

**Joint Meeting
of the
Pitt County Board of Commissioners and Greenville City Council
Monday, October 3, 2005
7:00 p.m.
Sheppard Memorial Library**

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners and the Greenville City Council held a workshop meeting on Monday, October 3, 2005 at 7pm. The meeting was held at Sheppard Memorial Library, Greenville, NC.

County Commissioners present:

Mark Owens, Jr., Chairman
Jimmy Garris, Vice Chairman
Glenn Bowen, Commissioner
Tom Coulson, Commissioner
David Hammond, Commissioner
Eugene James, Commissioner
Melvin McLawhorn, Commissioner
John Minges, Commissioner
Beth Ward, Commissioner

City Council members present:

Robert D. Parrott, Mayor
Ric Miller, Mayor Pro-Tem
Mildred A. Council, Council Member
Ray Craft, Council Member
Pat Dunn, Council Member
Chip Little, Council Member

Absent members:

Rose H. Glover, Council Member

Staff present:

Scott Elliott, County Manager
Susan Banks, Clerk to the Board
John Bulow, Deputy County Manager/Human Services
Florida Hardy, Director Human Resources
Melonie Bryan – Deputy County Manager/Financial Services
JoAnne Burgdorff, County Attorney
Phil Dickerson, Deputy County Manager/Public Services
Wayne Bowers, Greenville City Manager
Wanda Elks, City Clerk
Gerry Case, Human Resources Director
Rex Wilder, MIS Director
Chief Joe Simonowich, Police Chief

Steve Hawley, PIO, Greenville

Chairman Mark Owens and Mayor Don Parrott thanked everyone for attending the joint meeting.

The invocation was offered by Vice Chairman Jimmy Garris.
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Pro-Tem Ric Miller.

Motion:

Motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Ric Miller.

Motion seconded by Mayor Don Parrott.

Motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman Owens stated if there was no objection from the County Commissioners, the proposed agenda stood as approved.

Mayor Parrott spoke about the different areas of collaboration that are currently being worked on:

Tax Collections	Police/Sheriff
Drug Task Force	Recreation Departments
Greenville Utilities Company	Airport

He noted that there were twenty-two projects or programs that are being done jointly. Consequently, this saves money and helps both organizations ability to move forward.

Library Funding

Mr. Wayne Bowers, Greenville City Manager, gave a powerpoint presentation on library funding.

History of Library Funding:

- City has been the primary funding source for Sheppard Memorial Library
- County first provided funding in 1935
- Current funding arrangement has been in place since late 1960's

Overview of Current Library Funding:

- City pays 2/3 of local general funding
- County pays 1/3 of local general funding

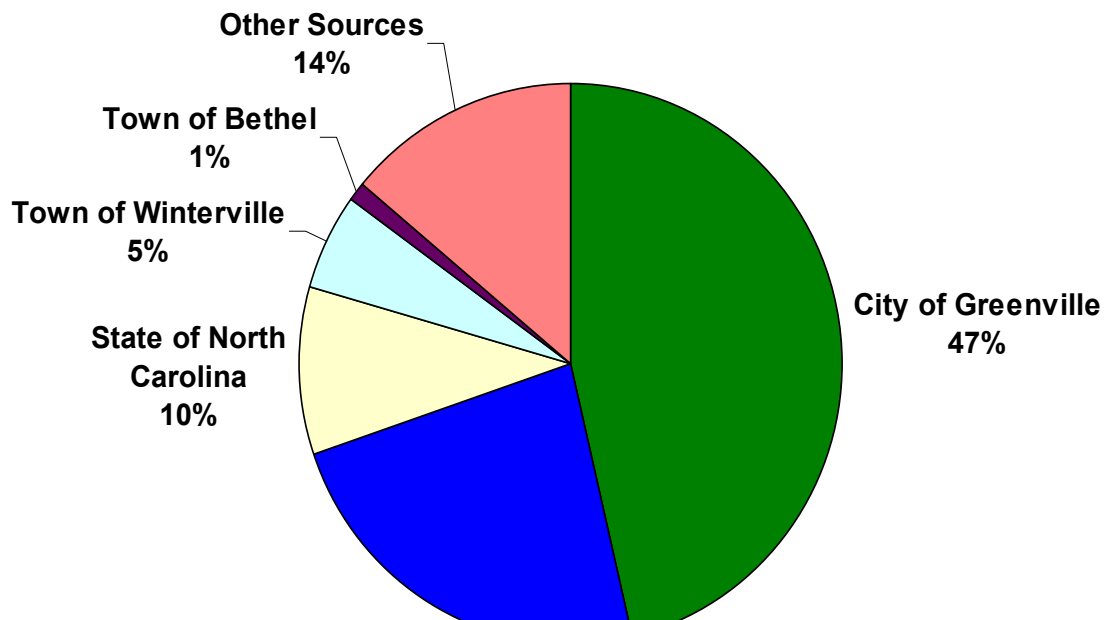
City and County Contributions for 2005-2006:

City - \$914,415

County - \$457,207

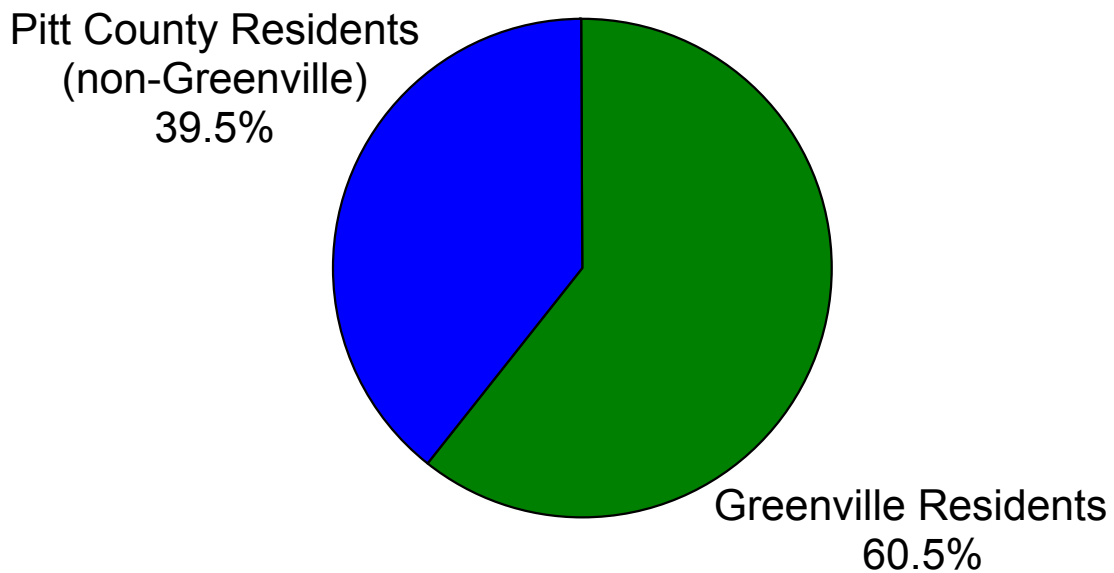
City of Greenville	\$ 914,415
Pitt County	457,207
State of North Carolina	192,333
Town of Winterville	107,816
Town of Bethel	22,053
Other Sources	274,324
Total	\$ 1,968,148

City of Greenville	47 %
Pitt County	23 %
State of North Carolina	10 %
Town of Winterville	5 %
Town of Bethel	1 %
Other Sources	14 %



Winterville	\$ 4,000*
Bethel	\$ 2,000*

Greenville Residents	25,222	60.5%
Pitt County Residents (Non-Greenville)	16,438	39.5%
Total registered borrowers	41,660	



Funding based on county formula	\$ 192,333
Funding based on municipal formula	\$ 55,044
Extra state aid based on County	\$ 137,289
Library Designation	

Mr. Bowers said that the Farmville library and other libraries in the county receive funds but not through this library. There are benefits to having a countywide library system. Mr. Willie Nelms, Sheppard Memorial Library Director said that state funding has increased over the last few years. He said that the State Legislature increased funding thanks to Representative Marian McLawhorn who submitted the request.

Mayor Parrott asked if the Farmville library would benefit by being in the system. Mr. Nelms said the small libraries cannot afford to pay professional librarians because they do not get enough funding from the state. The Farmville library receives \$3800 from the state. There is a formula based on the economies of scale. He said there is a trend towards becoming a countywide library system. As population increases would not get more than county wide allotment more across to libraries with opening Winterville and Bethel.

Mr. Bowers said that they do access grant funds as well as federal funds, state library system applies those funds. He spoke of the opening of the Bethel and Winterville libraries. The Department of Cultural Resources says they had to be part of the system to receive additional funds. Mr. Nelms said the benefit of being one system is shared resources, access to the book collection and the state developed system.

Mayor Don Parrott asked if the Farmville library was part of the county system would it change their funding and if there would be more funding. Mr. Nelms said they receive a \$35,000 block grant and this would not change Sheppard Library's total funding.

Mr. Elliott stated that this had been looked into and there would be no additional funding if Farmville came under Sheppard Library. Commissioner Bowen asked where the county and city can both save money and he would be in favor of that. Mayor Parrott said they need to consider changing the funding formula. Mr. Nelms said they are making advances and there is a major need to look into the future and do planning for the libraries. They really need to consider where the population growth is within the county. Commissioner James said they need to encourage students to use libraries in the summer. Mayor Parrott said the city paid for the additions to Carver Library.

Commissioner Bowen asked about the bookmobile. Mr. Nelms stated that bookmobile was bought for \$80,000 and they had a \$50,000 grant. Mayor Parrott suggested that staff could get together and evaluate this situation.

Pitt County EMS Services Update

County Manager Scott Elliott reported on changes made over the last 5-10 years in the county’s EMS system. The county now has ten (10) squads outside of the city that are all funded thru the EMS tax. The Special EMS Study Committee has been charged with looking at funding alternatives considering such possibilities as Privatization county takeover, hospital takeover and different combinations of options. They have surveyed all county EMS squads in the State. This will be presented to the committee at a future meeting. They will consider options such as privatizing or consolidating squads. He asked if the county decided to privatize the service would the city be interested in providing the services. Council Member Pat Dunn said the City would be more complicated because they would have to consider fire service also.

Lobbying Program

City Manager Bowers reported that the first agreement with The Ferguson Group and their legal staff in Washington D.C. was in November 2003 and was for one year. He said they have continued contracting with the Ferguson Group because they are doing different projects. The Ferguson Group has improved their communications with federal legislators and has more than paid for itself. The agreement provisions include the City having a Washington Representative. They review and help provide the city with information on the following:

- Annual Federal Agenda
- eCivis – grant locators service and helps monitor the process
- Monitor federal funding opportunities
- Other opportunities
- Assists with grant approval
- Provides a resource on fee issues
- Arranges meetings with federal officials
- Submits periodic reports
- Provides monthly reports

The Ferguson Group is paid \$7,000 per month plus up to \$6,000 per year for expenses. The City has received \$13,770,704 in earmarks in the past three years as follows:

Police wireless technology grant	\$200,000
Green Mill Run stream restoration study	\$200,000
West Greenville revitalization project	\$100,000
Tar River Greenway	\$1,500,000
Completion of the Green Mill Run stream restoration study	\$60,000
Tenth Street Connector	\$7,131,200

Greenways expansion project	\$1,600,000
Expansion buses and intermodal center	\$2,979,504

Counties the Ferguson Group assists in North Carolina include Forsyth, Wake, Alleghany, Cumberland, Washington, and Caldwell. It was suggested that the County and City could share the cost. The annual cost may be more than \$90,000 for the two entities together.

School Board Chairman Michael Dixon arrived and asked to be allowed to interrupt the meeting and introduce the new Superintendent of Pitt County Schools, Dr. Beverly Reep. Ms. Reep expressed how excited she is about the opportunity of coming to Greenville and Pitt County.

Commissioner Minges asked about the contract set pricing for The Ferguson Group. City Manager Bowers said the price has been the same each year. Commissioner Minges encouraged moving forward on the joint effort for the lobbyist.

Council Member Ray Craft informed the group that a lot of calls have been made and time spent in order to obtain the earmarks that have been received.

Commissioner Minges asked if Al Delia with East Carolina University is still working as a lobbyist in Washington, DC, and City Manager Bowers replied that he is. The Ferguson Group helped the City receive earmarked funds. Council Member Mildred Council learned about the Ferguson group at a League of Municipalities meeting.

Council Member Council said the City believes in it and hopes the County will join with the City in utilizing the Ferguson Group.

Commissioner Bowen said he had heard of the Ferguson Group at the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners State Conference. There was discussion about other companies that perform the same services.

City Manager Bowers stated that he discussed the Ferguson Group because that was the company that the City uses for this service.

Commissioner James said the City and County need to work together on sewer infrastructure. There is \$20 million available from grants or other funds, and the community needs to get those funds for use on sewer for school facilities. The County tried to take over the water system some 20 years ago.

There was discussion about earmarks versus grants.

Commissioner Hammond asked about airport funding and how funding is always available for airports. He suggested these funds may also be utilized for other projects.

Commissioner Bowen suggested the Board should invite the Ferguson Group to meet with the Board of County Commissioners.

City Manager Bowers said they are coming down and could do a presentation for the County Commissioners.

Sales Tax Report

Mr. Elliott reported on the sales tax legislation initiative for school construction. He reported that the Board of County Commissioners pursued a 1% sales tax for the authority to go from 7 to 8 cents sales tax locally. The legislation is House Bill 1050 and was passed by the study committee and the House of Representatives. The county has been promised that this bill will be taken up in May 2006 by the Senate. Mr. Elliott reported that when the county submitted this legislation and it was approved by the committee, about 60-64 counties asked to be added to the local bill. The bill does require a referendum be held in the county to determine community support prior to the sales tax being increased. Mr. Elliott reported that before the bill actually got passed in the House, it was changed by reducing the sales tax to ½ from 1 percent. This bill also states that these funds are solely dedicated for brick and mortar for schools. There are needs of over \$300 million in school construction including Pitt County Schools and Pitt Community College.

Chairman Owens thanked the Mayor and Council for their cooperation on the sales tax issue. Mr. Elliott said there is a primary in May and a special election can be held in the summer or next November for the sales tax referendum. Commissioner Ward said the board had to agree to add the referendum to the legislation in order to get it passed.

Mr. Elliott thanked everyone for their support and encouraged everyone to talk to the House and Senate Members.

Public Transit Service

Mr. Tom Tysinger reported on the 2003 Study Report on Regionalization of Transportation Service. The study included the City, County, East Carolina University, and NC Department of Transportation. This study suggested an open transit system with Pitt Area Transit System. He said it would break the PATS and GREAT systems. They looked at a Rural Transit Program (RTP). The GREAT Bus System and PATS have worked together to provide transit service. The people show a pass to get on the buses. He stated they could be doing better and need to take advantage of federal funds. He stated the city, county and other agencies need to continue communications on transportation. They discussed a merger with PATS but local funds must be committed to operate this system.

Staff considered the following:

- information on other transit system
- state funding

-expand public transportation to surrounding counties

Staff needs to look as specifics of a possible merger on transportation.

Employee Benefit Program

Ms. Gerry Case gave an overview of the city health insurance program. She said that they have a fully-funded program and pay premiums for all employees. Since 1997, the City has covered all employees from the city, airport, Convention and Visitors Authority, Greenville Utilities and the Library. This covers about 1200-1300 employees with 2800 members with families included. The new signed agreement will have a 5% rate increase on January 1. There was some interest in seeing if it could be beneficial for the city and county to consider combining programs for reduced costs.

Ms. Case spoke of the funding of the program and that the city hired TPA. Mr. Elliott said the county has a self-insured program that is administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS). The county is part of an insurance pool with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) which represents the interests of those participating counties out of the 100. Pitt County just received an award of \$10,000 for holding down its costs for the last three years. The county is very satisfied with its current plan. To change the county's insurance, the county would have to come out of the Association's pool because the city could not join the NCACC pool. This would not be a savings for the county.

Mr. John Bulow said the county has been part of a self-funded program for 22 years with the NCACC and with BCBS. BCBS will not be a carrier of this program if the city were added to the county's policy. The boards instructed the managers to review costs and report back to the boards.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Banks, CMC
Clerk to the Board