

**PITT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
JUNE 10, 2003 MINUTES**

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, June 10, 2003, at 7:00 PM 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
Tom Coulson, Commissioner
Randy Royal, Commissioner

Commissioners Absent:

David Hammond, Commissioner

Staff present:

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

Call to Order

Meeting Notes

Chairman Ward called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the budget hearing.

Invocation and Pledge

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

Approval of Agenda

Meeting Notes

Chairman Ward introduced Ling Dai, who was a student working towards her Masters of Public Administration at East Carolina University. Ms. Dai has been shadowing in the Finance Department. Ms. Patricia Mitchell, Ling Dai's professor who accompanied Ms. Dai to this meeting was also welcomed.

Motion:

**Motion to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion made by Commissioner Randy Royal.**

**Motion seconded by Commissioner Glenn Bowen.
Motion Passed Unanimously.**

ITEM FOR REPORT

Meeting Notes

Mr. Elliott said that prior to giving the Manager's Message, he would like to address the "perception" that Pitt County's General Fund departments have not made efforts in being efficient and cost effective. He said there have been numerous cost efficiencies that have been made in the past by the County staff and departments. He said he was going to review them because he had heard comments in the community about the citizens needing to be informed of what reductions and cost efficiencies had already been put into place. He stated that County government staff had worked to contain, cut and maintain and hold the line budget. The County's overall budget is \$180 million. Within this budget, the general fund is about \$85-90 million. The general fund funds the general administration departments such as Finance, Planning, Inspections, Management Information Systems, Human Resources, Legal, and other departments. He stated that the county departments have held their budgets in line for the past two years. The departments continue to make technology enhancements to make business more productive.

- Total headcount (# of employees) over the past five years has grown less than 1% while the total population has increased by more than 8%.
- Operated under a modified hiring and travel freeze. Travel was cut in half with a small reserve put aside. Those cuts are being maintained in the 2003-2004 budget.
- Continued to defer or limited capital spending (not bought vehicles)

Mr. Elliott provided some examples of these efficiencies as follows:

- 1) Tax Collector – Over the last six fiscal years, increases in operations with no staff increases
 - a. Accounts have increased from 148,000 to 166,000 or a 12.25% increase
 - b. Transactions have increased from 252,000 to 299,000
- 2) Elections – In the last six years
 - a. Increase from 69,000 to 82,000 in registered voters for a 18.29% increase
 - b. Transaction activity has risen 101.34%
- 3) DSS - current caseloads
 - a. Food stamps 434 clients per caseworker compared to 299 clients per caseworker in peer group– 45% increase
- 4) Mental Health – staffing ratios to clients, six years ago to today
 - a. Six years ago, the ratio was 20 clients to 1 staff; today it is 36 clients to 1 staff
 - b. Collection Improvements – last five years Medicaid billing and revenues have risen by 156% or \$4.8 million
- 5) Public Health – clinic visits have risen over 50% within Child Health over the last three fiscal years.
- 6) Detention Center – Average Daily census has increased over 44% resulting in staffing ratios going from 2.6 inmates per staff 1 in 1999 to 3.7 inmates per 1 staff currently.

Mr. Elliott stated that other examples have been documented for the Sheriff's Department, Financial Services, Tax Assessor, Engineering, MIS, GIS, Planning, Mail Room, Print Shop and E-9-1-1. He stated that the General fund Department have not grown in relation

to the clients they serve. Every department has remained flat in terms of personnel and funding while demand for services continues to grow.

Mr. Elliott said county government has been trying to contain costs or hold cost down while the population is still growing. County government has remained flat with personnel and funding. Staff is trying to be cost effective and efficient at the same time.

Mr. Elliott stated that there have already been four very productive budget workshop sessions with the Commissioners and then he addressed the proposed Fiscal Year 2003-2004 budget.

Commissioner Garris asked about the \$10.7 million fund balance versus \$6 million has a delta for \$4.7 million. He asked if the \$4.7 million will be spent. Mr. Elliott said they estimate spending \$6.7 million of the fund balance.

Mr. Elliott provided the Board with the following written "Manager's Message." He reviewed highlights from the message.

June 10, 2003

To the Pitt County Board of Commissioners and Citizens:

The following Proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2003-04 Budget for Pitt County, North Carolina, has been prepared in accordance with the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act and General Statute 153-A-82. The budget identifies revenue and expenditure estimates for FY 03-04 and attempts to maintain Pitt County's tradition of high quality services in light of continuing fiscal challenges.

The proposed budget for FY 03-04 totals \$180,013,816. This budget represents a decrease of 0.34% when compared to the current year's amended budget. The General Fund, the County's main control fund, is projected at \$82,967,209 or a 2.86% increase from the current year. At the Board's direction, the county property tax rate to support the FY 03-04 budget remains constant at 68 cents per \$100 of valuation. The distribution of these funds is 66½ cents supporting general fund operations and 1½ cents directed to Industrial Development. With the budget's adoption, a 1-cent increase is implemented for the Emergency Medical Service "Special Tax District", taking the rate to 4 cents and multiple Fire Service "Special Tax District" rates will be adopted as well.

Highlights:

- Includes no ad valorem property tax increase
- Fully funds Education Compact for Year 4
- Raises the EMS Special District tax by 1 cent
- Utilizes \$10.7 M in Fund Balance to supplant revenue streams

BUDGET PROCESS

The Board of Commissioners held a planning session in January to discuss the upcoming budget and the known revenue shortfall created by use of fund balance for operating expenses in the current year. Because of the County's healthy fund balance, the Board instructed the County Manager to plan to use fund balance in an amount up to \$11 million, if necessary.

Departments submitted their FY 03-04 budget requests in April. Budget conferences were conducted with every department between April 28 and May 2 to review their budgets—line item by line item. From revenue projections and the information gained from departments, the

preliminary budget reductions taken from the requests included reducing new positions, part time/temporary help, travel/training, capital, and funding to non-affiliate agencies. The manager's reductions to requests totaled over \$5 million. Even after these reductions, an infusion of \$5.6 million above the normal amount of fund balance was still required. The original manager's proposal included a total of \$9.6 million in appropriated fund balance to maintain current service levels.

A preliminary balanced budget was presented to the Board in accordance with General Statute requirements on May 19. The balanced budget was the impetus for discussion at workshops that followed on May 20-22. An additional budget workshop was scheduled for May 29 at which time the Board confirmed their desire not to increase taxes. This budget message reflects adjustments to the initial submission and represents the Manager's final recommended budget. The original Manager's proposal outlined a recommended budget of \$177.6 million. After subsequent budget workshops with the Board, the final recommended budget is just over \$180 million.

MAJOR BUDGET INITIATIVES

At the Board's Planning Retreat in January, the Commissioners reassessed and merged their previously adopted six goals into the following five priority areas:

- Education / Schools
- Community Safety / Emergency Services
- Facilities / Building Needs
- Human Services / Social Services
- Recreation & Parks

The recommended budget seeks to maintain the Board's priorities and to continue progress in meeting the ongoing needs of our citizens and provision of those public services mandated by state or federal law. However, because of funding constraints, many capital projects as well as program expansion requests are delayed into the future. Major initiatives included in the coming year's program of work include:

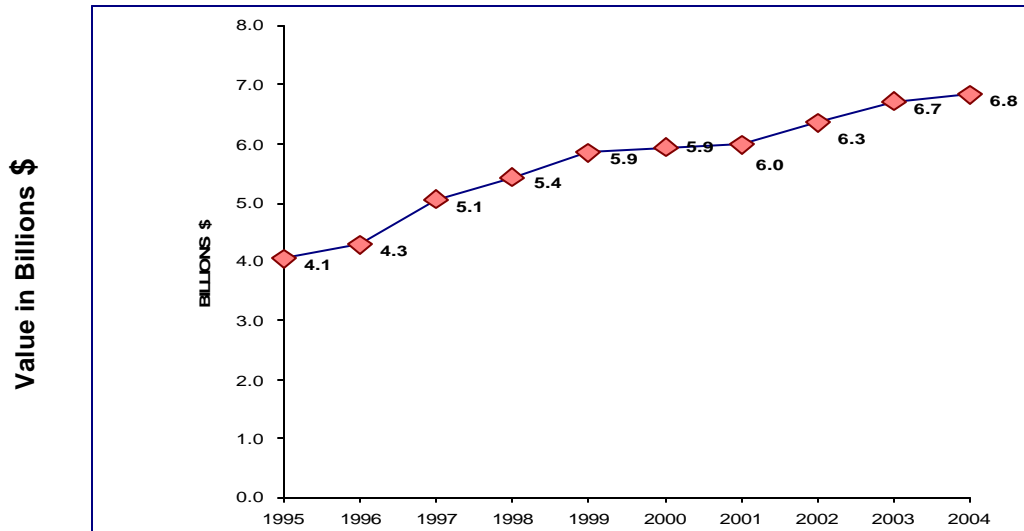
- Continue increased funding for education through the Education Compact (Year 4) with Pitt County Schools;
- Continue emphasis on legislation for expanded use of 911 surcharge;
- Continue revaluation of all real property to take effect January 1, 2004;
- Conduct public forums and hearings on countywide zoning ordinance to be submitted for governing body consideration;
- Develop Tar-Pamlico Stormwater Ordinance;
- Complete Courthouse renovations;
- Present Animal Control Ordinance for consideration by Board of Commissioners;
- Continue implementation of centralized phone system that operates over existing county network instead of leased phone lines, resulting in significant annual monetary savings;
- Improve epidemiologic surveillance systems used by county physicians, hospital, and other providers and improve response to public health threats such as bioterrorism.
- Implement Mental Health's business plan under State reform, changing from a service provider to Local Management Entity (LME).
- Continue work with the EMS Advisory Commission and squad volunteers to improve efficiency and fiscal responsibility for the emergency medical services provided to citizens;
- Work with the Public Schools on funding for the system's capital needs; and

- Work with Pitt Community College to plan funding of bond improvement projects and providing the required county matching funds.

REVENUE ASSUMPTIONS

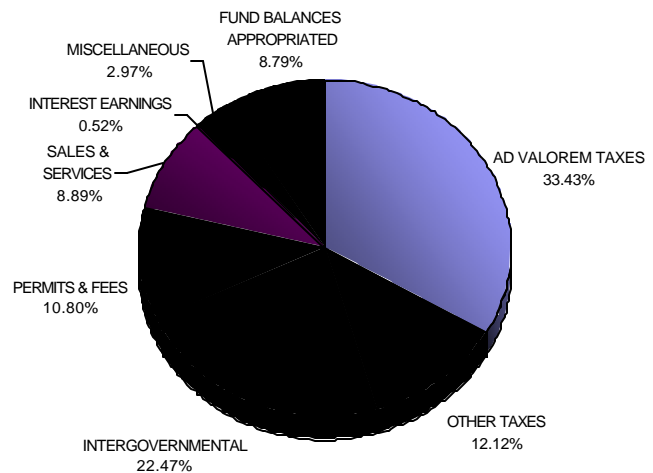
Ad Valorem Taxes – With less than 2% growth in the tax base anticipated over last year’s budget, the base property valuation is expected to be \$6.8 billion, which will generate approximately \$840,242 in new ad valorem tax revenue. The growth is somewhat down from last budget year due to the winding down of a contract for discoveries of unlisted properties, which produced a greater increase last year. Pitt County continues to have a steady growth in its property valuation. Property revaluation is underway and will take effect January 1, 2004. This revaluation will be reflected in the Fiscal Year 2004-05 budget. The following chart shows steady growth in the valuation of the tax base of Pitt County over the past 10 years.

Property Valuation for Tax Base



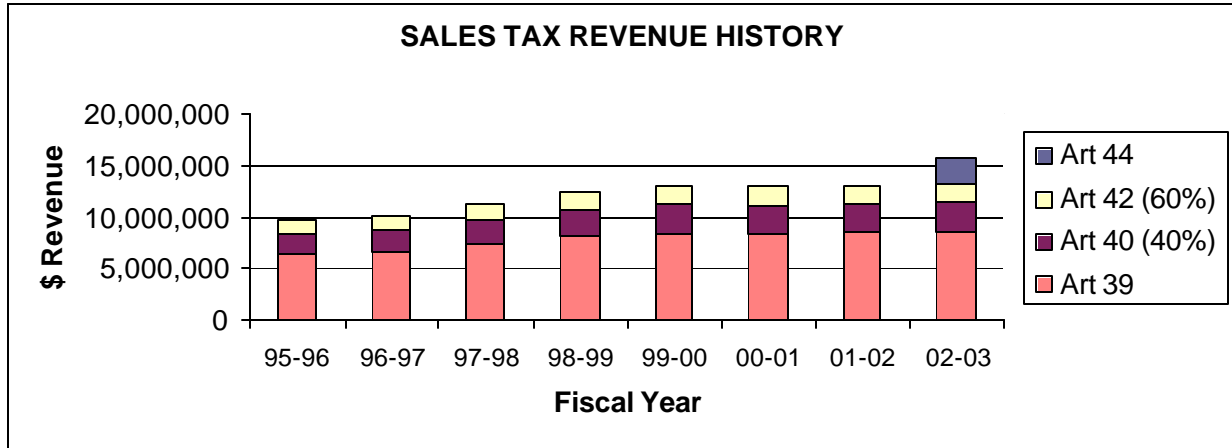
The Industrial Development Fund is allocated 1½ cents from Pitt County’s 68 cents tax levy. The Industrial Development Fund is used to support economic and industrial development activities throughout the county. The Development Commission requested an additional appropriation of 0.10 cent this year in order to add an additional staff member. The request for the 1.6 cents rate is not recommended at this time.

As presented in the pie-chart at the right, Pitt County’s largest revenue source comes from ad valorem property taxes. Federal and State “Intergovernmental” revenue is second and Other Taxes is the third largest source.



Sales Taxes – Pitt County adopted the new Article 44 local option ½ cent sales tax effective December 1, 2002, which was enabled by the State legislature to replace State reimbursements that permanently

ended. Reimbursements repealed included intangibles, inventories, the elderly homestead exemption, and local option food coupon tax. Pitt County's total sales tax rate is 7 percent. Sales taxes include Article 40 and 42 taxes that are distributed per capita and Article 39 and 44 taxes that are distributed on a point of sale basis. The chart below shows gradual growth in sales tax in the mid-1990s with a leveling off over the last several years.



Although we have only had the new ½ cent tax for a few months, this tax has the potential for growth over time which will be of benefit to the County, whereas the reimbursements that it replaces had been stagnate with no growth for many years.

Fees – Changes—both increases and decreases—are proposed as indicated below for fees in the Solid Waste, Animal Control and EMS areas.

	Present Fee	Proposed Fee
Solid Waste		
Residential Waste, Annual	\$65	\$63
Animal & Mosquito Control		
Animal Control Pickup/Euthanasia Fee, Per Animal	\$10	\$10, or N/C for towns that hold animals 3 days
EMS		
Advanced Life Support II	\$400	\$455
Advanced Life Support I	\$400	\$350
Basic Life Support	\$400	\$300
Treat/No Transport	NA	\$100
Mileage	NA	\$8.30 per mile

It is recommended that all other fees assessed for County services remain the same.

Fire Taxes – Four Fire Districts have requested a change to their tax rate—both increases and decreases—for their service area as indicated in the chart below. The remaining 16 districts will keep current rates. All fire districts were established by vote of the citizens of that area. The Sharp Point Fire District passed a referendum in November 2002 to levy a tax beginning this year.

<u>Fire District</u>	<u>Current Rate</u>	<u>Proposed Rate</u>
Ayden	.0400	.0375
Grifton	.0450	.0475
Red Oak	.0400	.0700
Sharp Point	NA	.0600

Emergency Medical Service (EMS) District Tax – The EMS District has been in place for one year and has been successful in improving response times to emergency calls and reducing out-of-service hours of the various squads throughout the county. In an effort to become more self-sustaining, the EMS Advisory Commission has recommended an increase in the district tax from 3 cents to 4 cents. With the tax in place and changes in the transport fee schedule as outlined previously, the District will become less reliant on General Fund contributions—which will be below \$400,000 in the proposed budget.

Hospital Portfolio and Other Hospital Revenue – The Pitt County Board of Commissioners voted in the budget workshops to divest the portfolio assets and transfer the funds—approximately \$16.2 million—into the unrestricted General Fund Balance managed by the Financial Services Department. This action by the Board rescinds the original intent that the Portfolio created with the hospital transfer proceeds would be used to function like an endowment that would generate interest revenue for education. Because of the economic downturn that has occurred since the Portfolio was opened, the Board felt it in the best interest of the County to utilize the funds and manage the balance in-house.

Continuous annual revenue realized from Pitt County Memorial Hospital includes a payment in lieu of taxes budgeted at \$1.37 million and just over \$500,000 to partially offset the County's Medicaid costs.

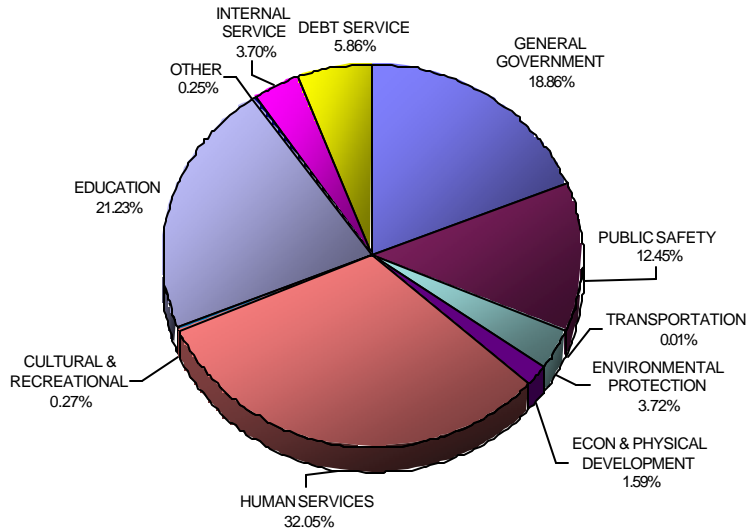
Interest Earnings – Pitt County has had two separate investment strategies to produce interest earnings. The first is the normal procedure that is allowed by the North Carolina General Statutes and requires that counties invest in very secure, very conservative instruments. The second investment strategy deals with the \$30 million in proceeds realized from the hospital transfer agreement, which by Board action last year had been reduced to \$23.8 million. Pitt County obtained special legislation to be able to invest these funds in typically higher yielding stocks and bonds and has had five fund managers managing these investments. Traditionally these type investments earn a higher yield over the conservative investments that the County is allowed. The Board of Commissioners had established a policy using the interest earnings from these proceeds to help fund the Education Compact. But as mentioned earlier, the Board has now decided because of economic conditions to divest of the portfolio and bring the funds internal for management by the Financial Services Department along with the current General Fund monies. The Local Government Commission confirmed last year that Pitt County may replace the funds deducted from this special investment strategy at any point in the future, up to the \$30 million original principal.

For this coming year, Pitt County expects to earn approximately \$750,000 on an average investment of \$35 million. As the Hospital Portfolio is liquidated over the course of several months for least possible negative impact, all funds will then be internally managed by the County's Financial Services Department.

Fund Balance – Approximately \$10.7 million in General Fund Balance is appropriated to cover expenses and balance the FY 03-04 budget. Historically, Pitt County has tried to limit the amount of fund balance appropriated to be an amount that can be offset by conservative budgeting. However, the amount needed to balance this budget is greater than can be offset through under-spending or over-collecting. The Board of Commissioners has directed that the County's Hospital Portfolio be tapped and liquidated to be a part of the General Fund Balance to cover necessary expenses in last year's and this year's budget in lieu of tax increases.

EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

The County's expenditures are divided across several major service areas that are shown on the chart below. Human services—such as Health, Mental Health and Social Services—account for the largest proportion, with education funding—to Pitt County Schools and Pitt Community College—a close second.



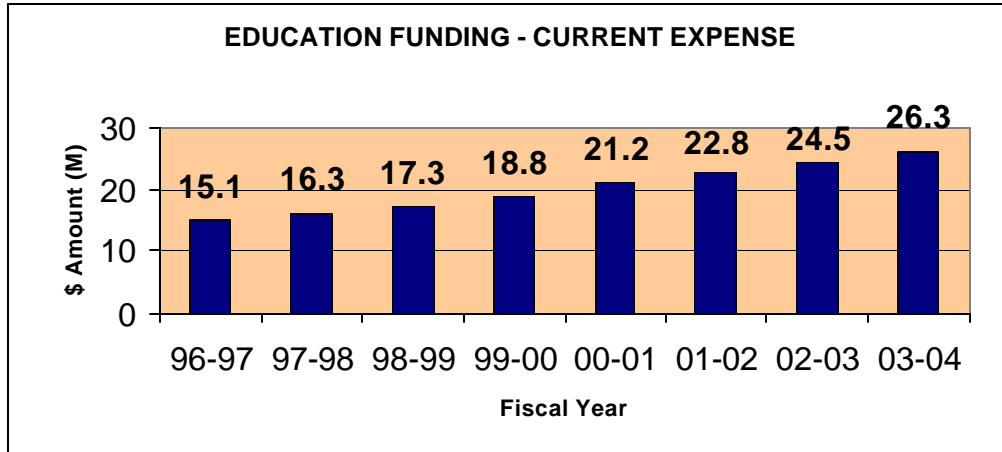
The total County budget is projected to decrease from the current year revised budget by less than .35%, with the controlling fund—the General Fund—increasing by 2.86%. The primary components of the increase are the Education Compact—an additional \$1.8 million—and several new positions, six in public safety that are wholly funded by General Fund monies. Capital

purchases and travel/training expenses have again this year been reduced substantially throughout all departments. Other noteworthy changes to the budget include:

General Government – The Revaluation staff, under the direction of the Tax Assessor, is well underway in the reappraisal process. Reappraisal of all property should be complete by late Fall of 2003 with Value Change Notices being mailed between November and January. The new tax values will be effective on January 1, 2004, with bills reflecting the new values mailed in August 2004.

Education – The joint Education Compact developed by the Board of Commissioners and the Pitt County School Board will be in its fourth year. The Compact provides for increased funding and greater accountability over a five-year period with the intention of moving the Pitt County Public School System into the top one-third of North Carolina's school systems in both funding and performance. According to records of the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, Pitt County's funding is currently within the top one-third of school systems; and when final data is available later this summer, could very well move into the top 25 percent. With additional funding this year, maintaining this fiscal posture should be assured. Even with another very difficult budget year, the Commissioners held to their commitment to increase funding for education in accordance with the Compact by an additional \$1.8 million. The \$26.3 million current expense budget reflects a 7.34% increase. Funding trends for education are shown in the chart below.

The Board annually appropriates an additional \$750,000 for pay-as-you-go Category I, II, and III capital needs and an additional 10% (\$472,702) of Article 40 Sales Tax to fund regular school capital projects. Pitt County also provides free rent, utilities, and other services for school administration, valued at over \$365,000 annually.



Human Services - In the Department of Social Services, Medicaid costs have not increased to the extent expected in the current year, thereby reducing the impact to the proposed budget and reducing the General Fund appropriation by over \$300,000 for FY 03-04. Four positions were added to the department supporting the areas of Child Support, Adult Services, and Food Stamps. The department's overall budget decreased by -1.89% over the revised budget this year.

The Health Department's budget reflects an overall decrease of -1.94%; with a \$17,961 decrease in General Fund appropriation attributed to the shift of a position from Environmental Health to the General Fund for the newly created Permitting Center. A Public Health Nurse and .50 FTE position for Smart Start have been included in the budget.

Pitt County's Mental Health program continues to be in transition as the County implements its business plan to operate as a single county department under State reform for mental health agencies versus a multi-county authority. As Pitt County divests itself of service units during the course of transitioning from direct service provision to Local Management Entity(LME), it will cause year-over-year statistical comparisons of the department to be inconsistent.

In Mental Health's operational budget, there was a net increase of 2.15 positions for FY 03-04. This includes the elimination of 4.85 and the addition of 7.0 positions. Four of the positions will be to create vacancies with new job responsibilities to fill for the LME. As these are filled, other positions will be eliminated. This is the second year Mental Health has been billed a chargeback for services from the General Fund. Mental Health will be billed \$200,000 (a \$100,000 increase) this year as a partial recovery of the over \$1.2 million of in-kind contributions that the County has been providing on an annual basis. This reflects a gradual increase in cost recovery that should continue in future years. Mental Health's total budget increased by 3.4% over the prior year revised budget. The General Fund appropriation remains the same (\$1,594,588).

Public Safety – Three new positions in the Sheriff's budget will begin mid-year when the Police Corps Scholars complete their course of study. This Federal program provides the highest level of officer candidates that are committed to work with the County for four years in repayment for their studies. In light of staffing needs at the Detention Center, the Board authorized three additional Detention Officers as well as \$100,000 in start-up funding for a space utilization/expansion study for the Detention Center to address issues with overcrowding.

After one year of operation, the Emergency Medical Service District (all of Pitt County with the exception of the City of Greenville) has made significant progress and has been successful in improving response times to emergency calls and reducing out-of-service hours. As mentioned earlier in my message, the EMS Advisory Commission has recommended an increase in the district tax from 3 cents to 4 cents. With the tax in place and changes in the transport fee

schedule (outlined under "Fees" section), the District will become less reliant on General Fund contributions—which will be below \$400,000 in the proposed budget. Also a part of the Commission's proposal is the purchase of four county-owned emergency rescue vehicles and the redistricting of several of the squads, requiring the relocation/construction of two stations. The loan and debt payments to accomplish these capital expenditures have been budgeted.

Personnel – A cost of living wage adjustment for employees in the amount of 1.6% has been budgeted. Although this amount does not reflect the January 2003 consumer price index change of 2.6%, it is consistent with the amount considered by state government and local municipal government for their employees. After a significant increase last year, premiums for employee and family health insurance coverage will remain constant this year.

With growing needs in many areas of government, department's requests for new positions totaled a net 46.20 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs). The Manager recommended a net increase of 6.20 FTEs in areas which were revenue producing or supported by outside funding. The Board of Commissioners choose to add 6 additional requested positions in the areas of Detention, Health, and Social Services, bringing the total net FTE change for FY 03-04 to an increase of 12.20 FTEs.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

An updated 5-year Capital Improvement Plan is presented as part of the annual budget process. Continuation funding is included for minimal recurring capital outlay, MIS projects, Pitt County Schools and Pitt Community College current annual projects and economic development (water, sewer, and gas) projects. We have identified the priorities that need immediate attention, including the Board of Education's \$57.7 million in Phase I construction needs and Pitt Community College's \$4.4 million local match for state bond funds. The Commissioners have scheduled to discuss at an upcoming meeting the financing options of General Obligation Bonds or Certificates of Participation to fund the projects. No debt service for these projects is currently budgeted.

Funds were included in the budget to perform a space utilization study for Social Services and Mental Health. It is believed that the restructuring of Mental Health under reform could create some capacity in its facility. This additional capacity may provide an opportunity for better utilization/expansion of existing spaces that could meet the needs of both departments.

The communications equipment for public safety continues to be a top priority with funding sources still pending legislative changes to the E911 surcharge fee. Other new projects have been forecast out into the future due to the inability to financially address them at this time unless taxes are increased or a new revenue source becomes available.

THE FUTURE

Along with the advancements, opportunities, and growth associated with being the hub of activity in eastern North Carolina, Pitt County faces the challenges associated with this growth such as increased service levels in human services, public safety, and education. Recovery from natural disasters and the general downturn in the national economy have impacted our budget for the past several years. Because Pitt County was blessed with a healthy fund balance, our Commissioners have lessened the impact to citizens by utilizing this money to fund normal activities until the economic conditions improve. We have been relying heavily on the upcoming revaluation that will be reflected in the FY 04-05 budget to replace this continued use of fund balance. Operations have been in a "hold the line" mode for several years, and it will be imperative that replacement revenue as well as the growing needs of the county be considered when setting the new ad valorem rate at revaluation.

We continue to petition our legislators to relieve counties of their share of Medicaid, however, no relief is in sight at this time. Removing the uncontrollable Medicaid burden from the counties and funding at the state level, would allow counties to focus on the services they provide.

Strong leadership, foresight, and fortitude will be required to emerge from this economic struggle and meet the needs and demands of our growing public. Together, we will roll up our sleeves and tackle these hard choices and decisions in the coming days and months.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Budget time in April marked my first anniversary with Pitt County as well as the completion of my second budget for the County! It has been a pleasure serving with and for you this past year. The staff and I have gotten to know one another well, and I appreciate their commitment to the County's business. With the budget, I want to acknowledge the assistance from all Pitt County department heads and their staffs in preparing realistic projections, and their cooperation and understanding when reductions were required. Special thanks are extended to Melonie Bryan, Deputy County Manager - Financial Services, and Loretta Lewellyn, Budget Administrator, for their dedication in developing, balancing and compiling the budget document and presentation material.

Respectfully submitted,

D. Scott Elliott
County Manager

Public Hearing

Chairman Ward opened the public hearing.

Nancy Colville – She thanked the Board for their work on this budget. She said she supported Plan B and supports the increase of the EMS tax. She said they hired someone to come here take care of the thing and the County cannot continue to supplement EMS from the general fund. She said she appreciates them not raising taxes but they may be fooling themselves. She spoke about nonprofits and the need to cut those from the budget. She said it is easy to say not to raise taxes but the county departments have cut all they can cut without hurting the services. Board members need to look at this because next year is going to be a “double whammy” with revaluation. She said it is time for this Board to make some hard decisions. She said the School budget needs to be included too in the reductions and that this Board can state what the funds they are giving them are for and before committing to another education compact, this Board needs to think long and hard and let them come up with some answers. She said a lot of people come here (to Pitt County) and have good jobs and then they leave but there are others that are here, without good jobs, and do not need to be overtaxed.

No one else signed up to speak.

Chairman Ward announced the public hearing was closed. She stated that due to the absence of Commissioner Hammond, the Board would wait to take action on this budget until Monday during the regular meeting.

Commissioners' Comments

Meeting Notes

Commissioner Royal said that he was ready for the vote Monday morning.

Commissioner Garris thanked the County staff for their work and their cost reductions. He said the staff needs to let the public know that cost reductions are being asked for so when the citizens pay more next year they will understand the reason.

Commissioner Mingos thanked the staff and said it has been a learning experience working on this budget.

Vice Chairman James thanked the Manager and the staff for their work on the budget. He stated he is not for the one cent increase in the EMS tax. He said the EMS system is not organized and not fixed for the betterment of citizens of Pitt County. He said that the County should work something out with the City of Greenville to serve the surrounding areas of Pitt County. There are certain things that the County cannot afford. He stated he was against higher taxes and that the citizens cannot afford some of the things being offered. He said he would vote for the budget.

Commissioner Bowen also thanked the staff for the proposed budget. He said that he is happy that this Board does not plan on raising taxes.

Commissioner Coulson said he would support this budget with reservations. He said its against his instincts but says there is a huge amount not addressed and would like to see staff look inwards where a lot of things need to be done. He said he does not want revaluation to have to cover all of the deficit. He said he wished the Board had accepted the Manager's recommendation which was a good recommendation. He stated that he was not physically present for the budget workshops but with the information that the staff provided him he was able to keep up.

Commissioner Owens said the public is not naive, and they see the County growing and the needs of a growing county. He said that the lack of participation here tonight shows that the public has faith in the decisions made by this Board.

Chairman Ward thanked the staff also. She said this is her 4th or 5th budget time and it gets better each time. She also thanked the commissioners for the hard work they have done on this budget. The Board has been diligent in getting the work done. She said the Board members may not all agree with each other but that they have worked hard on the budget.

Chairman Ward said that it was on the agenda to consider the budget ordinance tonight but one Board member is not present, so the Board will vote on this budget at the regular meeting on Monday.

Adjourn

Motion:

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner John Mingos.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Randy Royal.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan J. Banks, CMC
Clerk to the Board