

JUNE 5, 2012

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session in the Meeting Chamber Conference Room of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street at 5:00 p.m. and in Formal Session in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 5, 2012.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chairman Harold Cogdell, Jr. and Commissioners Karen Bentley, Dumont Clarke, Neil Cooksey, George Dunlap, Bill James, Vilma Leake, Jim Pendergraph and Jennifer Roberts
County Manager Harry L. Jones, Sr.
County Attorney Marvin A. Bethune
Clerk to the Board Janice S. Paige

Absent: None

-INFORMAL SESSION-

Commissioners Clarke, Dunlap, and Roberts were absent when the meeting was called to order and until noted in the minutes.

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

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The Board identified item(s) they wanted removed from consent and voted upon separately. The items identified were Items 12-0307, 12-0285, and 12-0310.

STAFF BRIEFINGS - NONE

(12-0324, 12-0325) CLOSED SESSION – BUSINESS LOCATION AND EXPANSION AND CONSULT WITH ATTORNEY

Prior to going into Closed Session, Attorney Bethune announced the following Consult with Attorney matter to be discussed in Closed Session: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Hospital Authority vs. Mecklenburg County.

Motion was made by Commissioner Pendergraph, seconded by Commissioner Bentley and carried 6-0 with Commissioners Bentley, Cogdell, Cooksey, James, Leake, and Pendergraph voting yes, to go into Closed Session for the following purposes: Business Location and Expansion and Consult with Attorney.

The Board went into Closed Session at 5:23 p.m. and came back into Open Session at 5:40 p.m.

Commissioners Clarke, Dunlap, and Roberts were present when the Board came back into Open Session. They entered the meeting during Closed Session.

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Commissioner Leake asked the Board to go back into Closed Session to Consult with the Attorney regarding questions she had with respect to complaints received from previous public appearance speakers regarding their children.

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Bentley and carried 7-2 with Commissioners Bentley, Cooksey, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph, and Roberts voting yes and Commissioners Clarke and Cogdell voting no, to go into Closed Session to Consult with Attorney.

The Board went into Closed Session at 5:43 p.m. and came back into Open Session at 5:55 p.m.

The Board then proceeded to the Meeting Chamber for the remainder of the meeting.

-FORMAL SESSION-

Chairman Cogdell called this portion of the meeting to order, which was followed by introductions, invocation by Commissioner Leake, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag; after which, the matters below were addressed.

Commissioner Cooksey entered the meeting.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION - NONE

(12-0329) PUBLIC APPEARANCE

The following persons appeared to speak during the Public Appearance portion of the meeting:

Kathy Davis addressed the 2011 Revaluation. She referenced pages 4.2 – 4.3 of the Schedule of Values, which she said outlined the land appraisal procedures to be followed when determining land values and specifically quality control measures. Ms. Davis said the Tax Assessor's Office were to have ran a report that compares 2011 assessed land values to 2003 for each neighborhood. Ms. Davis said the report is called a Land Line report. Ms. Davis said the Land Line report and the Qualified Sales report in the Tax Assessor's Office were in direct conflict. Ms. Davis questioned the fluctuations and percentage changes in land values amongst properties in the same neighborhood. Ms. Davis said she took her concerns to Tax Assessor Garrett Alexander and was still waiting on a response.

Barb Scott addressed the 2011 Revaluation. She expressed thanks to the Tax Assessor's Office for addressing the "confusion" around whether or not an attorney was needed if you appealed to the Property Tax Commission, which she said the answer was that you do not.

Ms. Scott said there was another communication issue still pending that had to do with the date that appears on the informal appeal letters indicating when you could file an appeal with the Board of Equalization and Review. Ms. Scott said on one page it states an appeal could be filed any time before the adjournment of the Board of Equalization and Review but on the next page it has the same wording and a date of June 30 without a specific year. She said the letter was dated in 2012 giving one the impression that you had until June 30, 2012. Ms. Scott said she wanted to know the status of dealing with that particular communication.

Ms. Scott asked a question with respect to tax collection. She referenced NC General Statute 105-378 (d) Limitation on the Use of Remedies which reads: (Effective for taxable years beginning before January 1, 2011) Enforcement and Collection Delayed Pending Appeal. –

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When the board of county commissioners or municipal governing body delivers a tax receipt to a tax collector for any assessment that has been or is subsequently appealed to the Property Tax Commission, the tax collector may not seek collection of taxes or enforcement of a tax lien resulting from the assessment until the appeal has been finally adjudicated. The tax collector, however, may send an initial bill or notice to the taxpayer. Ms. Scott asked County Attorney Bethune to look into this matter because there were taxpayers who have said they were being moved against to collect their taxes, even though they're in the Board of Equalization and Review appeal process.

Lloyd Scher, a former County commissioner noted the recent death of a fourteen year old who was not wearing a helmet while bicycling. Mr. Scher addressed the importance of wearing a helmet and the need for enforcement of the local ordinance requiring helmets be worn in County parks. He said there should also be enforcement of the state law requiring children to wear helmets when rollerblading, skateboarding, etc. Mr. Scher asked for the Board's support in the following ways:

- Prepare a joint resolution or proclamation with the City of Charlotte requesting that the helmet law be enforced and that parents be informed that children must wear a helmet.
- Support a bicycle rodeo he's putting together, at which, helmets would be distributed to children. He's seeking sponsors and plans to approach the Park and Recreation Department, the Fire Department, and the Police Department.
- Send a letter to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department encouraging them to pass out tickets to those not wearing a helmet.

Mr. Scher said he was preparing a bill to send to Raleigh that would require with every purchase of a bicycle, the purchase of a helmet. He also plans to ask the City of Charlotte not to allow any garbage cans to be left on the sidewalk, but rather on the grassy area.

(12-0293) APPOINTMENTS

WOMEN'S ADVISORY BOARD

The vote was taken on the following nominees for appointment to the Women's Advisory Board:

Jenny Bonk	None
Shanita Britton	Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Cooksey, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph, and Roberts
	<i>Voting Ceased</i>
Yolyndra Green	
Taylor Holloman-Pressley	
Melandee Jones	
Pamela McCarter	
Shalawn Moore	
Ashleigh Thornton	

Note: Twanna Daniels was nominated at the previous meeting but asked that her name be removed from consideration.

Chairman Cogdell announced the appointment of Shanita Britton to the Women's Advisory Board to fill an unexpired term expiring October 31, 2012.

She replaces Chia-Li Chien.

PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – NONE

Commissioner Bentley left the dais and was away until noted in the minutes.

CONSENT ITEMS

Motion was made by Commissioner Roberts, seconded by Commissioner Cooksey and carried 8-0 with Commissioners Clarke, Cogdell, Cooksey, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph and Roberts voting yes, to approve the following item(s):

(12-0301) ORDINANCE AMENDMENT - MECKLENBURG COUNTY SOLID WASTE FEE ORDINANCE

Approve an amendment to the Mecklenburg County Solid Waste Fee Ordinance

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute Book _____ Document # _____.

(12-0316) TAX REFUNDS

Approve refunds in the amount of \$2,242,624.14 and interest as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the Tax Assessor resulting from clerical errors, audits and other amendments.

A list of the refund recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

(12-0286) BOARD BULLETIN

Receive the County Manager's Board Bulletins published since the last Board meeting.

Note: As needed each week, the County Manager distributes to the Board a newsletter called "Board Bulletin" to keep the Board informed about policy matters and other key issues related to Mecklenburg County government.

(12-0289) BUDGET AMENDMENT - HEALTH DEPARTMENT (REVENUE INCREASE)

Recognize, receive and appropriate \$295,358 in state and federal revenue allocations from the NC Department of Health and Human Services for the Health Department.

Note: The \$295,358 increase is the net impact of revenue increases in the Breast and Cervical Cancer, Tobacco Prevention, and Syphilis Elimination, along with a decrease related to the elimination of the Health Disparities Initiative this spring.

(12-0282) BUDGET AMENDMENT - DSS (REVENUE INCREASE)

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Recognize, receive and appropriate \$401,632 additional Federal revenue from the N.C. Division of Child Development broken down as follows: \$1,632 for the administration of the Smart Start Child Care Subsidy program and \$400,000 to Department of Social Services for child care subsidies.

(12-0290) CARRY FORWARD OF FUNDS - CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES PROFESSIONAL FEES

Carry forward remaining funds as of June 30, 2012 to FY13 for the County's agreement to support the criminal justice system.

Note: The funding is used for providing support services, primarily staffing, to the court system through agreements with the Administrative Office of the Courts and the local state criminal justice. This action item provides for a carry forward of approximately \$879,000.

(12-0303) SET PUBLIC HEARING - STREET NAME CHANGE

Set a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on July 3, 2012 to change the name of a portion of Odell School Road. to Mallard Creek Road, and to change a portion of Mallard Creek Road to Ridge Road.

(12-0318) SET PUBLIC HEARING - NCDOT RURAL OPERATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION

1) Set a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. at the June 19, 2012 Board of County Commissioners meeting to receive comments on the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services' grant application for the NC Department of Transportation's Rural Operating Assistance Program for Fiscal Year 2012-2013, and 2) Direct the Clerk to publish notice of intent to hold a public hearing.

(12-0312) RAMSEY CREEK BOAT LAUNCH FEE CAPITAL RESERVE – PARK AND RECREATION

Appropriate \$12,000 from the Ramsey Creek Boat Launch Fee Capital Reserve account to repair the boat dock and make landscape improvements at Ramsey Creek Park.

(12-0313) HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM - FLOODPLAIN ACQUISITIONS

1. Accept the "Offer of Sale of Real Estate" from Carolina Foods, Inc., owner of property at 3215 Cullman Avenue (Tax Parcel 08303126) for \$180,000.

2. Accept the "Offer of Sale of Real Estate" from Carolina Foods, Inc., owner of property at 240 East 36th Street (Tax Parcel 08303127) for \$520,000.

3. Accept the "Offer of Sale of Real Estate" from Gregory W. Smith and Gayle J. Smith, owners of property at 1100 Willhaven Drive (Tax Parcel 18511117) for \$195,335.49.

4. Authorize the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police and Fire Departments to utilize the structure for training exercises.

Note: These acquisitions are a continuation of ongoing flood mitigation efforts.

(12-0317) LEASE EXTENSION - CHARLOTTE EAST COMPLEX

Authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a lease extension with Charlotte East, LLC for office space for Child Support Enforcement Services.

(12-0322) MINUTES

Approve minutes of Regular meeting held May 15, 2012 and Special meeting held May 30, 2012 and Closed Session held May 15, 2012.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Pendergraph and carried 8-0 with Commissioners Clarke, Cogdell, Cooksey, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph and Roberts voting yes, to approve the following items.

(12-0307) LAND USE & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES FEE ORDINANCE REVISIONS AND REVISIONS TO THE BUILDING DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

1) Amend LUESA Fee Ordinance effective July 1, 2012 to revise various fees.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute Book _____ Document # _____.

2) Amend the Building-Development Ordinance effective July 1, 2012 regarding various definitions and projects with designated inspection counts included in permit fees.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute Book _____ Document # _____.

(12-0285) GRANT APPLICATION - BLUMENTHAL FOUNDATION (GIS)

Approve the submission of a grant application for funding in the amount of \$1,000 from the Blumenthal Foundation; and if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate such funds and carry forward unspent funds.

Note: The requested funding will allow Mecklenburg County GIS to support GIS Day activities. GIS Day is an international event where local governments open their doors and showcase the benefits of geographic technology to the public and schools.

(12-0310) BUDGET AMENDMENT - BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES AGENCY (CARRY FORWARD OF UNSPENT FUNDS)

Approve carry forward of up to \$350,000 of Business Support Services Agency funds that remain unspent at June 30, 2012.

Note: This Board action is necessary to carry forward sufficient funds to obtain a vendor self-service (VSS) procurement module.

MANAGER'S REPORT - NONE

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS

Commissioner Bentley returned to the dais.

(12-0305) CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Finance Director Dena Diorio addressed the Capital Improvement Program and Debt Management Policy.

Motion was made by Commissioner James, seconded by Commissioner Bentley and unanimously carried with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Cooksey, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph and Roberts voting yes, to adopt the

1) FY2013 Authorization Park & Recreation Approved in November 4, 2008 Referendum Capital Project Ordinance

Section I. That for the purpose of providing funds, together with any other available funds for the following projects:

- Ballantyne Park
- Wesley Heights Greenway
- First Ward Park

including the acquisition and construction of new facilities, the improvement and expansion of existing facilities and the acquisition and installation of furnishings and equipment and the acquisition of interests in real property required therefor, \$10,190,000 is hereby appropriated.

Section II. That it is estimated that the following revenues will be available during the construction period to meet the appropriations in Section I, as set forth in the following schedule:

Proceeds from sale of bonds, Pay-As-You-Go/Other County Funds \$10,190,000

Section III. That the Director of Finance is authorized from time to time to transfer as a loan from the General Fund or unspent bond proceeds in the Capital Projects Funds, cash in an amount necessary to meet obligations until such time as financing is arranged, at which time repayment will be made and the Director of Finance is authorized to sign the Declaration of Official Intent to Reimburse Expenditures as required by Internal Revenue Service regulations.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute Book _____ Document # _____.

2) FY2013 Authorization Central Piedmont Community College Facilities Approved in November 6, 2007 Referendum Capital Project Ordinance

Section I. That for the purpose of providing funds, together with any other available funds, for the Broadcast Center Renovation Project including the acquisition and construction of new facilities, the improvement and expansion of existing facilities and the acquisition and installation of furnishings and equipment and the acquisition of interests in real property required therefor, \$5,000,000 is hereby appropriated.

Section II. That it is estimated that the following revenues will be available during the construction period to meet the appropriations in Section I, as set forth in the following schedule:

Proceeds from sale of bonds, Pay-As-You-Go/Other County Funds \$5,000,000

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Section III. That the Director of Finance is authorized from time to time to transfer as a loan from the General Fund or unspent bond proceeds in the Capital Projects Funds, cash in an amount necessary to meet obligations until such time as financing is arranged, at which time repayment will be made and the Director of Finance is authorized to sign the Declaration of Official Intent to Reimburse Expenditures as required by Internal Revenue Service regulations.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute Book _____ Document # _____.

3) FY2013 Authorization Land Bonds Approved in November 6, 2007 Referendum Capital Project Ordinance

Section I. That for the purpose of providing funds, together with any other available funds, for providing land for present and future county corporate, open space and community college purposes and the acquisition of improvements thereon and interests in such real property, \$6,600,000 is hereby appropriated.

Section II. That it is estimated that the following revenues will be available during the acquisition period to meet the appropriations in Section I, as set forth in the following schedule:

Proceeds from sale of bonds, Pay-As-You-Go/Other County Funds \$6,600,000

Section III. That the Director of Finance is authorized from time to time to transfer as a loan from the General Fund or unspent bond proceeds in the Capital Projects Funds, cash in an amount necessary to meet obligations until such time as financing is arranged, at which time repayment will be made and the Director of Finance is authorized to sign the Declaration of Official Intent to Reimburse Expenditures as required by Internal Revenue Service regulations.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute Book _____ Document # _____.

4) FY2013 Authorization School Facilities Approved November 6, 2007 Referendum Capital Project Ordinance.

Sections I and II are amended to read as follows and Section III is added:

Section I. That for the purpose of providing funds, together with any other available funds, for the following projects:

- East Mecklenburg High Renovation
- Garinger High Renovation
- Independence High Renovation
- Myers Park High Renovation
- Palisades Elementary New
- Ranson Middle Renovation
- Stumptown Elementary New
- Vance High Renovation

including the acquisition and construction of new facilities, the improvement and expansion of existing facilities and the acquisition and installation of furnishings and equipment and the acquisition of interests in real property required therefor, in order to provide additional school facilities in said County to maintain the nine months' school term as required by Section 2 of Article IX of the North Carolina Constitution, \$108,610,000 is hereby appropriated.

Section II. That it is estimated that the following revenues will be available during the construction period to meet the appropriations in Section I, as set forth in the following schedule:

Proceeds from sale of bonds, Pay-As-You-Go/Other County Funds: \$108,610,000

Section III. That the Director of Finance is authorized from time to time to transfer as a loan from the General fund or unspent County proceeds in the Capital Projects funds, cash in an amount

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necessary to meet obligations until such time as financing is arranged, at which time repayment will be made and the Director of Finance is authorized to sign the Declaration of Official Intent to Reimburse Expenditures as required by Internal Revenue Service regulations.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute Book _____ Document # _____.

Prior to the above vote:

Commissioner Leake asked if the amendment to the *FY2013 Authorization School Facilities Approved November 6, 2007 Referendum* capital project ordinance as it related to Independence High Renovation, include renovation to the school's gymnasium. *Finance Director Diorio said yes.*

Commissioner Pendergraph asked about the status of a stadium at Olympic High School. *Finance Director Diorio said that project had not yet been ranked. Finance Director Diorio said the project would be part of the 2014 ranking process.*

Commissioner Pendergraph said residents in the Steele Creek area were promised a stadium for Olympic High School 20+ years ago. He encouraged the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education to "remember the promises" that were made to the residents in the Steele Creek area regarding a stadium for Olympic.

Commissioner James requested information from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools regarding their revised capital plan and how it fits into the County's ability to fund projects.

CIP Prioritization Process

Motion was made by Commissioner Roberts, seconded by Commissioner Cooksey and unanimously carried with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Cooksey, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph and Roberts voting yes, to approve revisions to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) prioritization process as presented by staff with one amendment to the CIP Criteria for Ranking, which would be to change the Funding Source Rating Criteria point range from 0-10 to 0-15.

Note: Commissioner Roberts said the impact of this change would be that if a project has an outside company or federal grant that's time sensitive, and there's commitment to fund, for example, 100% of the project, that would add 15 points to that ranking as oppose to 10 points. Commissioner Roberts said that would be a compelling reason to move something up, if the funding was there and it was time sensitive.

Commissioner Cooksey left the dais and was away until noted in the minutes.

Debt Management Policy

Motion was made by Commissioner Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Pendergraph and carried 8-0 with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph and Roberts voting yes, to approve the revised Debt Management Policy.

Policy recorded in full in Minute Book _____ Document # _____.

(12-0298) MECKLENBURG COUNTY FUND BALANCE POLICY

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Motion was made by Commissioner James, seconded by Commissioner Dunlap and carried 8-0 with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph and Roberts voting yes, to approve the proposed fund balance policy.

Finance Director Diorio addressed this matter prior to the above vote.

Policy recorded in full in Minute Book _____ Document # _____.

(12-0299) REVALUATION REVIEW REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Land Use & Environmental Services Agency Director Cary Saul addressed the proposed Revaluation Review Request for Proposal (RFP).

Commissioner Cooksey returned to the dais.

Commissioner Dunlap asked would Board members be involved in the bidder selection process. *Director Saul said if the Board wanted to select a member to participate staff had no objection.*

Chairman Cogdell asked Director Saul to notify Board members of any interviews that would take place following RFP submissions. *Director Saul said June 13, 2012 was the pre-submittal Q & A meeting of staff with prospective bidders, which would probably be the one Board members would want to attend in case there were any questions regarding the Board's intent.*

The following persons expressed concern for the way the 2011 Revaluation was conducted.

Dorothy Rainey from the Villa Heights Community said there were approximately 400 homes in their neighborhood, many of which were built in the 1940's. Further, many of the residents have lived in the neighborhood for 20 and 40 years. Ms. Rainey said as a result of the 2011 Revaluation, property taxes in the neighborhood doubled. Ms. Rainey said its felt the increase was because of the nearby NoDa community. Ms. Rainey said many residents did not appeal because they were not aware of the process for doing so and those that did appeal received rejection letters. Ms. Rainey said the letter received from the Tax Assessor's office was very confusing when it came to the deadline date for appealing. Also, they were not aware, until recently, of the availability of information such as the property record card, the qualified sales report and the land line report, all of which she said was complicated to understand.

Ms. Rainey said residents feel they're being "taxed out of their homes."

Joe Huss said he attended a community meeting prior to the 2011 Revaluation where it was noted to the Tax Assessor's office representatives that consideration should be given to the fact that their neighborhood had multiple types of housing, built by multiple developers, and was near the airport. Mr. Huss said they were told all of these factors would be taken into consideration; however, when he received his revaluation notice, it had not been taken into consideration in his opinion. Mr. Huss said he appealed, but to no avail.

Director Sau clarified that the selection committees Board members serve on were for the selection of architects and engineers and not routine departmental RFP's.

Motion was made by Commissioner James, seconded by Commissioner Leake and unanimously carried with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Cooksey, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph and Roberts voting yes, to approve the Request for Proposal for the review of the 2011 Revaluation.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUEST

(12-0320) ADOPTION OF BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR FY2012-2013

Motion was made by Commissioner James, seconded by Commissioner Pendergraph and unanimously carried with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Cooksey, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph and Roberts voting yes, to adopt the Mecklenburg County, N.C. Budget Ordinance Fiscal Year 2012-2013 that reflects a county property tax rate of 79.22 cents, as well as a law enforcement service district tax rate of 19.37 cents and a fire district service tax rate for the following Extra Territorial Jurisdictions (ETJs): Charlotte = 5 cents; Cornelius = 5 cents; Davidson = 5 cents; Huntersville = 5 cents; and Mint Hill = 7 cents.

Prior to the above vote, Commissioners commented on the budget in the following order:

Commissioner Roberts noted the importance of education, value of teachers, and her regret that funds had to be placed in contingency.

Chairman Cogdell asked County Manager Jones to share with the Board staff's perspective of the impact of the State House passage of their budget as it related to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' budget presentation to the Board on May 9, 2012.

County Manager Jones said based on the information received today from Raleigh, the House budget bill includes \$333 million of additional funds for the Local Education Authority (LEA), to refund LEA flexibility cuts. County Manager Jones said based on staff's calculation the potential increase for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) would be an estimated additional \$30 million based upon the District's Average Daily Membership (ADM) compared to the statewide ADM figure.

County Manager Jones said in addition, the House budget proposal also included a \$250.00 bonus to all state employees and teachers and an additional five vacation days.

Commissioner Pendergraph said he too valued teachers and understands the importance of education and felt this was a good budget.

Commissioner Clarke asked could the restriction placed on a portion of CMS funds be amended if necessary. *County Attorney Bethune said the Board could amend its budget ordinance at any time with respect to how it appropriates funds.*

Commissioner Cooksey offered the following observations and suggestions for future budget processes:

Comments on Budget Book

The budget book as it's currently outlined provides more information but "less knowledge" about where the County is in its financial position and where it wants to go in its financial position.

The budget book has "a lot of numbers in it, but it does not provide a lot of knowledge" about what he needs to do as a County Commissioner and how he needs to react.

Suggestions

- Have each department to list three or four budget/staff changes that have occurred in the past year that had a dramatic effect on their budget that changed the way it operated, such as initiatives that were implemented to make them more efficient. This would help Board members understand the department better and where they're heading. In addition, have departments to state what their major initiatives are for the coming year.

- That the budget book reflects more “verbal communication and less numerical communication.”

Commissioner Cooksey said when you look at the numbers presented on the spreadsheet, it’s hard to see, line by line, the comparison between the FY2012 and FY2013 numbers, thus it’s hard to see what’s occurring in each of those line categories.

Comments on Budget Process

The Board has a responsibility to get more involved in the beginning of the budget process to set forth its expectations to the County Manager about what the Board expects to see in the budget.

The Board does a good job with respect to setting its priorities and staff does a good job to make sure those priorities are reflected in the budget.

Suggestions

- Have a Board task force involved in the budget development process by sitting in on some of the meetings where decisions are made regarding how much should an agency be defunded, etc.
- The Board should be clearer with the County Manager regarding the Board’s expectation with respect to the tax rate. For example, that the Board would like to see a flat tax rate or a decrease in the tax rate or an increase.
- There should be more time allowed in the schedule for deliberation from the time the County manager presents his budget to the time the Board begins its straw voting. This would allow for more discussion and receipt of answers to questions, per those discussions.
- There should be a Budget/Public Policy meeting for the purpose of discussion and asking questions prior to straw voting.

Commissioner Cooksey said the Board was really left out of some of the fundamental decisions about funding in the County and was “forced” to focus on things the Board has control over, such as community service grants. Thus, 90% of the Board’s discussion during straw voting evolved around 2% - 3% of the budget or less, which is not a “helpful” situation for the Board to be in.

Comments on Community Service Grants

The discussion regarding Community Service Grants should take place prior to straw voting and should be more “transparent” with respect to who applied, what were the results of staff’s recommendations and how they were reached, and the process used to make the determination. In addition, information regarding why there were less new outside agencies funded in a given particular year should be shared.

Comments on the Timing of the Budget Process

Suggestion

Consider adding to the Board’s legislative agenda or to at least begin some discussion with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners regarding trying to make the budget decision process more sequential and less simultaneous, meaning let the state make its decisions about what it’s going to fund and what its funding is going to look like before

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requiring schools and counties to make its decisions, to a lesser degree than cities. This would allow counties to have better information about what it can expect from the state versus trying to “look at the crystal ball. “

Commissioner Cooksey said he too valued teachers and hopes the Board’s action to place funds in restricted contingency will allow CMS employees to receive a raise.

Commissioner Dunlap in response to some of the comments made by Commissioner Cooksey said there should be a separation between management and governance. He said once the County Manager makes his budget recommendation to the Board, then it’s the Board’s responsibility to determine what should be in the budget using whatever processes the Board likes in order to get more information.

Commissioner Dunlap said he would be interested in knowing in the future, what departments had funds left over and who did not.

Commissioner Dunlap said the placement of funds in restricted contingency for CMS employees salary increase was done in keeping with what the Interim Superintendent said was CMS’ top priority.

Commissioner Bentley echoed Commissioner Dunlap’s comment regarding the placement of funds in restricted contingency for CMS salary increases, that it was done as an assurance that the employees would receive a pay raise.

Commissioner Bentley said she would implore the incoming superintendent and the Board of Education to communicate “strongly” to its staff and teachers that they are serious about supporting them with pay raises and that you “don’t look to the local governing body to make that happen, that you would build that into your base budget.” Commissioner Bentley said this would communicate to CMS employees that pay raises was important.

Commissioner Leake spoke in support of teachers, but encouraged educators to voice their concerns to those in Raleigh.

Commissioner James said the budget was not perfect, but was a good compromise. Commissioner James acknowledged his opposition to the law enforcement service district tax and the fire protection service district tax, which was a part of the budget ordinance, but can’t be voted upon separately.

Chairman Cogdell expressed his thoughts on the budget. He said with respect to some of the comments made by Commissioner Cooksey that the Board should not be directly involved in the development of the County Manager’s budget to the extent that Commissioner Cooksey suggested. He said it would be helpful, however, if staff would provide the Board with information regarding what agencies applied for funding, those recommended and not recommended and the reason why.

Chairman Cogdell thanked the County Manager and staff for all of its work on the budget.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute Book _____ Document # _____.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Bentley, seconded by Commissioner James and unanimously carried with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Cooksey, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph and Roberts voting yes, that there being no further business to come before the Board that the meeting be adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

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Janice S. Paige, Clerk

Harold Cogdell, Jr., Chairman