

BUDGET WORK SESSION
JUNE 2, 2008

The Pender County Board of Commissioners continued its budget work session of Monday, May 19, 2008, on Monday, June 2, 2008, at the Pender County Public Assembly Room, 805 South Walker Street, Burgaw, North Carolina.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman David Williams, presiding; Vice Chairman Jimmy Tate; and Commissioners Norwood Blanchard, George Brown and F.D. Rivenbark.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Parker, Interim County Manager; David McCole, Finance Officer; Glenda Pridgen, Deputy Clerk to the Board; other staff and members of the Press and public.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Williams called the meeting to order at 2:00p.m.

Chairman Williams welcomed all to the work session and thanked Mr. McCole for leading them through the process.

Mr. McCole reviewed the additional funding requests that were made by the Board, and reviewed cuts that were made to cover these additional funds in order to help balance the budget without increasing property taxes. The additional funding included: \$250,000 for funding four School Resource Officers for the middle schools; an additional \$50,000 to help fund a Cape Fear Community College campus in Surf City, bringing the total to \$100,000; \$10,000 for the Board of Education Masters Degree Program; \$5,000 for the Christian Charity; \$3,000 to the Maple Hill Civic Club; and \$3,000 to the Willard Outreach Program; and \$3,000 to the Atkinson Library. The new position requests which were cut included: Deputy Fire Marshal/EM Officer; Jail Cook; Tax Clerk; a DSS position; and Administration Building Central Receptionist. With respect to the Christian Charity donation, Mr. Blanchard clarified that it is not a religious organization – he said it is a food pantry and donates used clothing, and this contribution by the County will help them secure grants.

Mr. McCole noted that the SRO's vehicles would be funded out of the Vehicle Replacement Fund. Mr. Rivenbark said that funding these vehicles is a tremendous expense; that when the School Resources Officers Program first started, it came on as a grant and their vehicles were part of the grant; and asked if the SRO's can't use their own vehicles since they are at the school all day. Sheriff Smith explained that many times the SRO's have to transport students, go out to see parents and go to other schools and can't use their personal vehicles. Mr. Rivenbark said "we are sticking our necks way out" to dig into fund balance and Mr. McCole responded that the \$50,000 won't affect the General Fund, that it is being taken out of the Vehicle Replacement Fund and we'll have to build that fund back up. Mr. Brown asked if the \$250,000 will cover all middle schools in the County and the response was affirmative. Mr. Brown asked if the Pender Success Academy has SRO's and Sheriff Smith said they have officers that go to that school twice a day and that Town of Burgaw police officers respond to calls from that school. Mr. Williams said the Board wanted to add the SRO's and this is how Mr. McCole did it. Mr. Tate later asked if two full-time SRO positions could be cut into four part-time and Sheriff Smith said the best case scenario is to have two SRO's at each middle school. Sheriff Smith said they are now seeing a need for more SRO's in middle schools because more things are happening in middle schools now than ever before. There was more discussion on how many SRO's are needed and which schools need them. Mr. Rivenbark suggested Sheriff Smith talk to the Superintendent about this and Sheriff Smith said he will definitely work with the Superintendent.

Mr. Tate had concerns about cutting the Central Receptionist position and asked if we can look at making it a part-time position without any benefits. Mr. Williams suggested we get someone for the pique hours, for example, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., etc. It was the consensus of the Board to discuss this further in the future and Mr. McCole suggested looking at funding it in October.

Mr. McCole said he is recommending approval of the request to hire a full-time attorney for DSS, at a cost of only \$6,000 more than the contracted cost.

As requested by the Board, Pat Simmons and Jimmy Fields of the Public Works Department were present to explain the request for \$103,050 for fire alarms/smoke detectors. It was explained that most county buildings are equipped with fire alarms and smoke detectors but everything is outdated; that a contractor had tested the equipment building by building; and that some buildings don't need a full system but need fire protection. An Incident Report was distributed to the Board showing where a break-in had recently occurred at the Probation and Parole Building and there was no burglar alarm. Mr. Blanchard asked do we not have burglar alarms in our buildings and Mr. Fields responded "no." The Board generally agreed that the \$103,050 for updating burglar and fire protection equipment is a "legitimate" expense.

There was more discussion of Cape Fear Community College, Surf City Campus – whether or not the \$100,000 would be a recurring expense and whether or not the County will give them a check or hold until they have the facility. Mr. Williams said we need to be crystal clear on when they need the actual money. Mr. Brown asked if this campus would offer anything different than the Burgaw campus and Mr. Tate said his understanding from Dr. McKeithan of CFCC is that they will offer ABA classes – industrial training – and that Burgaw Campus is becoming more of a high school type campus, with continuing education classes. Mr. Blanchard added that the Surf City Campus will be an Associate's Degree campus. It was noted that the Surf City Campus will also have potential for future expansion. Mr. Tate asked if this \$100,000 will be in addition to the \$100,000 we already give them and Mr. McCole said this will be in addition to the \$100,000 we already give them for Beach Nourishment Funds. Staff was instructed to have Surf City Mayor Zander Guy and Dr. McKeithan attend the June 16th meeting and make a ten minute presentation.

Mr. Tate noted that the Atkinson Library is only requesting \$2,687 and that will be a \$300 savings to the County. Mr. Tate said he has one additional funding request – the Chairman of the Pender Youth Football Association had approached him and said they had a \$3,472 shortfall in their budget and asked the Board to consider funding. Mr. Tate asked the Board to consider funding half of this shortfall because it will help the situation where folks have to travel to New Hanover County for these games. Mr. Brown asked if this is a separate program or funded under Parks & Recreation and it was noted that this is a separate project – that Parks & Recreation funding for football is \$3,000. Mr. Williams said he is definitely for Parks & Recreation but if we do this for this one, we'll have to do it for others and we don't have a policy in place for these types of funding. Mr. Tate said a lot of people in this program don't have the means to travel to Ogden, where these games are held.

Mr. McCole noted that the Cape Fear River Assembly funding hadn't been approved the previous year and that their recommended request of \$3,362 could be shifted somewhere else. It was noted that this is a duplicate of another agency that already provide these services; it was the consensus of the Board to shift these funds to the football program.

Mr. Blanchard asked Mr. McCole to research why Pender County doesn't qualify for Low Wealth Funding for the Effective Tax Rate and why we don't receive more in lottery proceeds.

Health Director Dr. Jack Griffith and Kathy Lewis of the Topsail Humane Society spoke about the benefits of having a contractor run the Animal Shelter. Dr. Griffith explained a plan that will allow the County to contract out the day-to-day operations to the Topsail Humane Society and will allow the Animal Control Officers to get back to doing their job of being out in the field. He said that the contract would be for \$60,000 a year, down from the earlier proposed contract of \$200,000 which the Board of Health had originally approved, which would have included an additional animal control officer; that he and Ms. Lewis worked together to get the contract down to \$60,000; that for \$60,000 a year, Ms. Lewis plans to put two attendees in the shelter, plus a manager seven days a week; that he could make the contract work without any additional money in this year's budget and would not need to hire the additional animal control officer; and that with respect to the recent controversy about the Topsail Humane Society's request to build a shelter off Hwy 210 in Hampstead, the contract and the facility are not connected. He said this contract was not designed to get the east side shelter, but it is a benefit that the Topsail

Humane Society has, and plans to keep, an east side shelter. Dr. Griffith added that we will be able to drop off animals at the shelter, and it is a "win-win situation." Ms. Lewis explained that large items like medical expenses, a van and other non-monetary donations helped reduce the cost of the contract. She said they had already spent the \$60,000 and are basically asking for remuneration. The Board generally agreed to consider funding the \$60,000 contract.

ADJOURNMENT

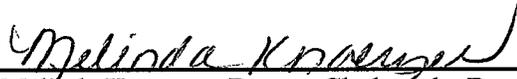
The meeting recessed at 3:35 p.m. for the Board to return at 4:00 p.m. for a regular meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,



Glenda Pridgen, Deputy Clerk to the Board

Reviewed By:



Melinda Knoerzer, Deputy Clerk to the Board