

**PITT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
MAY 22, 2003 MINUTES**

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners met on Thursday, May 22, 2003, at 8:30 AM in the Commissioners' Auditorium, Pitt County Office Building, 1717 W. 5th Street, Greenville, North Carolina.

Commissioners present:

Beth Ward, Chairman
Eugene James, Vice Chairman
John Minges, Commissioner
Jimmy Garris, Commissioner
Mark Owens, Jr., Commissioner
Glenn Bowen, Commissioner
David Hammond, Commissioner
Randy Royal, Commissioner

Commissioners Absent:

Tom Coulson, Commissioner

Staff present:

Scott Elliott, County Manager
JoAnne Burgdorff, County Attorney
Melonie Bryan, Deputy County Manager/Financial Services
Phil Dickerson, Deputy County Manager/Facility Services
John Bulow, Deputy County Manager/Human Services
Loretta Lewellyn, Budget Administrator
Susan Banks, Clerk

Call to Order

Meeting Notes

Chairman Ward called the meeting to order.

Invocation and Pledge

Meeting Notes

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

Approval of Agenda

Motion:

**Motion to approve agenda as presented.
Motion made by Commissioner David Hammond.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Garris.**

Motion Passed Unanimously.

Items for Report

Manager's Overview

Meeting Notes

Mr. Elliott said the purpose of this session is to hear the affiliate and non-affiliate agencies funding requests. He said he wanted to review the fund balance situation.

He said there would be \$6 million of fund balance spent in this budget as it has been proposed. The fund balance spent will have to be made up through revaluation in Fiscal Year 2004-05. It will also restrict any capital improvements for the County, Schools or others. He said he wanted to make sure the Board is informed on the effects on the budget and fund balance by adding any requests back to the budget.

Commissioner Hammond said this Board has not heard from other departments and commended the Manager for these other departments accepting their budgets.

Chairman Ward said that the Manager notified the agencies that there would be a time limit and asked them to keep their comments to three to five minutes. Mr. Elliott stated that Ms. Burgdorff had prepared a memo to the Board about the State's mandates for emergency services. Ms. Burgdorff said in the 2001 General Assembly session two laws were passed that controlled emergency services with an effort to be put on the uniformity of emergency workers. She said that the counties are now responsible for providing emergency medical services across the County. The County has to insure that there is a plan in place to provide these services to the citizens.

Items for Decision

Nonprofit/Affiliated Agencies

Meeting Notes

Reginald Speight, **Martin Community Action**, said they are creating a distribution center in Bethel. They will distribute over \$500,000 in provisions to people in need and would be hiring 12 full time employees. There will be training for job skills. He provided a list of costs incurred to date totaling \$13,469. Commissioner Hammond said the people of Bethel are excited about this facility. He said they would receive donations of items and funds and would put it back into the program to help the families they serve. Commissioner Bowen asked what Martin County's participation is in this program. Mr. Speight said they are asking for Martin County's assistance in their weatherization program which is separate from this program. This will be a benefit to Bethel. The request was for \$25,000 for help with improvements in the building.

Request: \$25,000

Recommended: \$0

Michael Peoples, Administrator for **Town of Grifton**, said he was addressing their library, civic center and recreation. He said they would like to expand their hours of operation for the library. The Civic Center is used for classes for senior citizens and Pitt Community College uses it as a satellite campus for small classes. He said they have acquired some areas through the flood and are putting in parks. They have a \$37,000 grant for recreation. They are over budget on that project.

Requests for funding:

Civic Center - \$6,000

Recreation (Creekside Revitalization Area) - \$10,000

Library - \$10,000

Recommended:

Civic Center - \$2,500

Recreation - \$1,000
Library - \$2,000

Blythe Tennant, **Mediation Center**, thanked the Board for their support for the last thirteen years. She said their services are for prevention. She spoke about the Resolve Program which requires a 20% match, \$6,712 which would be part of that match. She gave an example of what the purpose and accomplishment of the Resolve Program does for youth. They served 40 youths this year and keeps them out of the courtroom. She said 100% of the families are coming to all the sessions and they are seeing huge changes.

Request: \$6,712
Recommended: \$1,625

Ozzie Hall, **West Greenville Regional Resources Inc.**, was recently organized. The Weed and Seed program was eliminated. The facility known as the safe haven which was funded by Weed and Seed program. Computer literacy program would be closed down as of April 15th along with after school programs. A group of residents gathered and decided they did not want the facility to shutdown. Since April he has volunteered over 200 hours. The City Council voted to give them the facility for a \$1 a year lease. It has been a lot of volunteer effort but it has been a lot of work. They have applied for numerous grants to keep this program alive and are asking the Board to support their request. They are asking for \$5,000 to help leverage other funds and keep the doors open. He said they believe they will be able to generate funds in the future. He said West Greenville has a disproportionate amount of the crime and problems and this program helps address these problems. He said they sent a revised budget with the commissioner's package.

Request: \$5,000
Recommended: \$0

Lynn Roeder, Family Violence Program, Inc., said they are requesting \$5,000 and said they are in a budget crisis. They have received reductions from the State also. She reported on the services they provide and noted that during these type of economic times their services are needed even more. She shared a story of a victim of abuse and her success. She requested an additional \$5,000 for the operations at the safe house.

Request: \$5,000
Recommended: \$5,000

Rena Bunn, **Westside Community Service Center**, have been in operation almost two years. They offer youth enrichment, rights of passage, and some senior programs. They receive referrals from the schools. They partner with Pitt Community College, Pitt County Memorial Hospital, Town of Winterville and others. They are looking to expand their programs and maximize the potential for the facility. She noted that they have received funding from Juvenile Crime Prevention Committee but this funding has been eliminated. She requested funding to serve 30 youth in the Rights of Passage Program in the amount of \$52,121. There is \$26,061 funding contingent upon this request.

Request: \$52,121
Recommended: \$0

Robert Lancet, **Radio Reading Service**, said they have been trying to stretch funds since Hurricane Floyd. He has sent out six grants that have not been accepted. He thanked the Board for the machine that was bought last year. He said they meet constantly to look at their funding and needs. He said they have \$18,500 in needs. He said these funds go a long way. They have not been able to buy the 200 machines that they have needed for their blind citizens. He said they have at least 1700 with the hospital beds and the television channel.

Request: \$6,000
Recommended: \$750

LaRue Evans, **Winterville Historical and Arts Society**, said the Winterville Museum was now open. It is serving the citizens. They have a smoke house, a tobacco room, typical 1920 room, farm instruments, and artifacts that show the school children how their forefathers lived. She said because of the economy and the County's fiscal situation, they would like to withdraw their request.

Request: \$5,000 (original request) request withdrawn
Recommended: \$2,500

Barbara Owens, **Farmville Community Arts Council**, said the annual report was provided previously to the Board. As the sole Arts Council in Pitt County, Farmville Community Arts Council, eastern grassroots cultural arts, on behalf of children that have enjoyed performances, seniors have also enjoyed their services.

Request: \$7,000
Recommended: \$3,500

Barbour Strickland, **Greenville Museum of Art**, said he was requesting \$7,000 from the County. This amount represents 4% of their operating budget. The museum has grown physically and in stature. Cultural institution that is bringing recognition throughout the State. Ms. Peggy Tolmie spoke about the museum in schools program. She said they spend more time in the schools out in the County. They work with some adults. She spoke about the different groups that have been through the museum. Art on wheels is a mobile unit that goes around helping educate the children.

Request: \$7,000
Recommended: \$3,500

Joyce Albritton, **Farmville Child Development Center**, spoke about the children with disabilities that they serve. She stated that they have asked for \$10,000. She said she received a letter that no funding is budgeted for this program this year. She said these children and their parents are effected everyday of their lives. She said it is cheaper to help in the early part of a child's life. She asked the Board to look at their need again. Mr. Elliott stated that this agency was not funded the \$10,000 because of the increase in Medicaid billings and their direct relationship with Mental Health. She said they had stabilized their finances based on the county's participation. They are a nonprofit agency and they anticipate their revenues. They received funding of \$400 per month but cost them \$1,000 to provide the service. They are funded \$680 per month per child for 10 months out of the year from the Board of Education but they provide the service twelve months out of the year. This a developmental program from birth to five years old that are not available in the schools. The provide from 25-29 children.

Request: \$10,000
Recommended: \$0

Angel Savage, **Youth Today, Inc.**, said this program provides dropout prevention services to meet the needs through education, cultural resource services. They serve the Bethel, Stokes and Belvoir area. This area has been underserved. The northern part of Pitt County needs these services. She said Hurricane Floyd left this area in extreme blight. They are in the third year of operations. Youth Today leaders have built a strong foundation in its community. They have a new facility that will be at 1014 North Greene Street. They are having a positive effect on youth of Pitt County. Students have had an opportunity for leadership, civic education and other benefits. Summer enrichment program will be open to anyone interested. She said in 2002 this program won the Outstanding Program Award from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension which was recognition for a program that engages parent involvement. She said they have something for every child and family member. Financial resources are minimal. She said they need local support before asking the State for funds or other grants. She said they are in the process of writing grants. She said they need some startup funds to keep excellence in their agencies. Commissioner Royal said the Phillipi Church supports this program and this program grew out of the flood. He said they have \$72,000 in in-kind services. Vice Chairman James said that north of the river does have a need for this program.

Original Request: \$15,000
Revised Request: \$14,200
Recommended: \$0

Mark Garner, **Pitt County Girls Softball League (PCGSL)**, and Bo Batts were present. Mr. Garner said that the PCGSL is a nonprofit corporation providing softball recreation for years. They have over 500 volunteers and have this year expanded the program to include 5-6 year olds. This expansion has been at the request of citizens. They have the largest program of its kind in the United States. He said 8000 young people have been mentored to during their free time. He said these kids have been tremendous ambassadors for Pitt County. Mr. Garner reported on how they came about the Sara Ann Law Field. He said they promote camaraderie for the kids and this program is indicative of what goes on in Pitt County. The Sara Law Field is 20 acres of land that was acquired through a charitable trust that provided the field. The annual budget is over \$222,000 and they operate two softball programs. He gave an overview of the budget. He said that they have done all they can do financially. They are asking for help with the utility bill \$14,000.

Request: \$14,000
Recommended: \$0

There was a short break at this time.

Ms. Ward said that Marvin Arrington, Jr. was present from the Little Willie Center, who had not responded to the Finance Office about appearing before the Board.

Marvin Arrington, Jr., **Little Willie Center**, said the center is meant to be a safe haven for latchkey children. They offer tutoring, mentoring, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, computer programming, and a GED program for people who want to obtain their GED. These programs are provided free of charge. He asked that they continue to receive the \$1,750 from the County and they appreciate what they have gotten in the past. They have rent, insurance, books, and activity expenses. They have nine people on staff that volunteers their time. He said they have the support of the ECU volunteer program and other sponsors. Commissioner Royal said this program has helped 100's of children in after-school programs. This program has saved lives of young people in the area of West Greenville. They are currently serving about 25 children from three to fifteen years of age. Commissioner Owens said that the Little Willie Center has been doing what has been described with and without funding.

Request: \$1,750
Recommended: \$875

Manager's Review

Mr. Elliott explained the logic behind the recommended funding of the affiliate agencies. He said what was called nonprofit agencies are now referred to as affiliate or nonaffiliated. He said concerning affiliate agencies, these are agencies such as the library and council on aging. The library went down because of the past contribution of about \$120,000 towards the renovations so they increased the operations budget over last year's budget by 2.6% based on the consumer pricing index. He said the Council on Aging was increased by 2.6% also. PATS budget was 50% of capital expenditures and a portion of a new Transportation Planner Position. ECVC funds are past through monies from the solid waste fund.

He reviewed the funding of the affiliate agencies.

<i>Affiliate Agencies</i>	<i>FY 03-04 Request</i>	<i>Manager's Recommendation</i>
Sheppard Library	428,701	427,338
COA	366,081	153,900
PATS	22,750	15,050
ECVC - funded from Solid Waste	55,000	35,000

Mr. Elliott stated that each of the ten libraries was funded at the same rate as last year. All of the Non-affiliates were cut 50% from the current year's budget. No new requests were funded because there were no funds for expansion. Farmville Child Development Center was reduced to zero funds because the staff thought that their revenues would be increasing from Medicaid revenues like Mental Health's Medicaid reimbursements had increased.

Mr. Elliott provided the Board with the following information for consideration. He stated they are showing only the county dollars needed for these additional positions.

Additional Expenditure Considerations

Department/Agency	Item	Amount
Detention Center	Basic Detention Officers - requested 7 (salary, benefits, uniforms, training)(one officer salary)	36,193
Social Services	Income Maintenance Worker II – Food Stamps Social Worker III - Adult Protective Services (only county funds portion)	14,671 31,323
Health	Public Health Nurse	15,687
Pitt County Schools	Strive to Fully Fund Compact Goal of \$1.8 Million (Difference from budgeted amount and compact amount to be added back in)	780,043
Pitt Community College	Additional \$ for Revised Request	73,000
Other Non-Affiliate Agencies	Commissioners to provide	??
	Total (only includes salary for one detention officer)	950,917

Potential Revenue Sources

Tax Increase	Each 1-cent = \$650,000
Fund Balance Appropriation	\$9.5million currently appropriated
	Additional usage impacts future capacity to retire debt service

Proposed Capital Improvement Plan Actions

Start-up Funding - Jail Space Utilization / Expansion Study	100,000
	Use Fund Balance and repay through long term financing Could do Reimbursement Resolution
Start-up Funding - DSS/MH Space Utilization / Programming & Design	100,000

Use Fund Balance and repay through long term financing

PCC/BOE Funding

How much to build / borrow?

Financing Methods - COPS/GO

Bond Referendum Timing - Fall 2003, Spring 2004, Fall 2004

Mr. Elliott stated that the budget has \$9.5 or \$9.6 million of fund balance included which would actually spend about \$6 million of fund balance. However, he stated that the \$6 million would have to be made up in revaluation next year and could limit the County's ability to make debt payments on any capital construction projects such as schools.

With Pitt Community College and school construction, it would take 8.8 cents on the tax rate. He spoke about general obligation bonds or certificates of participation (COPS) as possible financing options for capital projects. He asked if the Board wanted him to make any changes to the proposed budget and how to fund those changes by tax increase or use of fund balance or a combination. Chairman Ward said that she wanted each commissioner to speak on this presentation and then try to get a consensus on which way to fund this budget. There is a 30-35% increase projected in the County's tax base for revaluation.

Commissioner Royal stated that this is a major hurdle the Board has to overcome on this budget. The County has grown 25% in a short period of time and sees that the departments are coming back with reduced budgets so they are doing a good job. There are some areas that do not need to be sacrificed. The County is more urban so they have to look at education and technology. The departments have towed the line and now the Commissioners need to make the tough decisions. He said almost 50% of the hospital funds are gone. He said there has to be an influx of funds. He said he would support a moderate tax increase and does not feel they need to wait for revaluation funds.

Commissioner Garris said he would like some time for absorbing all of this information. He would like to come back next Wednesday or Thursday and make a decision on the budget as well as how to fund the capital improvement program. Mr. Elliott said the schedule would have to be pushed out a week if the Board postpones action.

Commissioner Minges said he would like to see the Education Compact fully funded. He said he totally supports the requests from Pitt Community College, Little Willie Center for \$1750, Farmville Child Development Center for \$10,000, Radio Reading for \$1500, Fountain Public Library fund, and that the Arts Councils and Historical Society are all treated equally at \$3,500. He said he would support some funds for the PCGSL or some portion of their request. He said a tax increase is one of the ways to fund these items even if it is not popular with the public. He offered support for additional 1 cent EMS tax.

Vice Chairman James said he is in favor of most of the recommendations but not to fund it with a tax increase. He said he would support it if funded using the \$16 million fund balance which would not reduce the general fund balance. He said it is not good to increase taxes while the fund balance is high. He supported three new detention officers, the Social Services employees, Public Health Nurse, and Schools. He supported the funding of the Education Compact and supports Pitt Community College. He said he would vote against the increase in the EMS tax because there still needs to be improvements and that is another tax.

Commissioner Bowen said he thought they should fund the nonprofits at the same rate as last year. He said a lot of nonprofits have the same mission and they need better organization. He asked what the commissioners considered a modest tax increase. He said he would not support a tax increase except maybe for EMS. He said he wants additional funding needs to come out of the hospital fund. He said the county should not be in the investment business. He supported the Sheriff's needs. He said this Board should listen to the citizens

before making decisions. Chairman Ward said there has to be a budget for the public to respond to at the public hearing.

Commissioner Hammond said he represents citizens that live in the City of Greenville. He spoke about the City of Greenville's proposed tax and fee increases for city residents. He spoke about the upcoming tax increase as a result of the County's revaluation. He said times are getting worse and more people have lost jobs in the last seven months than in many years. A lot of industries are downsizing their plants. He said he had talked to 87 citizens in Pitt County and Greenville and not one said they would welcome a tax increase for anything. He said he knows services have to be paid for but he is opposed to a tax increase. He said he will wait for the conclusion of this budget before stating how he will vote.

Commissioner Owens said the Fountain Library had a long history of elderly women running it but then people from the Medical School came over and used the building for providing services for the underprivileged. He asked staff, since Farmville is so yoked with Fountain, to give Farmville the \$4,000 which combines funds for Fountain and Farmville. He said he was expecting staff to speak about equity between the libraries last year and hoped they would at a later date. He supported the additional expenses being considered of the Detention Center Officers, Social Services staff, Public Health Nurse, Pitt County Schools, and Pitt Community College. Funding can be fund balance or tax increase and would like to have both brought back to the Board. He asked staff to provide the effect of using fund balance on the County budget. In regards to rescue and emergency, he supports the projection of on one cent additional tax for EMS. Fund balance if continued to erode, it will cause repercussions when looking at other long term projects. He said he would like to see the study of space needs for Mental Health and Social Services. He said this should be looked at without spending \$100,000 and was not supportive of the \$100,000 for the expansion study on the jail. As for capital, he stated the need to look at COPS for funding. He supported the use of COPS for capital improvements. He asked staff for a projection on revaluation. He said he needs to know the debt retirement information and then he can determine what can be spent on buildings or other needs.

Chairman Ward asked if the Board would agree to meet again on Thursday, May 29 at 8:30 a.m. for an additional budget workshop, with staff providing the possibility of two different budget scenarios addressing the 1 cent EMS tax, effect of 2 cent tax rate, proposed budget using fund balance to meet all of the additions mentioned. She asked staff to look at the reinstatement of non-affiliates and the PCGSL. Commissioner Hammond said to include the Jackie Robinson League. Chairman Ward said some of the non-affiliates did not respond to the budget cuts or to appeal before the Board. She said the Board needs to hear how to use COPS versus General Obligation bonds for facilities and look at the space plans or need for the changes to Social Services and Mental Health and the possibility of waiting on the jail expansion.

Mr. Elliott said the Board may look at fully funding the capital projects for Schools and Pitt Community College, with debt projections. Chairman Ward suggested the Board may reconsider the athletic needs for the schools. Commissioner Owens said the Board needs projections so they can pull back on some items.

Commissioner Minges asked what the \$100,000 was for on the Mental Health/Department of Social Services facility. Mr. Dickerson said it was for an architect to look at space utilization.

Commissioner Bowen spoke about the facility master plan. He also suggested that the Board consider having the budget session in the evening so Commissioner Coulson could attend. He asked that they change the meeting time to 5pm on Thursday afternoon, May 29th. The Board members were agreeable to a change in meeting time.

Vice Chairman James asked about Mental Health plans. Mr. Elliott said that staff is looking at putting the Mental Health LME in the County Office Building. He spoke about the other

agencies located in the County Office Building and their need to expand. He said a lot of factors need to be looked at for space, not just the two agencies. Commissioner Owens said that Mr. Dickerson has enough experience to work through this plan without costing the County \$100,000. Mr. Dickerson said the architect law says select architects based on qualifications. Commissioner Hammond spoke about Mr. Garrison's request to put all of Social Services in one building. He said this proposal would not be enough space for all of Social Services to be in one location. He asked about the 55% funding that the federal government could put in for social services space. He said he did not see how the County could get around building a Social Services Building.

Commissioner Hammond spoke about the Education Compact. He spoke about the continual funding of the compact for five years. He stated that the Compact says the County will strive to meet this agreement. He wants this Board to strive again to meet the funding of this compact. He said other areas of the government will be considered later.

Chairman Ward thanked all of the commissioners for being present and working on this process. She noted for the public that everything the Board has heard to this point has been recommendations. She thanked the staff.

Commissioner Bowen said Ayden-Grifton High School had just paid off a lawsuit. He said that a Board of Education member said they did not have any knowledge about lawsuits or funds for the lawsuits. He asked how much money did the school system pay an attorney last year, what was spent on the retainer of another attorney and how much money has been spent paying off lawsuits.

Commissioner Hammond said according to the newspaper 60% of families cannot pay their expenses.

Motion:

Motion to recess this meeting until 5pm on Thursday, May 29th to be held in the Commissioners' Auditorium.

Motion made by Vice Chairman James.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Garris.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

Respectfully submitted.

Susan J. Banks, Clerk