

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN RECONVENED ITS REGULAR SESSION OF MAY 21, 2001 ON MAY 29, 2001 IN THE COMMISSIONERS' CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA AT 6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman C.W. "Pete" Bland
Vice Chairman Johnnie Sampson, Jr.
Commissioner Lee K. Allen
Commissioner Donald Phillips
Commissioner J. Harold Talton
Commissioner Albert H. Toon
Commissioner Charles F. Tyson, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Harold Blizzard, County Manager
George B. Sawyer, Assistant County Manager
Richard F. Hemphill, County Finance Officer
Ray H. Moser, Human Resources Director
Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board

SET PUBLIC HEARING FOR CDBG

The Board was requested to set a public hearing for 9:30 a.m. on June 18, 2001, concerning an application for CDBG funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act. Commissioner Sampson moved to set the public hearing, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Allen and unanimously carried.

RED CROSS REQUEST

County Manager, Harold Blizzard, presented a request from the Coastal Carolina Chapter of American Red Cross for a \$10,000 appropriation in the current budget. He informed the Board that the agency had not made a request for the upcoming budget year, and there had been no appropriation made by the County in the current fiscal year. Commissioner Tyson requested staff to find out what neighboring counties have given to the Red Cross.

DISCUSSION OF FUND BALANCE

Craven County Finance Officer, Rick Hemphill, announced that the current fund balance is \$12,336,000, or approximately 18% ; however, there is still a need to use fund balance to close the current year. An additional amount of \$500,000 for additional projected expenses, as well as \$350,000 for health claims, and \$750,000 for the current year's Medicaid payments above what was originally projected will be needed. He stated that the remainder in fund balance after these allocations would be \$10,700,000.00, which is the equivalent of 16%. He advised the Board that the recommended budget, which was presented by the County Manager on May 21st, included \$850,000 budgeted from fund balance to balance the budget, and also reflected a \$.03 increase in the ad valorem tax rate, with no appropriations to non-profit organizations. He stated this allocation would further diminish the fund balance to \$9,950,000, the equivalent of 15%.

DISCUSSION OF 2001-2002 CRAVEN COUNTY BUDGET

Commissioner Tyson inquired about possible additional reductions in expense line items to avoid a \$.03 increase in the ad valorem tax rate. Items cited by Commissioner Tyson for closer scrutiny were the employee 401k plan, the County Commissioners monthly travel stipend, and the County Commissioner's discretionary travel. Commissioner Phillips agreed, and also proposed reconsideration of the employee merit pool, travel and training, and employee recognition. Commissioner Sampson requested that the Board consider approving a position requested in the Department of Social Services for a Social Worker I in the schools, which will be fully funded by the Federal Government. Commissioners Allen, Talton, and Sampson requested that the Vector Control program

be reconsidered for funding. There was also discussion of the extreme need among some of the agencies that requested special appropriations. County Manager, Harold Blizzard, discussed with the Board each departmental budget with the following highlights:

- Personnel Administration: He advised the Board that the Safety Position, which was approved, was not funded in the proposed budget; however, he asked that the position not be eliminated so that it could be considered for funding at a later point.
- Environmental Lab: Commissioner Allen was requested, and agreed to find out from the Health Director what strategies could be employed to close the gap between revenue and salary expense in this area.
- Vector Control: The majority of the Board reached consensus to consider funding the program, but to cut back part time help to the prior year's level, approximately \$80,000 or 1,875 hours.
- Department of Social Services: It was the consensus among the majority of the Board to consider funding the Social Worker I position for the schools as long as funding from the Federal Government exists; however, the program would be eliminated when the funding ceases.

At 9:55 p.m. Commissioner Talton moved to recess until 5:30 p.m. on May 30, 2001, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously carried.

Chairman C.W. "Pete" Bland
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan
Clerk to the Board