

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 30, 2006, 7:00PM
BUDGET MEETING – PUBLIC HEARING

PRESENT: Chairman Billy R. King
Vice Chairman Kenneth S. Edge
Commissioner Talmage S. Baggett
Commissioner Breeden Blackwell
Commissioner Jeannette M. Council
Commissioner John T. Henley, Jr.
Commissioner Diane Wheatley
James Martin, County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager
Amy Cannon, Asst. County Manager
Cliff Spiller, Asst. County Manager
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney
Budget Staff (Howard Abner, Kelly Autry, Bob Tucker, &
Todd Hathaway)
Human Resources (James Lawson and
Marsha Fogle, Clerk
Sara VanderClute – PIO

INVOCATION: Bishop Ken Hill – North Ramsey Street Church of God

Chairman King called the meeting to order and opened the public hearing.

SPEAKERS

1. Richard Higgins, Chairman, Library Board of Trustees. – Asked the Board to support the Library's request to bring the rest of the branch libraries back to full operating hours. In addition, also supported the request for funding for Electronic Database and audio visual materials.
2. Deborah Mintz – Noted the importance of the Arts in the community and thanked the Board for its support.
3. Tracy Chandler – Cumberland County Sheriff's Office. Asked the Board to support the Sheriff's request to raise salaries in the Sheriff's Office to same level as the Fayetteville Police Department. This step will help with new hires and retention.
4. Bobby Jeffers - Cumberland County Sheriff's Office. Noted the importance of compensation parity for Sheriff's Office deputies with Fayetteville Police Department. He noted he would be making \$12,000 more a year if he worked for the Fayetteville Police Department.
5. Bruce Obranovich – Cumberland County Sheriff's Office. Noted that some sheriff's deputies have to work a second job in order to make ends meet. Urged support of a plan to bring deputies' salaries in line with Fayetteville Police Department.
6. Lynette Hodges - Cumberland County Sheriff's Office. Noted that recruitment and retention is a challenge. Concerned that veteran officers would move on. She asked the Board to support the Sheriff's request for the additional funds.
7. Ken Hill – Child Advocacy Center. Reviewed statistics regarding child abuse cases in Cumberland County. Thanked the Board for its support.
8. Katherine VanSickle – Cumberland County Coordinating Council on Older Adults. Ms. VanSickle noted that the agency offers many programs to our seniors. She thanked the Board for its support.
9. Shirley Konneker – Friends of the Library. Noted the importance of restoring full service hours to Hope Mills Branch, Bordeaux, East Regional and Spring Lake. Also requested funding for audio visual materials and electronic databases.
10. Polly Davis- Friends of the Library. Noted the technological changes and the importance of providing updated technical resources to the clients of the Library.

11. Sue Ivey – Asked the Board to support the Sheriff's request for additional funding for his deputies.
12. Lillian Hughes – Friends of the Library. Asked the Board to fund the library request.
13. Esther Barkley – Friends of the Library. Asked the Board to restore the cuts made in 2001 and restoring full service hours to the all of the libraries.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Chairman King inquired of Jerry Thrasher, Director, Cumberland County Library System, the status of the study that has been done regarding adding branch libraries to our current system. Mr. Thrasher said the Library Board will take the completed study and add some cost figures to it before submitting it to the Board of Commissioners.

MOTION: Commissioner Council moved to recess the meeting to Room 564 to continue budget deliberations.

SECOND: Commissioner Blackwell

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Chairman King reconvened the meeting in Room 564 of the Courthouse.

County Manager, James Martin, reviewed a pay plan for the Sheriff's Office, prepared by the Manager's Office and the Sheriff's Office that would address to some extent concerns about starting salaries for law enforcement officers. The Manager said that the Plan is not comprehensive and does not address adequately salaries of veteran officers. He also noted that at this point, the Plan is NOT fully funded.

Following some discussion regarding the funding of the Plan, the Sheriff offered to agree to not fund five of the twenty-one vacancies in his department for fiscal year 2006-07, which would free up about \$200,000. In addition he indicated he would purchase 3-4 less vehicles, and come up with an additional \$20,000 in his budget to fully fund the Plan devised by the Manager's staff and his staff. (Plan attached to these Minutes). These adjustments made by the Sheriff plus the appropriation recommended by the Manager in the proposed budget would fund this Pay Plan.

The Manager noted that there is still work to do as far as compensation is concerned for officers who have tenure with the Department.

The consensus of the Board was that a salary study needed to be done county-wide.

Commissioner John Henley suggested the Board consider the following additions to the budget:

\$500,000	Water and Sewer fund to fund Grays Creek School Extension
\$75,700	Restore full hours to Hope Mills Library Branch
\$15,000	Elderly & Disabled Transportation
\$20,000	Electronic Databases for Library
\$5,000	Freedom Park
\$23,600	Board of Elections (capital outlay and training)

In addition, he asked Staff to look at adding an additional ½% to the Cost of Living Adjustment for all employees, and to look at raising the minimum to \$1,000. Cost of the additional ½% would be \$338,000 (includes benefits). The cost to raise the minimum from \$750 to \$1,000 would be \$280,000.

The Manager stated, that in regards to the request from the Register of Deeds to add \$16,800 to the Register of Deeds budget, he (the Manager) would, if needed, come before the Board and request these funds, if the Register of Deeds cannot find them in his budget.

Commissioner Henley suggested that funding for the above items could come from the \$1.6 million in the budget set aside for software for the Tax Office. He noted that all of the budgeted \$1.6 million would not be needed in FY06-07. He suggested using half of the \$1.6 million for the added appropriations and replenish that line item in FY07-08. Note: The software will not be ordered until 2007.

Note: The COLA increase is a recurring expense as is the restoration of full hours to the Hope Mills Branch Library.

The next budget work session will be held on June 5, 2006 at 5:30PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:15PM.

Clerk