the Board that he has lost two full-time positions in the last year or so; one was sent to the Archdale library after their expansion and one was laid off because of the state's withholding of funds. Also, he has not been able to hire anyone for the summer reading program. Usage of the library continues to grow. There are 52,346 registered patrons, and 968,000 people came through their doors last year. Circulation of books totals 448,000. Mr. Wells reiterated what other department heads have said—there is a serious need for an increase in employee pay. He said he is losing an 8-year employee who is going somewhere else to do the same job at a 20% pay increase.

Mr. Wells reported that the library had to start using security guards at night several months ago because of unruly teenagers with disruptive behavior. Security guards were paid from library trust funds this year, but funds to pay them next year are included in his recommended budget.

Planning and Zoning

Hal Johnson, Planning and Zoning Director, endorsed the plan for transferring a Public Works employee to Planning and Zoning to help with code enforcement. He said this addition would allow the current code enforcement employee to do more planner duties. Mr. Johnson said he had asked for a replacement vehicle, but it was cut from his budget. He said his department puts many miles on vehicles doing code enforcement.

Adult and Juvenile Day Reporting Center

Pam Hill, DRC Director, distributed a flow chart of her department. She told the Board she was not asking for any additional funding; she just wanted to give them an update. She said the adult program is looking better than last year; only 5% in state funding was cut. She also reported that teen court and restitution programs will be placed under the Juvenile DRC umbrella, and they are getting more grant money.

Sheriff and Jail

Major McNeill distributed a priority list of items requested to be reinstated into the 03-04 budget, which the Board had asked him to prepare earlier in the meeting. First, he asked for employee pay increases, with 5% being the minimum. He prioritized other requests in the following order: 4 patrol officers, 1 civil deputy, 1 records assistant supervisor, holiday pay buy back, and new vehicles taken out. He noted that it was hard to prioritize since all go hand in hand. Additional officers need cars to drive. Pay is important to recruit and keep deputies. He again asked the Board to raise taxes to fund these requests.

Budget Discussion

The Board discussed unfunded requests. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Phil Kemp, Chairman

Darrell L. Frye

J. Harold Holmes

Robert B. Davis

Robert O. Mason

Alice D. Dawson, Clerk to the Board