

**THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN
RECONVENED ITS RECESSED SESSION OF MAY 16, 2005 ON MAY 19, 2005
AT 9:10 A.M. IN THE COMMISSIONERS ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH
CAROLINA. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO CONDUCT A
BUDGET WORK SESSION.**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman George N. Brown, Jr.
Vice Chairman Perry L. Morris
Commissioner Lee Kyle Allen
Commissioner Bill Harper
Commissioner Johnnie Sampson, Jr.
Commissioner M. Renée Sisk
Commissioner Leon C. Staton

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

Following an invocation by Commissioner Sampson, the Board began discussions of the proposed FY 2005-2006 Craven County Budget.

Commissioner Allen made recommendations on the budget format for next year and requested that unnecessary fields in the document be deleted in the future. Finance Officer, Rick Hemphill, presented comparisons with comparable group counties in the population range of 50,000-99,999. He advised the Board that Craven County's Fund Balance, at 16%, has declined since its peak of 22.75% in 1998 and should be expected to decline further by the end of the current fiscal year. He further advised the Board that one cent on the ad valorem tax rate in Craven County represents approximately \$575,000. Highlights of the recommended budget were discussed. It was noted that the proposed budget does not include any appropriation of fund balance, but included three percent (3%) cost of living adjustment for employees and four percent (4%) increase in insurance. It was noted that aside from increases in Medicaid and the Board of Education budget, normal growth is reflected. Additional strains are being placed on the budget by the State's requirements for court facilities upgrades (rewiring of the courthouse for new computers) and withdrawal of \$18 a day for prisoners serving for child support violations. The Board reached consensus to proceed through the budget by departments. Commissioner Allen moved to fix a time to adjourn; however, the motion died for lack of a second. The discussion commenced with the Commissioners line item and proceeded through the Elections Department, with the following highlights. There was consensus among the Board to defer discussion of special appropriations. In the Information Technology Department there was an explanation that one position would be reclassified downward due to a retirement, from a grade 73 to a grade 68. The web site design and maintenance, as a result, will be contracted out. In the non-departmental line item, the Board was advised that the budget includes costs for a comprehensive personnel study which is generally done every five (5) years. In Elections, the Board was advised that the requested budget included a second primary; however, these costs were excluded and will be added back when and if it is determined that a second primary will be necessary.

At 10:30 a.m. the Board recessed and reconvened at 10:45 a.m.

The discussion continued with the Assessor/Appraisal Department and proceeded through the Animal Control Department with the following highlights:

The Assessor's budget request included the addition of an appraiser position in preparation for the County's next revaluation. Fifty one thousand (51,000) parcels are currently being managed with approximately 1,000 parcels being added each year. Under the budget for Public Buildings it was noted that the County will be conducting auctions

on line in the future to the extent possible. In the Sheriff's Department it was noted that a request for six (6) investigator positions was not being recommended and the vehicle request was reduced in the proposed budget by the number of new positions that were not recommended.

At 12:00 p.m. the Board recessed and reconvened at 12:45 p.m. beginning with the Rescue Squads and continuing through Social Services with the following highlights:

The requested backpack sprayer in the Vector Control Department was deferred for future consideration. It was noted that the Board would commence with the Recreation Department at the next review. The Board was then presented requests for support of or opposition to several bills from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. As a result, the staff was directed to prepare a resolution supporting House Bill 1402, and resolutions opposing House Bill 1638 and House Bill 1504.

Commissioner Sisk moved to recess until 9:00 a.m. on June 1st, seconded by Commissioner Harper and unanimously carried.

Chairman George N. Brown, Jr.
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan
Clerk to the Board