

Budget Session

June 14, 2007

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met at 5:30 p.m. for a special budget session in the Commissioners Meeting Room, County Office Building, 725 McDowell Road, Asheboro, NC. Commissioners Holmes, Frye, Kemp, Haywood and Lanier were present.

NC Museum for Traditional Pottery

Richard Gillson, President of the Board of Directors, thanked the Board for the funds allotted last year to the Museum of Traditional Pottery. He stated that last year's funds helped to buy and restore the old Seagrove grocery store. He reminded the Board that the Museum is a tax-exempt organization formed to promote public awareness of the Seagrove area potteries and the 200-year-old tradition that they represent. He said that the Museum has also brought a lot of tourists to Randolph County by doing several pottery showcases such as "Christmas in July" and the "Pottery Festival." This year's Festival is the 26th annual and it brought about 10,000 people to Randolph County to visit the Seagrove area. Mr. Gillson requested \$10,000 from the County for fundraising opportunities and for additions to their new building.

NC Pottery Center

Denny Meacham, Director, thanked the County Manager for including the Pottery Center in the Proposed Budget for 2007-08. Ms. Meacham answered questions from the Board regarding the Pottery Center.

Baptist Children's Home

Michael Ayers, Board of Directors member, presented information about the Baptist Children's Home. He said that they are a faith-based organization requesting funding to assist them in building a new home. They have already constructed one home that will be housing ladies. The funding they are requesting is for the second home. The homes will remain group homes.

Commissioner Haywood commended the facility they built and their operations.

Partnership for Children

Pauline McKee, Director, thanked the Board for including Partnership for Children in the Proposed Budget. The \$25,000 they requested will be seed money, and they will raise the rest privately.

John Freeze also thanked the Board for their consideration in funding Partnership for Children.

Communities In Schools (CIS)

Sandi Norman, Executive Director, and Keith Lambeth, Board of Directors member, reported that Communities In Schools has expanded to the Randleman and Eastern Randolph areas. They also thanked the Board for letting CIS move into these new areas. They also stated that CIS would like to move all throughout Randolph County. Ms. Norman asked the Board for funding for a part time Area Coordinator position.

Yadkin-Pee Dee Lakes Project (Central Park NC)

Nancy Gottovi, Executive Director, thanked the Board for their continuing support. She said that the focus of Central Park NC is small town revitalization.

Randolph Vocational Workshop

Commissioner Lanier reported that Eddie Davis, Director, was not able to attend the special budget session. However, he asked Commissioner Lanier to thank the Board for all the support they have given Randolph Vocational Workshop.

Clerk of Court

Pam Hill, Clerk of Court, requested a \$30,000 line item from Court facility funds to be spent at the discretion of the Clerk.

Randolph Arts Guild

Phil Shore, Executive Director, thanked the Board for their continued support and for helping to fund the Arts Guild.

Eastside Fire Department

Eric Hoffman, Fire Chief, said that Eastside is requesting a tax rate of \$0.0875, which is above the 2006-07 level of \$0.07. He stated that they have 35 volunteers and that money is really tight for them. Seven people stood in support of Eastside.

Franklinville Fire Department

Kyle Dixon, Fire Chief, said that Franklinville is also requesting a tax rate of \$0.093, which is above the 2007 level of \$0.065. He said that Franklinville has 2 stations and, in addition to Chief Dixon, they employ 3 full-time firefighters. They agreed to lower the rate a few years back because they thought they did not need the extra funds. Chief Dixon said that now they realize they do need that extra funding. Major repairs are needed at one of the fire stations; their 22-year-old fire engine has a rusted tank that will cost \$18,000 to replace; they need another full-time firefighter, which will cost \$30,000; and fuel costs and repairs have increased \$55,000. He said that Franklinville is the leading rural fire department and they have seen a 48% increase on calls. Four people stood in support of Franklinville. Commissioner Kemp said that Sharon Grose, Franklinville Commissioner, sent in a letter in opposition to the increased tax rate.

Farmer Fire Department

Tracy Boyles, Fire Chief, said that Farmer is requesting that the tax rate be lowered to \$0.07, which is below the 2006-07 level of \$0.075. He stated that they can afford it right now.

Bennett Fire Department

Two people stood in support of Bennett requesting their same rate of \$0.07.

Climax Fire Department

Gary McGee, Fire Chief, asked to keep their same tax rate of \$0.93. He showed a PowerPoint presentation outlining the services provided by Climax Fire Department. He also stated that it is important that the tax rate remains the same in order to maintain the current level of services provided to the public, to maintain the NC Department of Insurance rating of 6 or better, to make necessary preparations for the current and upcoming growth, and to ensure a safer department and community for their taxpayers. The Climax Fire Department Board's Chairman stood in support.

Fairgrove Fire Department

Scott Brissell, Fire Chief, requested to stay at their current rate of \$0.065. He said that they are building a new facility on Finch Farm Road. Maintaining their tax rate will help build and staff the facility.

Guil-Rand Fire Department

Brian Cox, Fire Chief, requested that Guil-Rand stay at their \$0.10 tax rate. He said there were 33,000 residences, 1,000 businesses, 8 public schools and 1 private school in their district. He stated that it is going to cost \$4.4 million to replace their older trucks. He also noted that Guil-Rand has lost 25 firefighters to other fire departments for increased pay.

Northeast (Liberty) Fire Department

J.R. Beard, Fire Chief, requested that Liberty keep the same \$0.068 tax rate. The Mayor of Liberty and Town Manager stood in support.

Randleman Fire Department

Marty Leonard, Fire Chief, stated that their operating costs have increased \$160,000 since 2001. Also, their call rate has gone up 56% from 2001-2006 and gas costs have increased 70%. They have already received over 1,200 calls in 2007. Chief Leonard stated that they also have to buy a new fire truck this year. He requested that Randleman keep the same \$0.10 tax rate.

Seagrove Fire Department

Darrell Voncannon, President of the Seagrove Fire Board, requested that their tax rate remain at \$0.097. He said that Seagrove's number one priority is to reduce homeowners' insurance.

Sophia Fire Department

Harris Brown, Fire Chief, requested that Sophia retain the same \$0.10 tax rate. He also stated that Sophia will be doing an audit this year. Chris Hinshaw, President of the Sophia Fire Board, stood in support.

Southwest Fire Department

An unidentified citizen stated that Southwest would like the same tax rate of \$0.10.

Tabernacle Fire Department

Brent Powell, Fire Chief, requested that the Tabernacle tax rate remain \$0.087.

Ulah Fire Department

Robert Callicut, President of the Board of Directors, requested that Ulah keep the same \$0.061 tax rate. He stated that the number of volunteers is down and that, as of right now, their budget exceeds their income. Commissioner Haywood commended Mr. Callicut on the Rural Fire Department meeting that Ulah hosted.

Westside Fire Department

Recil Williamson, Westside Chief, thanked the Board for allowing the county fire departments to come and speak to the Commissioners. He requested that Westside keep the same \$0.09 tax rate. He stated that their biggest concern is the City of Asheboro annexing more of Westside's territory into the City.

At 7:34 p.m. the Board recessed until 7:46 p.m.

Budget Public Hearing

At 7:49 p.m., the Board adjourned to a duly advertised public hearing on the proposed FY 07-08 budget. Chairman Holmes opened the public hearing.

Donald Andrews, 2222 S. Fayetteville Street, said that he felt what the Board should be focused on is maintaining the quality of life in our community. He said he understands that this is a challenging budget since it was a revaluation year. He does not like his taxes going up but he understands that it is about setting a standard for the growth of Randolph County. He feels that we need to be prepared for the future.

He expressed his support for the Board's stand to hold the line or even expand it for the good of the County.

Phil Morgan, Seagrove, stated that the NC Pottery Center does not bring people into Seagrove and Randolph County; the potters do that. He said that he would like to save the County money and request that no funds are given to the NC Pottery Center. He said that instead of using local potters, the NC Pottery Center brings in outside people to showcase their work. Mr. Morgan said that they have hired people from Ohio and China.

Mr. Morgan said that Gina Myers, a teacher in Cabarrus County, told him that she tried to call for the past three years and arrange to bring her students to the NC Pottery Center to learn about the history of pottery in North Carolina, since the NC Pottery Center claims to be an education center. Ms. Myers was told that she could not bring children to the Pottery Center but that a representative would send her a package of information. She never received the package of information and, instead, drove to Seagrove to visit the Pottery Center herself and ask for the package in person. She was then told by an employee that the Pottery Center does not give out free packages but that she could buy books from the gift shop. Mr. Morgan felt this was not right since the NC Pottery Center presents themselves as an educational facility but will not let students come learn. He also thought it was wrong that the NC Pottery Center will not give out the Seagrove Pottery Map that the Tourism Development Authority designed and printed.

Sharon Grose, Franklinville, said that she wanted to come and speak in regards to the letter she sent the Board about Franklinville Fire Department requesting a higher tax rate. She stated that she is concerned for the citizens of Franklinville because if the fire tax goes up, it will affect the whole town, which is already under a very tight budget.

Chairman Holmes closed the public hearing.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

J. Harold Holmes, Chairman

Darrell L. Frye

Phil Kemp

Stan Haywood

Arnold Lanier

Amanda R. Jones, Deputy Clerk to the Board