

APRIL 13, 2010

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**NORTH CAROLINA
MECKLENBURG COUNTY**

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Budget/Public Policy Session in Conference Center Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 13, 2010.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chairman Jennifer Roberts and Commissioners Karen Bentley, Dumont Clarke, Harold Cogdell, Jr. George Dunlap, Vilma Leake, and Daniel Murrey County Manager Harry L. Jones, Sr. Clerk to the Board Janice S. Paige

Absent: Commissioners Neil Cooksey and Bill James

Commissioner Dunlap was absent when the meeting was called to order and until noted in the minutes.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Roberts, after which the matters below were addressed.

(1) FEE CHANGES - LAND USE & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AGENCY (LUESA) AND PARK AND RECREATION

Budget/Management Director Hyong Yi addressed proposed fee changes for Land Use & Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) and Park and Recreation.

Commissioner Dunlap entered the meeting.

LAND USE & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AGENCY (LUESA)

The proposed fee increases for Land Use & Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) – Solid Waste Division and Code Enforcement were as follows:

- Increase Tipping Fee charged at the Speedway Landfill for Residential Waste
- Increase the Yard Waste Tipping Fee at Compost Central and Recycling Centers
- Technology Surcharge (new)

PARK AND RECREATION

The proposed fee increases for Park and Recreation were as follows:

- Revolution Park Sports Academy (Multi-purpose rooms and Gym rental) (new)
- Outdoor Basketball Court Reservation – Clanton Park and Camp Greene Park (new)
- Copperhead Island – Camp Rental
- Historic St. Mary’s Chapel – Rental

- Greenways and Trails Events (new)
- Senior Citizens Rates (new)
- Aquatic Center Facility Rental
- Athletics – Field Reservation
- Tennis Court Reservations
- Golf Course Rates

A copy of the report is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Comments

Park and Recreation

Commissioner Dunlap with respect to Park and Recreation fees asked about the indigent and those receiving services from Social Services when it came to paying for the use of facilities.

Park and Recreation Director Jim Garges said two programs were in place to address this need. The first was the Department of Social Services provides funds to Park and Recreation for families for day camps and other programs. Secondly, Partners for Parks has a dedicated account to help families in need. Director Garges said Park and Recreation staff was also familiar with a lot of the families that visit facilities and if cost was ever a problem then Park and Recreation takes care of that cost.

Commissioner Dunlap asked for clarification with respect to someone making a reservation versus someone just showing up and wanting to use a facility, which was addressed.

Commissioner Leake, in light of the budget situation, asked how many employees had already been terminated and/or how many would be terminated. *Director Garges said none to date and that the number for possible termination had not been determined.*

Chairman Roberts asked if the revenue projected from the proposed fee increases took into account there may be fewer people willing to use the service because of the increased fees. *The response was staff had not seen any decrease in use in the past when there were fee increases, thus, none was anticipated.*

Chairman Roberts asked would the additional revenue be tied to a particular program. *Director Garges explained that for certain accounts those fees would be placed in a reserve account and the funds would go back into those facilities. He said the additional fees in some instances go to pay for the full cost of utilizing a service.*

Chairman Roberts with respect to Copperhead Island asked would the tents be kept. *The response was yes, until they wear out and anything not used would be auctioned off.*

Commissioner Cogdell asked about the Large Gym Full Court Rental fee at Revolution Park Sports Academy. *Director Garges said the use of term gym was not correct because there was no gym at Revolution. He said it should have read large multi-purpose room.*

Commissioner Cogdell asked about the process used to determine which fees to increase, which was addressed by Director Garges.

Commissioner Dunlap asked if approval of the fees meant the Aquatic Center would not be closed or golf courses not sold. *Director Garges said he could not say that would be the case. Director Garges said there's no way the County could charge enough money to cover Park and Recreation's budget. Director Garges said fees were an investment back into the program, not a subsidy. Director Garges said there's no way you can close the budget gap with fee increases.*

APRIL 13, 2010

Commissioner Leake asked how the public would be informed of the new charges. *The response was that it would be available on-line and via an electronic newsletter. It would also be posted at facilities.*

Commissioner Cogdell asked County Manager Jones how he would develop his budget with respect to the fees. *County Manager Jones said his recommended budget would reflect the proposed fee increases.*

Commissioner Cogdell said he would like to know the following with respect to the proposed fee increases for Park and Recreation: 1) the amount that would be placed in the Manager's Recommended Budget, 2) how would the increase be used, and 3) the impact on services with and without the fee increases.

Director Garges said if the fee increases weren't approved, the difference needed would have to be made up with further reductions to the operating budget.

Commissioner Cogdell said he wanted to know the specific impact, such as, would recreation centers be closed, etc.

Commissioner Clarke asked was there a program in place for gradual fee adjustments. *Director Garges said there were two schools of thought with respect to that. He said one was the "big whammy" where it's two-three years between increases and the other was to make small incremental changes over time. He said his philosophy was for small incremental increases over time, as long as it's market rates based, and fits in the philosophy of your particular community or county.*

Land Use & Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) – Solid Waste Division and Code Enforcement

Chairman Roberts with respect to the fee increases in LUESA asked were the Towns okay with what's being proposed. *Director of Solid Waste Bruce Gledhill said the towns were aware and understand the need for the proposed increases.*

Commissioner Dunlap asked were there other departments that provide a service to a particular segment of the community where a user fee should be considered to help address the budget issue. *County Manager Jones said he had not had discussion with staff regarding other possible areas to charge fees.*

General Manager John McGillicuddy said it was in the department's realm to recommend fees. He noted other departments that charge fees, such as the Register of Deeds.

This concluded the discussion.

Note: The above is not inclusive of every comment but is a summary.

Sales Tax Update

Finance Director Dena Diorio gave an update on the sales tax.

A copy of her presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Comments

Commissioner Cogdell asked would staff be adjusting its projections for this fiscal year. *The response was yes.*

APRIL 13, 2010

Commissioner Clarke asked would staff also be considering adjusting the projection for next fiscal year. *The response was yes.*

This concluded the discussion.

Note: The above is not inclusive of every comment but is a summary.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Murrey and carried 7-0 with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Dunlap, Leake, Murrey, and Roberts voting yes, that there being no further business to come before the Board that the meeting be adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

Janice S. Paige, Clerk

Jennifer Roberts, Chairman