

## Commissioners Meeting Minutes

June 19, 2006

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met at 2:00 p.m. for a special budget session in the Commissioners Meeting Room, County Office Building, 725 McDowell Road, Asheboro, NC. Commissioners Holmes, Kemp, Lanier, Davis, and Frye were present.

### **Randolph County Schools**

Donald Andrews, Superintendent, discussed the Randolph County Schools budget request and also expressed his appreciation to the Board for their support of the county schools over the years. He said that their FY 06-07 Current Expense request is for \$16,660,800, which is a 14.80% increase over the current year's funding. The costs associated with continuation account for about 3.57% of that increase. The continuation costs relate primarily to projected salary increases, fringe benefit increases and rising costs associated with items such as insurance and utilities. Expansion items include the following:

- Teacher supplements (1% increase)
- Funding for supplements (classified staff) (2.5% of annual salary)
- Funding for teacher signing bonus (\$2,000 per sign-up)
- Funding for coaching allotments (\$45,000)
- Funding for Exceptional Children Coordinator (\$65,000)
- Funding for middle school Math-Science Lead Teacher (\$47,000)
- Funding for high school Testing/Drop Out Prevention Coordinator (\$120,000)
- Funding for elementary classified & part-time certified positions (\$391,000)
- Funding for high school Nova Facilitator (\$100,000)
- Funding for nurse (\$50,000)
- Funding for bus maintenance (\$35,000)
- Funding for AP courses (\$32,000)

Mr. Andrews said that their Capital Outlay Request is for \$2,946,770, an increase of 29.06%. Most of this is for day-to-day and year-to-year upkeep of facilities and grounds. Major continuation items include roof repair and replacement, painting, HVAC/plumbing/electrical upkeep and improvements, general building repairs, and hazardous materials removal. Mr. Andrews mentioned that they have 91 modular units in place, with an additional need of 15 for growth system-wide. They are also requesting the following:

- Funding for the purchase of 3 buses (\$195,000 total)
- Increase in funding for major hazardous material removal at SWRHS (approximately \$500,000).

Mr. Andrews stated that the Archdale/Trinity Tax Council is requesting that the tax rate remain the same as last year: \$.085 per \$100 valuation.

### **Asheboro City Schools**

Dr. Diane Frost, Superintendent, highlighted this year's accomplishments related to academic achievement and facility improvements. She stated that the FY 06-07 budget was prepared to align with strategic priorities established by the Board of Education. The major goal areas can be summarized as follows: high student performance, academic excellence, and closing the gap in achievement scores among student subgroups; healthy students in safe, orderly, and caring schools;

quality teachers, administrators and staff; strong family, community, and business support; and effective and efficient operations.

Dr. Frost said that economic considerations that will impact the continuation budget include a projected 6% salary increase for certified staff, a 3% salary increase for non-certified staff, a hospital rate increase that took effect last October, all totaling \$255,100; increased energy costs (\$200,000) and cuts in state funding (\$222,000). She said their expansion budget includes:

- Funding for a 9<sup>th</sup> grade counselor and to increase a reading teacher from ½- to full-time at AHS (\$65,000)
- Funding for a middle school curriculum coach (\$50,000)
- Funding for strategic planning (\$8,000)

Dr. Frost said that in order to fund the continuation and expansion budgets, the following appropriation and supplemental tax rate requests for the FY 06-07 school year are

- Current Expense: \$4,200,000 (an increase of 16% over the FY 2005-2006 funding)
- Supplemental tax rate be increased from \$.1385 per \$100 valuation to \$.145 per \$100 valuation.

Dr. Frost said that the Teachey School addition will help address overcrowding and student growth in their elementary schools. Future projects will include additions at North Asheboro Middle School, Asheboro High School and construction of a new elementary school. The Asheboro City Schools Capital Outlay request includes funding for roof replacements, lighting upgrades, South Asheboro Middle School gym floor, North Asheboro Middle School locker refurbishing, Asheboro High School bleacher upgrade, technology upgrades and security cameras. These capital improvements and various other site improvements require \$600,000 in Current Capital and \$400,000 in Construction Capital, which is a total increase of \$181,732 over the FY 05-06 appropriation of \$818,268.

### **Randolph Community College**

Dr. Larry Linker, President Emeritas, said that instructional programs at RCC are sound and doing a great job. He said that they are addressing the problems with the audit findings. RCC's requested operational budget request is \$2,228,938, which is a 9.54% increase over the prior year funding. Projected increases are due to the addition of the early college high school that will begin in the fall of 2006, opening up additional space at the Archdale campus, roof repair, HVAC replacement, increased energy costs and a 4% salary increase. Dr. Linker and Jim Campbell, RCC Board Chairman, urged the Commissioners to fully fund their request.

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*The Board recessed at 3:15 p.m. and reconvened at 3:30 p.m.*

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### **NC Zoo Society**

Russ Williams, Executive Director, asked the Board to consider a \$100,000 appropriation, over 3 years, to help fund the creation of a Watani Grasslands Reserve at the NC Zoo. This reserve will be a 37-acre, multi-exhibit that will house 10 or more African elephants, 10-12 southern white Rhinoceros and will provide viewing of many species of antelope. The exhibit will cost over \$33 million.

### **Central Boys and Girls Club**

Addie Luther, Fundraising Chairperson, asked the Board to appropriate \$75,000 (\$25,000 over 3 years) to the Central Boys and Girls Club of Asheboro. They need these funds to keep it operating. They continue to look for a major sponsor to fund most or all of the costs. She said that this club has

experienced 4 years of a very professionally managed club under the auspices of the Greater High Point Boys and Girls Club. The first four years were funded primarily by seed money grants from national organizations obtained by the High Point club, plus approximately \$42,000 from the Asheboro/Randolph United Way and the City of Asheboro. She said that 45-60 youngsters attend the Club daily; the Club has proven to be a very positive atmosphere for the children.

### **NC Museum for Traditional Pottery**

Richard Gillson, President of the Board of Directors, said that the Museum of Traditional Pottery is a tax-exempt organization formed to promote public awareness of the Seagrove area potteries and the 200-year-old tradition that they represent. Mr. Gillson requested \$70,000 from the County to plan and organize a \$2 million venture for a new facility on a recently purchased parcel of property that currently contains a grocery store. Plans are to convert the store into an information center with displays of pots from Seagrove area potters, a museum, a coffee shop and an education center.

### **Communities In Schools (CIS)**

Sandi Norman, Director, asked the Board for \$175,000 in order to expand their program from the Archdale area to a county-wide program. The money would fund 4 CIS Coordinators' salaries. She said the CIS mission is to help kids stay in school and prepare for life. She said that it is difficult to get donations from other sources when there is not a county-wide presence.

### **Randolph Vocational Workshop**

Eddie Davis, Director, asked the Board for \$10,000 to improve working conditions and update computer technology at their facility. The workshop is a private, non-profit organization that has been in business for 33 years providing employment training and job placement for disabled adults in Randolph County. It employs 25 disabled adults and has successfully placed 39 persons in jobs throughout the county this fiscal year. Current funding sources are from Vocational Rehabilitation (\$210,000), Sandhills Mental Health Center (\$96,188) and in-house production revenue (\$260,000).

### **Request from Westside Fire Department**

Recil Williamson, Westside Chief, asked the Board for assistance in getting the tax base rating in place with the state for their new station, located on Old Hwy 49. County Manager Richard Wells said that he would look into this matter.

### **Request from Forest Service**

Will Massie, Assistant County Manager/Finance Officer, said that Steve Pearce, County Forester, had asked him to remind the Board that the Forest Service had approached the Board in September 2005 for consideration of funding assistance for their new "on-call" policy. The Forest Service FY 06-07 budget request is for \$104,218. Mr. Massie's proposed budget for the Forest Service includes only \$100,600. The Forest Service needs the \$3,618 difference as a match for \$5,428 in State funding for the new "on-call" policy.

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*At 5:00 p.m. the Board recessed until 7:00 p.m.*

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### **Budget Public Hearing**

At 7:00 p.m., the Board adjourned to a duly advertised public hearing on the proposed FY 06-07 budget. Chairman Holmes opened the public hearing.

**Faye Cox**, 1211 Grantville Lane, Asheboro, spoke in opposition to the proposed property tax increase. She said too many people have lost their jobs and are struggling. She said the cost for everything has gone up, and the elderly, farmers and unemployed cannot afford any more taxes. She suggested imposing a sales tax instead of increasing the property tax because that would make things

more equitable. She said that she is sick of hearing about schools because foreigners are causing the additional school needs, and most of them don't pay much in taxes because they rent. She said that she lost her job at 59 years of age and it has been very hard on her and her family. She assured the Board that no one wants a tax increase and that they should contact all the people in their districts to talk to them about it. She said that she doesn't agree with the proposed salary increase for County employees when "everyone else" is struggling. She said that if deputies were not satisfied with their pay they could just go to Guilford or Alamance County where they can make more money. She said that the Commissioners were voted in to look after their citizens, but it's obvious that County government is not going to look after the average citizen. She urged the Board to give the taxpayers a break this year.

**Jerry Sykes**, 5580 Streiby Church Rd., said that he was against the tax increase last year and the proposed increase this year. He would like to see more open space out in the county but the Commissioners are doing everything they can to destroy that.

Chairman Holmes closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Frye explained to the audience that there is no salary increase in the proposed budget for the County Commissioners. Also, there is no funding in the proposed budget yet from the State Lottery proceeds. County has no control over the amount we pay for Medicaid; we don't make the rules. North Carolina is the only state in the nation that requires counties to pay a portion of the state's share of the Medicaid expense. He said that the County would like to utilize a sales tax for some of its needed revenue, but the County can levy only what the State allows us to do. Mr. Frye also noted that only about half of Randolph County's budget is funded by the property tax; the other half comes from sales tax, grants, fees, and other sources.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

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J. Harold Holmes, Chairman

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Darrell L. Frye

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Phil Kemp

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Robert B. Davis

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Arnold Lanier

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Cheryl A. Ivey, Clerk to the Board