

**THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN
RECONVENED ITS REGULAR SESSION OF JUNE 2, 2008 ON JUNE 4, 2008 AT
9:00 A.M. IN THE COMMISSIONERS' ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH
CAROLINA. THE PURPOSE OF THIS RECONVENED MEETING WAS TO
CONDUCT A BUDGET WORK SESSION.**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Jason R. Jones
Vice Chairman Theron McCabe
Commissioner Lee Kyle Allen
Commissioner Perry L. Morris
Commissioner Johnnie Sampson, Jr.
Commissioner M. Renée Sisk
Commissioner Steve Tyson

STAFF PRESENT:

Harold Blizzard, County Manager
Ray H. Moser, Assistant County Manager
Richard F. Hemphill, County Finance Officer
Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board

Chairman Jones reminded the Board that the purpose of the joint meeting with the Craven Pamlico Carteret Regional Library Board scheduled at 10:30 a.m. was to conduct dialogue with the library representatives concerning existing issues, as opposed to discussing the proposed FY 08-09 budget issues.

County Manager, Harold Blizzard, shared a memo with the Board containing responses from Sandy Chamberlin regarding the NCACC 2008 Conference and concerning Legislative Day. Mr. Blizzard recapped issues and concerns that were addressed in correspondence with the Regional Library Director, as follows:

- Use of New Bern/Craven County appropriations to fund Pamlico Library and regional expenses such as facility and information technology personnel without contributions by other counties. [Refer to point of clarification in 10/06/08 minutes] *G.M.B 11/19/08*
- Specifics of agreement between Craven County and the Craven Pamlico Carteret Regional Library, and the recommendation that it be renegotiated.
- Notice requirement for withdrawing from the regional library system
- Accountability for funds appropriated being allocated to line items represented in budget requests.

Commissioner Allen inquired what the benefits [are] *G.M.B 9/26/08* of Craven County's membership in the regional library. The Board reached consensus to set a time limit for the meeting of 1 to 1 ¼ hours.

FY 2008-2009 Budget Review

The Board began review of the budget with consideration of special appropriations. Consensus was reached on appropriations to place in the budget for State of the Child Conference, Promise Place, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Merci Clinic, Religious Community Services, Coastal Carolina Red Cross, Harlowe Community Center, Havelock Senior Center, Neuse River Development Corporation, Vanceboro Christian Help Center, Forestry Service, Craven Arts Council and Gallery, River Bend park and North Carolina Symphony. Commissioner Tyson indicated that he would appreciate seeing the paperwork on the budget requests from the non-profit agencies applying for special appropriations. He cautioned the Board that in the coming year he would not vote on any special appropriations unless presented to the Board as an official written request that the Board can review before budget work sessions.

At 10:07 a.m. the Board was declared in recess and reconvened at 10:15 a.m. There was discussion of the Havelock Parks and Recreation funding relative to ballfield lights, and

consensus that clarity was lacking as to where the budget request for the ten year agreement between the City of Havelock and Craven County should be placed in the budget; either as special appropriations or as a recreation department line item. The Board reached consensus that next year it would be appropriate to regard the procedure more closely.

Commissioner Morris introduced discussion concerning the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust offer for acquisition of Broad Creek Road property. The Board reached consensus to provide for the administrative fee for this acquisition in the pending budget.

At 10:25 a.m. the Board was declared in recess and reconvened at 10:30 a.m. with members of the Craven Pamlico Carteret Regional Library Board, as follows: George Brinson, Dorothy Bryan, Alecia Coates [Alice Copes] *GMB 9/26/08*, Esther Hardin, Mary Belle [Marybelle] *GMB 9/26/08* Hollowell, Paxton Holtz [Paxon Holz] *GMB 9/26/08*, Tricia Reitz, Brenda Rose; in addition, Regional Library Director, Jackie Beach, was in attendance. The County Manager was asked to give background on his communication with the regional librarian, beginning in January 2007. He stated that at that time he had requested financial and personnel information from Ms. Beach at the direction of the Board of Commissioners. He reported that on February 8, 2007 a letter was received from her which did not answer all of the questions. As a result, there were several additional exchanges of correspondence in an attempt to have all the questions answered. The Chair of the Regional Library Board, Dorothy Bryan, reported that the Library Board had met in a special called session as a result of the County's last correspondence and had discussed the funding for Pamlico County, funding of the New Bern/Craven County Library, terms of withdrawal from the Regional Library and the recommendation that the agreement with the County be renegotiated. Vice Chair of the Regional Library Board, George Brinson, stressed that the board members of the library are volunteers, and as such, don't know all of the answers; however, he indicated that to preserve the regional structure the counties participating must be contiguous counties and that Craven County's withdrawal from the regional system would make it impossible for Pamlico and Carteret Counties to continue in this structure. He stated that it is not likely that the Pamlico County Board of Commissioners would make an appropriation to support a librarian. Commissioner Sisk inquired what Pamlico County had appropriated in the current year and was advised that Pamlico County had appropriated \$129,000, which included all personnel except the public librarian. The personnel included two (2) full-time library assistants and some part-time personnel, totaling \$69,126. Regional Librarian, Jackie Beach, stated that the Pamlico County Librarian is paid by State Aid to Public Libraries funds, not Craven County funds. She stated that those funds also pay for technical services staff, secretary, bookkeeper, technical coordinator and that New Bern/Craven County funds only cover two (2) positions in technical services, which are clerical positions. She stated that the procedures that are currently being followed were in place when she came into the position and that previous regional directors also served as directors of the New Bern/Craven County Library. She further stated that the secretary to the regional system performs $\frac{3}{4}$ of her work for the New Bern/Craven County Library and therefore some of the overlapping that may occur in allocation of staff is balanced. She suggested that one possible solution would be to transfer all positions into the budgets that reflect where the work is being done and to redraw the agreement with the County for greater clarity.

Discussion ensued concerning the staffing and hours of the Havelock Library. The decision to increase the hours of a part-time employee in order to qualify for full-time benefits was questioned. Ms. Beach stated that the Havelock Library Board was party to the decision [to] *GMB 9/26/08* increase a twenty eight hour employee to thirty hours, with benefits, while decreasing the hours of operation of the library. She stated that it was done to retain the staff person. There was discussion concerning the mechanics of renegotiating the regional agreement, which Ms. Beach indicated would require bringing the other local library boards into the process. She stated that the regional library board is the only board of record and with standing in the state structure. She suggested that renegotiation or reorganization may be smoother if the local boards are made into advisory boards, as opposed to policy boards.

Commissioner Allen addressed what he perceived as an inequitable distribution of funds among the four Craven County libraries based on population proportions. Ms. Beach stated that no cash funds from the state are now going into the individual local libraries. All of the contributions are in-kind. Commissioner Sisk inquired what Carteret County's contribution is to the regional system. Ms. Beach responded that Carteret County only gets state appropriated funds. [Refer to point of clarification in 10/06/08 minutes] *GMB 11/19/08*

Finance Officer, Rick Hemphill, stated that the audit reflects all funds of the Craven Pamlico Carteret Regional Board and that the Craven Pamlico Carteret Regional Library Board is responsible for all of these funds. The Chairman suggested that the County Attorney's opinion should be sought to clarify duties and responsibilities for all Craven Pamlico Carteret Library Board members. Mr. Hemphill recommended some adjustments on audit documentation that may enhance clarity in tracking the finances. There was consensus to proceed to work on an agreement that would clarify the duties and responsibilities. Chairman Jones expressed concern about the regional library's IT Department and stated that he felt there is too much down time with the Cove City Library computers.

At 11:55 a.m. the Library Board members retired and the meeting was recessed. The Board reconvened at 12:45 p.m. and proceeded with its discussion of the proposed budget beginning with the libraries and concluding with discussion about the fire departments. The Chairman indicated a desire to address questions and issues that were presented by Havelock Mayor, Jimmy Sanders, at the budget public hearing on June 2nd, in a written response, specifically comments that were made concerning the library funding in Havelock, the school resource officer contract and prior requests for joint meetings between the two boards.

At 2:10 p.m. the Board was declared in recess and reconvened at 2:20 p.m. At that time the Board entertained a request by Airport Director, Tom Braaten, for acceptance of an Airport Improvement Grant in the amount of \$893,171. Commissioner Allen moved to authorize execution of the grant agreement, seconded by Commissioner Sampson and unanimously carried.

The Board considered increases for the Commissioners' stipends, with Commissioners Morris and Jones expressing opposition. The consensus was to leave the proposed amount as budgeted, but to address the matter of Commissioner stipends, separately, on an annual basis, as opposed to automatically applying the cost of living adjustment percentage that is applied to employees.

At 3:10 p.m. Commissioner Sampson moved to go into closed session, seconded by Commissioner McCabe. The Board returned to regular reconvened session at 3:36 p.m. following a motion by Commissioner Sampson, seconded by Commissioner McCabe. There was no action to report. It was announced that another public hearing on the budget would be held at the June 16 regular session.

At 3:40 p.m. Commissioner Sisk moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried.

Chairman Jason R. Jones
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan
Clerk to the Board