

PITT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA  
MAY 21, 2002 MINUTES

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, May 21, 2002, at 8:30 AM in the Commissioners' Auditorium, Pitt County Office Building, 1717 W. 5th Street, Greenville, North Carolina.

Commissioners present:

Mark Owens, Jr., Chairman  
Tom Coulson, Commissioner  
Randy Royal, Commissioner  
Glenn Bowen, Commissioner  
Tom Johnson, Commissioner  
Beth Ward, Vice Chairwoman  
David Hammond, Commissioner  
Eugene James, Commissioner  
Terry Shank, Commissioner (arrived later)

Staff present:

Scott Elliott, County Manager  
Susan J. Banks, Clerk  
JoAnne Burgdorff, County Attorney  
Melonie Bryan, Director of Financial Services  
John K. Bulow, Assistant County Manager  
Loretta Lewellyn, Budget Administrator

**Call to Order**

Chairman Owens called the meeting to order.

**Invocation and Pledge**

The invocation was offered by Commissioner Hammond.  
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner James.

**Approval of Agenda**

**Motion:**

**Approve agenda as submitted.**

**Motion made by Commissioner David Hammond.**

**Motion seconded by Commissioner Eugene James.**

**Motion Passed Unanimously.**

**Items for Report**

*Preliminary Budget Overview - Scott Elliott*

**Meeting Notes**

Mr. Elliott brought to the Board's attention each of the sections in the preliminary budget overview and budget calendar. The budget document was delivered to the Board at the May 20th, 2002 Board meeting. Workshops are scheduled for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The Manager's formal budget will be presented on June 3, 2002 and the public hearing will be held on June 11, 2002. Adoption of the budget could be done on June 11, 2002 following the hearing or June 17th during the regular meeting.

<b>OVERVIEW OF FY 02-03</b>					
<b>REDUCTION / BALANCING PROCESS</b>					
<b>Estimated Revenue</b>					\$76.3 M
<b>Total General Fund Requests</b>					\$83.2 M
<b>Deficit</b>					-\$6.9 M
<b>Manager's 1st Round Cuts</b>					-\$3.7 M
<b>Deficit Remaining</b>					-\$3.2 M
<b>Manager's 2nd Round Cuts</b>					-\$0.9 M
<b>Deficit Remaining</b>					-\$2.3 M
<b>Revenue Generation Options Elected:</b>					
<b>2 ¢ Tax Increase</b>					+\$1.1 M
<b>Additional Fund Balance Over \$4 M</b>					+\$1.2 M
<b>BALANCED BUDGET</b>					-0-

The Manager recommended Option A of four scenarios for the revenue portion of the budget. Option A included the following:

- 2.5% Additional Cuts to Departments (net realized is less than % of total) \$ .9 M
- 2 cent Tax Increase \$ 1.1 M
- Utilize fund Balance \$ 1.2 M

Approx. Deficit Covered \$ 3.2 M

Consequences to FY 03-04

- Fund Balance = +/- 6.3%
- Need Additional \$5.9 M
- Partial Liquidation of Hospital Portfolio for Cash Flow

#### NOTES

- \$4 m Fund Balance Utilized in FY 02-03 No Longer Available
- FY 04-05 – Additional Ad Valorem (non-value neutral) or Sales Tax Income would be needed to Replenish Both Fund Balance and Hospital Portfolio utilized in all options
- All of these options assume that State Reimbursements will be received next year. If they are not, sources to cover an additional \$3 million shortfall will be necessary.

General Fund Revenue Summary provided the actual budget for 2001-02 and a summary of the estimated changes in fund balance.

Commissioner Hammond asked how much the debt service is for Pitt County. Ms. Bryan stated that there was over \$10 million in debt services but the Schools pay their portion, which is \$5.8 million. The County's responsibility is \$4.2 million. Ms. Bryan said that Pitt County owes somewhere over \$100 million in debt. Commissioner Johnson said he had heard that if the Hospital Portfolio was appropriated, it would not be spent, and wanted to know if that was true. In option A, the \$30 million would be on the books. When revenues come back in, it would be put back into the \$30 million. Commissioner Johnson said another approach needs to be taken on fund balance. He said the Hospital funds should be talked about like it is fund balance because it truly is fund balance. Vice Chairwoman Ward asked if staff had checked on putting money back into the Hospital Portfolio. Ms. Bryan said she had not gotten an answer, but if it is held for use but not used, it should not be effected. Vice Chairwoman Ward asked if the use of Hospital Portfolio would be the interest. Mr. Elliott said these funds are already appropriated.

Commissioner James said he agreed with Commissioner Johnson on the use of fund balance but education is putting us in the hole and should not put this on the back of Pitt County citizens. Commissioner James said there is no choice but there should be no tax increase. He said this board should give the Manager directions to move forward on this budget without a tax increase.

Commissioner Hammond said he would support using the interest earnings of the Hospital Portfolio but now staff is saying the interest earnings have already been obligated. Mr. Elliott said that under the three budget options, you would use hospital funds and only one option the County would not be penalized.

Commissioner Bowen said 1998 was the year the County sold the hospital and \$4.5 million has been given to the Schools since 1999. He said he had heard Board members say that the Hospital money should go to the schools. He suggested the Board take \$4.5 million from the \$30 million and put back it back into the County's fund balance. It would help the taxpayers and the Schools. He said the Board can not raise taxes and then give money to schools.

Commissioner Hammond said Commissioner Bowen said the County could spend \$1.7 million and still be in good standing with the Local Government Commission. He said the interest earnings has been funding the education compact.

Commissioner James said the consultant told the Board to give them two months notice if they want to liquidate funds in the \$30 million. He said the interest earnings on the fixed investments had been 5, 6, 7%, but only 2% on the others. Commissioner Coulson said they were wasting time talking about penalties on the portfolio. Commissioner Johnson said the Board should consider Commissioner Bowen's suggestion.

Mr. Elliott shared with the Board the tax rates and what they would generate. He also provided the information on the EMS Tax rate and what the revenue it would generate.

Ms. Bryan reviewed the proposed increase in fees by each department. Inspections fees would be increased to cover costs. She noted that the travel reimbursement rate would be increased to the IRS rate. Animal Control and Mosquito Control are being put under Phil Dickerson, County Engineer. Commissioner Bowen asked how much money was in the Solid Waste fund. Ms. Bryan said the Solid Waste fund is down because the County has been fronting all the eligible costs for flood debris and demolition. FEMA pays by the reimbursement method. Ms. Bryan spoke of the need to keep a balance for solid waste for post closure. FEMA currently owes the County about \$750,000 to \$1.0 million.

Mr. Elliott reviewed each department and where cuts had been made. Ms. Bryan reported that Non-Departmental includes insurance premium to Solid Waste.

Mr. Elliott said the budget next year (FY 03-04) would be even worse than this year. He recommended the Farmers Market close two weeks early to balance their budget with the reduction. Commissioner Bowen asked if they had considered raising the vendor fee. Ms. Bryan said this would mean closing the Farmers Market forty-three hours early however they could work this out. Commissioner James supports the same number of days for the Farmers Market but possibly closing one hour earlier. He stated that closing two weeks early would mean they would miss the sales for the Thanksgiving Season.

Commissioner James asked why the Engineering budget increased. Ms. Bryan explained that the person that was hired for their construction expertise is working part time over in the revaluation. Commissioner Johnson said he does not believe in symbolic changes or making equal cuts and he was specifically opposed to cut in office staff. He asked if the Cooperative Extension position was funded with County funds? Ms. Bryan said Mitch Smith thinks they may lose a position and he is in a waiting game. Commissioner Johnson asked about a process for a continuation budget? Mr. Elliott said an interim budget can be adopted prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> and one-twelfth of whatever the appropriation is given each month.

Commissioner Bowen asked about the County Garage.

Vice Chairwoman Ward said she was not sure this Board should even discuss an interim budget.. The State could possibly hold back \$3.0 million from Pitt County in reimbursements. Mr. Elliott said the \$2.9 million that the State reimburses could cause another cut in services, dip into Hospital Portfolio, and any other options could be considered. He stated that the County Commissioners Association recommended that the sales tax reimbursements be tied to any construction projects but Pitt County does not have any such projects on the table at this time. Vice Chairwoman Ward said the Governor has stated he may recommend that the 1/2 cent sales tax start this year instead of 2003.

Five minutes break.

#### **Items for Discussion**

*Elections - Margaret Hardee - Scott Elliott*

#### **Meeting Notes**

Ms. Hardee said there are some questions about the primaries and there is no answer. She said their budget has been cut to the bare bones. Precinct workers may use government employees to work elections. Mr. Dickerson and Ms. Bryan have worked on using employees on elections day. If these volunteers don't come forward, they will have to have the money reinstated.

Commissioner Bowen asked what the workers get paid per hour. Ms. Hardee stated they are paid \$7.00 per hour. Commissioner Bowen said if they use an employee that makes \$20 per hour when you could use a worker at \$7.00 per hour then you are not saving any money. Ms. Hardee said that the workers must attend an instructional meeting. Ms. Bryan explained the process. Commissioner Bowen said it sounds like it is costing the County more money. Mr. Elliott said they cut the part-time staff and funds in the Elections Budget and around 200 employees will work the elections.

Commissioner Hammond and Commissioner James support the idea of Pitt County employees working the polls for elections. Commissioner James said all employees should vote and this would help it by making it convenient. He supports this program as long as the employees do not get overtime pay. Mr. Elliott said the people who work overtime will receive compensatory time. Vice Chairwoman Ward supports this plan of using employees to staff the poles at elections and hopes it will continue in the future. Commissioner Coulson asked about

the employees hours and if they will get time and a half. He spoke about furloughing employees. Commissioner Coulson said that per vote rendered, it costs Pitt County \$5.34 per vote and in Mecklenburg and Wake Counties it is \$1.00 or less. Ms. Hardee said it may be the equipment they use because the equipment is ten years old. They will be testing equipment at the next election that could save the County \$25,000. Commissioner Shank asked about the machines. Ms. Hardee said the machines are still good but they are large and costs to store. They are testing new equipment for the absentee voting and the ballots in the last election were costing too much. The existing equipment has a trade-in value also. Commissioner Hammond asked if there are too many precincts open. Ms. Hardee said there are 80,000 voters and the precincts must be ready for them. It is based on the number of registered voters in that precinct. She said the usual turn out is about 50%. There were no written complaints last year and it went smoothly. She said if they have money left over at the end of the year that is turned back in to the County's general fund. Commissioner Bowen asked about the Town of Grifton's addressing project. She said they are working on those addresses. The Town of Simpson is getting ready to do the same.

*Sheriff's Grant Request - COPS - Mac Manning*

**Information Provided with the Agenda**

Request to Submit Application for COPS Universal Hiring Program

The COPS UHP Program is a three-year grant program designed to increase the number of officers on the street. Grants are available to fund up to 75% of entry-level salary and benefits for full or part time personnel. There is no limit as to the number of personnel one can apply for. COPS grant funds must not be used to replace local funds that agencies otherwise would have devoted to sworn officer hiring. Priority application deadline is May 24, 2002 and we are prepared to meet this first deadline with the Board of Commissioners approval to apply.

With the ability to apply for Full time or Part time Deputies (or a combination of) we have several options listed below:

Option 1: Apply for 4 Full Time Deputies under COPS UHP

Total Local Match over three-year period:	\$205,808
Total Federal Match over three-year period:	\$300,000
Total Project Cost:	\$505,808

(based on our salary/benefits total, the grant will fund approximately 60% of project total)

Option 2: Apply for 2 Full Time Deputies and 4 Part Time Deputies under COPS UHP

Total Local Match over three-year period:	\$152,813
Total Federal Match over three-year period:	\$299,727
Total Project Cost:	\$452,540

(based on our salary/benefits total, the grant will fund approximately 66% of project total)

Option 3: Apply for 6 Part Time Deputies under COPS UHP

Total Local Match over three-year period:	\$74,863
Total Federal Match over three-year period:	\$224,591
Total Project Cost:	\$299,454

(based on our salary/benefits total, the grant will fund 75% of project total)

### **Meeting Notes**

The Sheriff said he is asking for permission to apply for the COPS Universal Hiring grant. He has provided three options for the Board. This is the first time they have been able to apply for a grant for general officers. He said there has been an average of 20-22 traffic deaths annually in Pitt County and so far there have been none this year. This program is tied to community-oriented policing.

Mr. Elliott discussed Option 3 stating that this appears to be the best option under the grant application. Sheriff Manning said if they went with Option 3, these part time officers could free up some of their fulltime officers.

The Sheriff stated that this is for a grant position that is not in the budget. If they do not pick up the grant and the personnel involved, it will change the way the State looks at Pitt County on grant applications. Mr. Elliott said \$25,000 per year for three years for the first option and the County is required to pick up the grant. This is a four-year grant project and the County has to pick up the fourth year.

### **Motion:**

**Motion for Sheriff to grant file application and level of funding support for Option 3.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Glenn Bowen.**

**Motion seconded by Commissioner Eugene James.**

**Motion Passed Unanimously.**

### **Sheriff/Detention Center**

Sheriff Manning stated that this was his fourth budget year and the fourth year he has been told that it is a tight year. He spoke of Pitt County being a rapidly growing County and the need to provide adequate law enforcement. He spoke about the need to maintain the service rate. He gave the following information:

- Calls for service have leveled off but the workload has not gone down.
- Paper service has steadily increased.
- Civil process has had slight increase.
- Deputies are just not as able to keep up with workload as they were in the past years.
- Aggravated assaults have increase.
- Violent crimes the same
- Property crimes have reduced and auto theft has dropped.
- Reported larcenies have increased.
- Hugh increases in petty thefts.

Sheriff Manning said this work falls back on the patrol deputies and they do not have the time to work on misdemeanors. He said they could make a difference with the right amount of resources. Patrol deputies are overworked. He requested additional positions this year. He said he had added three patrol districts lowering the amount of patrol for each officer. He needed to staff the southern area of the County. He explained the breakdown of services that the Sheriff's Office provides for the County. The time available for regular patrol is minimum. He said they serve the entire county not just the areas outside of municipalities.

Sheriff Manning spoke about the pay study and that the turnover rate in the Sheriff's Office has dropped off but it is still fairly high which is also expensive to the County. He informed the Board that the North Carolina Sheriff's Association has a professional certification program. In a number of years the deputies can qualify starting at a basic certified level. With more training, they can qualify for an intermediate certificate and advanced certificate. He would like to

tie the pay grades into their professional certificate level which is in place statewide. They could be more competitive with this approach.

The Sheriff said with eight years of service and 780 hours of training, a deputy qualified for an intermediate certificate. He expressed that he wanted to make this available to all officers including the Detention Center. He stated he would like extra duty pay for staff to help make a difference. The Sheriff stated that all these people go above and beyond their basic job. The Special Response Team has been equipped to deal with terrorism or incidents in Pitt County. He gave numerous examples of deputies doing their jobs. He spoke of special duty pay, higher physical standards, as part of the certification. He said he wants to motivate his employees to achieve higher goals even outside of what the County offers.

He stated his priority is to retain the employees that they have on staff. He wants to give them the pay boost they have available. He asked to keep positions that are currently frozen. The Property Crimes Detective is in contact with the State for terrorism training. Training costs have been cut and they need to maintain their training. He said he needs to send the SRT team off for training which is funded by the Federal government but he cannot spare them. They began preparing for terrorism in 1999. The Domestic Terrorism grant started last summer. There was an Anthrax scare locally back in October. He said they spent a lot of time going out and picking up packages in municipalities. He requested \$20,000 for training to be hazmat technicians. Terrorism is a criminal act and requires their presence. The travel and training costs have been cut. As for Personnel cuts, the Federal wing opened in 1998 or 1999. He requested 21 officers but only 6 were approved. Five officers were cut in this future budget. He said he now is facing cutting an additional four positions. Nine of the original sixteen officers that were hired were staff for the Federal wing. There are 113 Federal inmates in the Detention Center today. Revenues were way over projections this year. These budget cuts represent what services are going to be cut out. He said two weeks ago they were at capacity at the Detention Center. They went over capacity last year. They are asking for more help. If one person calls in sick, it is a critical matter. He stated that four detention officers, two deputies and one communication officer position are frozen. Child abuse crimes are taking a lot of their time. Mr. Tim Copeland, Supervisor of the Detention Center spoke about increases in medical care and a capped expense on medical expense but they have had less than zero increase in medical care. This contract for medical care has been beneficial.

Sheriff Manning stated that there were 84 inmates planned for but they have an average of 104 federal inmates per day. They expect an increase in jail revenues of forty percent more than projected. He said as of the recent budget crisis, there are seven positions countywide being frozen and four of them are at the Detention Center. He said they have eleven officers to care for 96 inmates and are now going down to seven officers. Safety and Security is his charge. They are going to have to start making choices on inmates they will accept based on the law.

Chairman Owens asked about the \$153,000 for certification and if this request was in addition to the budget request. Sheriff Manning said it depends on the pay study. He said his priority is to maintain the positions in last year's budget and implement the pay plan study. His most important resource is personnel.

Sheriff Manning stated there are 113 positions in Detention Center. Mr. Elliott said the State mandates Pitt County to house local prisoners. He talked about the decision to house Federal inmates. Ms. Bryan said the Board cannot give the Sheriff excess funds to use if they are not going to do this in other departments. Commissioner Hammond spoke about public safety and it should be on everyone's mind. He asked what would not be done if the personnel cuts were made at the Detention Center.

Commissioner James asked about deputies delivering warrants. Sheriff Manning said 4% of personnel are used to issue warrants. Why not let municipalities serve warrants in their area. Sheriff Manning stated that the local Police Departments are working with them on serving warrants but only a Sheriff or Sheriff Deputy can issue a bond forfeiture.

Vice Chairwoman Ward spoke about the pay plan study. The Sheriff said it would cost \$153,047, and an additional cost each year with the new plan for certification. The maximum cost would be \$400,000 spread out over many years. Sheriff Manning does not anticipate this being a big jump each year.

Sheriff Manning said that the Officer position under the grant will run out in August, 2002. He said when the federal wing was built at the Detention Center, a staffing plan was recommended. Commissioner Shank said it was the Sheriff's choice as to where the positions come from. Sheriff Manning said that they do not have choice. They have already pulled officers to cover the shortages. If these positions are cut, they will have to cut back on Federal inmates and send them back. Mr. Tim Copeland said they are trying to help the County bring in revenue by housing federal inmates. Commissioner Johnson said he agreed with Commissioner Hammond. Commissioner Coulson supports the grant fully with the full-time positions. He stated he believes in the Sheriff's charges and feels they should be supported.

Commissioner Coulson spoke about the shift coverage. Sheriff Manning said not all the 114 employees in the Detention Center are officers. Only eighty-four would be assigned to shifts and they need twenty-one per shift. Commissioner Bowen asked if Mental Health reimburses the County for deputies to transport people. Sheriff Manning said that they do not reimburse the Detention Center. They can bill other counties when they transport mental commitments. Commissioner Bowen said the Sheriff recommended Option 3 because they get more with the 6 part time deputies.

*Convention & Visitors Bureau - Debbie Vargas*

#### **Meeting Notes**

Ms. Debbie Vargas spoke on the occupancy tax and the convention center. She stated that six percent occupancy tax is collected in Pitt County. Three cents is for debt retirement on the convention center. One cent goes to Exhibit Hall Managers to market the convention center. Two cents goes to fund the Convention and Visitors Bureau. The budget they provided reflects the three cents allocated to the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Exhibit Hall Managers. She said their budget is approved by the City Council and the Convention and Visitors Authority. Commissioner Shank is the County's liaison. Commissioner Hammond recommended approval since it is funded through occupancy tax.

Ms. Vargas made the following comments:

Revenues are 6% under budget

The amount of fund balance proposed for use to balance the budget was \$18,000.

\$577,000 or \$550,000 less than this year

The Bureau has gone from a budget using three cents to two cents.

No provision for staff salaries

No increase in staff

CVA staff has relocated to convention center.

One cent of occupancy tax for convention center

She stated many people attended the grand opening of the Convention Center. She invited everyone to come by and visit the new facility.

#### **Motion:**

**Approve the budget as presented.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Eugene James.**

**Motion seconded by Commissioner David Hammond.**

**Motion Passed. Unanimously.**

*Nonprofit/Affiliated Agencies*

May 21, 2002, revised version (2)

8

6/19/2002 5:24 PM

## **Information Provided with the Agenda**

Town of Grifton - Mayor Tim Bright, Manager Michael Peoples

### **Meeting Notes**

Mr. Michael Peoples, Town of Grifton Administrator, presented the Town's budget request. They received a \$37,500 grant for hazard mitigation work. The Town must match dollar for dollar the \$37,500 over a two-year period. Consequently, the Town is requesting \$5,000 to help fund this large recreational project. The project will be spread out over two fiscal years. They are requesting \$6,000 for the Civic Center and at least \$5,000 for Public Library for purchase of new materials. Commissioner Johnson asked what small town was most effected by flood. Grifton was the most effected.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- Commissioner Johnson stated the Board needed to look at the budget information very carefully.
- Vice Chairwoman Ward stated she liked the budget presentation.
- Commissioner Bowen agreed with Commissioner Johnson that the budget information needs careful review by the commissioners.

### **Adjourn**

#### **Motion:**

**Motion to adjourn at 11:45 a.m.**

**Motion made by Commissioner Eugene James.**

**Motion seconded by Commissioner Terry Shank.**

**Motion Passed Unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan J. Banks, CMC  
Clerk to the Board