

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JUNE 3, 2008, 5:30PM
SPECIAL MEETING – BUDGET

PRESENT: Chairman Breeden Blackwell
Vice Chair Jeannette Council
Commissioner Kenneth Edge
Commissioner John T. Henley, Jr.
Commissioner Ed Melvin
Commissioner Billy R. King
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
Harvey Raynor, Deputy County Attorney
Finance Department Staff
Human Resources Department Staff
Marie Colgan, Deputy Clerk
Marsha Fogle, Clerk

Chairman Blackwell called the meeting to order.

Department Head Presentations:

Jody Risacher, Director, Library System

Ms. Risacher reviewed the Library System and its services and how those services affect the public. She noted that use of computers at the North Regional Branch has increased by 45% since the hours were restored. She said that computers are used to do homework, resumes and research. She also noted that the summer programs for students are important and positively affect their learning. The Library Board asked that the Board of Commissioners consider increasing the hours at the Bordeaux Library, one of the most widely used in the County.

Other Issues:

Hope VI - Deputy Manager Juanita Pilgrim reported that the grant for this project has been submitted to HUD and a reply should be forthcoming by July 15. She said that HUD may require us to re-do our plan so that we have two projects ongoing at the same time in order to accelerate the overall completion date. Monies have to be spent within five years. There will be no drawdown of funds until HUD approves the Plan. It is likely the County will have to provide \$2.5 million during fiscal year 08-09, probably in January 2009 or beyond.

Commissioner Henley said he would like to see the County give some relief to the Hospital and for water projects since the county would not be releasing the total \$4 million in funding for the Hope VI project in fiscal year 2009. Commissioner Council said we should not be using the Hope VI money for other projects.

Water-Sewer Issues:

Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager, told the Board that the Cumberland County Safe Water Task Force has met. It wants to develop a map of the areas in which there are contamination issues, and then start to address the issues and how they can be funded. Ms. Pilgrim said that the county will need to invest some money initially for an engineering study to assist us in our efforts to address the issues and to investigate how to extend water through PWC and other water systems to those areas in critical need.

James Martin, County Manager, said that it will take more than just an appropriation of \$500,000 or even \$1-2 million to address our contamination problems. He suggested that it would probably take a bond referendum to truly make a difference. He also suggested that perhaps we can work with neighboring counties to bring water to some of the areas in question. The county will also pursue money from the Rural Center; although, some of the areas will not fit into the criteria to receive those monies.

Chairman Blackwell said he wanted to see not just a map of the contamination areas but also an estimate of the cost to address the problem.

Ms. Pilgrim indicated the Safe Water Task Force would make a report to the Board of Commissioners at its June 16 meeting.

All of the commissioners acknowledged the need for funding for water projects. Some suggestions as to how to begin to fund a water fund were to designate a certain amount of the property tax each year for water projects and/or possibly reduce the amount of COLA for employees. In addition, another alternative would be to change the Policy the Board has for its Fund Balance requirement of 10% and perhaps lower it to 9% and put that money into a water fund. Chairman Blackwell said everyone will have to feel the pain a little bit if the water issue is to be addressed.

Vehicle Registration System - Chairman Blackwell noted that when commissioners go to Raleigh for County Assembly Day on June 10, they should urge the delegation to continue the requirement for payment of vehicle taxes when tags are issued and registrations are renewed.

Budget Meeting (June 9): Commissioner Edge suggested that perhaps we did not need to have a meeting on June 9. After that the next budget meeting is June 16 at 5:00PM, just prior to the regular Board meeting. The Board will decide whether or not to have a meeting on June 9 following the Public Hearing on June 4.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 6:35PM

Clerk to the Board