

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN RECONVENED ITS REGULAR SESSION OF JUNE 17, 2002 ON JUNE 18, 2002 IN THE COMMISSIONERS' ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA, FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSIDERING THE PROPOSED FY 2002-2003 BUDGET. THE MEETING CONVENED AT 3:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman C.W. "Pete" Bland
Vice-Chairman Johnnie Sampson, Jr.
Commissioner Lee Kyle 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
Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board
James R. Sugg, County Attorney

Following an invocation by Commissioner Sampson, the Board engaged in discussion concerning the proposed FY 2002-2003 Craven County Budget.

Health Department Proposed Fee Changes

Craven County Finance Officer, Rick Hemphill, discussed with the Board changes in fees that were incorporated in the total revenue of the proposed budget which was presented to the Board. Two (2) fee changes in the Health Department, Environmental Health Section, generated extensive discussion. The soil evaluation fee and the flow increase usage fee both reflected an increase from \$100 to \$175. The consensus of the Board was that both fee increases were too drastic for the Board to consider without adequate justification. Commissioner Tyson recommended that the Board not consider approving any of the increases without the Health Director's presence to explain them. The Health Director and the Environmental Health Section Head were contacted and asked to join the meeting.

Recreation Department Request

Mr. Hemphill continued with discussion of fee changes in the following Recreation Department revenue line items: Day Camp (\$60-\$65), History Camp (\$40-\$45), and the Over 30 Basketball League (\$1.00/night). In addition, he requested the Board's approval of a loan transferring \$150,000 from the general fund to the park fund. This amount is expected in reimbursement funds from the State; however, he explained that the reimbursement funds are not expected before June 30, 2002.

A transfer of \$500,000 from the water fund to the Twp 6 project was also requested because reimbursement funds are not expected prior to June 30, 2002. Commissioner Tyson moved to advance both loans, one in the amount of \$150,000 from the general fund to the park fund and another for \$500,000 from the water fund to the Twp 6 project, subject to reimbursement. Commissioner Talton seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Proposed Fire Department Budgets

The Board was informed in detail of the rationale for establishing the proposed Fire Department budgets.

Health Department Proposed Fee Changes – Cont.

Upon arrival of Health Director, Wanda Sandelé, and Environmental Health Section Head, Ray Silverthorne, discussion returned to the proposed changes in Health Department fees. Ms. Sandelé explained that two current steps, which involve an improvement permit in the amount of \$100 and a construction authorization in the amount of \$50 have been combined into one step in the soil evaluation fee. Therefore, the proposed fee increase only reflects a \$25 increase over the entire operation. This applies to the soil evaluation, as well as the flow increase usage fee. There was discussion about the fairness of charging one fee in the event that the first permit is denied. Commissioner Toon moved to table all of the requested changes in Health Department fees until questions can be resolved, seconded by Commissioner Sampson. During discussion, the Board considered the approval of all other fees, with the exception of the soil evaluation fee and the flow increase usage fee. It was recommended that the other fees be approved in the budget, with these two (2) fees being withheld with the rationale that these two (2) fees could be changed during the course of the budget year with proper justification. The original motion to table all fee changes failed, there being seven (7) “Nays”.

Rescue Squad’s Budget Recommendations

Mr. Hemphill continued with a review of the budget recommendations for Rescue Squads. There was discussion of Bridgeton Rescue Squad’s request for funding a paramedic position in the amount of \$30,000, which was presented to the Board on June 17th. Mr. Hemphill advised the Board that the recommended appropriation to Bridgeton is only \$21,000 less than originally requested; however, the original budget request included \$55,000 to set aside for capital expenditures. He suggested that the Squad would have the option to shift expenditures in order to fund the desired paramedic position.

Adjustments to Proposed Budget

Mr. Hemphill highlighted adjustments that have been made to the budget since it was initially presented. He explained changes that resulted in additional fund balance allocation in the amount of \$31,051.

Non-Profit Organizations

Appropriations to non-profit organizations were introduced for discussion. The consensus among Commissioners was that the non-profits merit some consideration; however, the budget, based on currently known resources, cannot support appropriations to the agencies. Commissioner Tyson expressed opposition to the entire budget shortfall being passed on to taxpayers in the form of an increased tax bill. The consensus among Commissioners was that allocations to non-profit agencies and a tax rate adjustment should be considered when and if legislation is passed allowing the County to collect an additional one half cent sales tax, and allowing a change to the tax rate during the year.

Commissioner Toon reminded the Board of his request of the current budget for funds to pave the parking lot at Harlowe Community Center. He stated that he had applied for and received a grant for this project, which would allow him to withdraw his request to the County; however, the project cost is \$35,000 and the grant received is for \$26,500, leaving a shortfall of \$8,500. He asked that the Board consider funding this additional amount.

Chairman Bland stated the opinion that the budget proposed is as lean as possible and expressed his intention to support it as presented. Commissioner Sampson moved to instruct staff to prepare the budget ordinance based upon the proposed budget, seconded

by Commissioner Talton and carried with five (5) “Ayes”, there being two (2) “Nays” from Commissioners Phillips and Tyson.

At 5:35 p.m. the Board was declared in recess to reconvene at 3:00 p.m. on June 25th to consider the budget ordinance for adoption.

Chairman C.W. “Pete” Bland
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk