

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Monday, May 30, 2008

9:00 A.M. Budget Worksession

MINUTES

Place: Commissioners' Room, second floor, Durham County Government Administrative Complex, 200 E. Main Street, Durham, NC

Present: Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow, Vice-Chairman Michael D. Page, and Commissioners Lewis A. Cheek, Philip R. Cousin Jr. and Becky M. Heron

Absent: None

Presider: Chairman Reckhow

Sheriff

Sheriff Worth Hill and Teresa McKinney, Division Manager of Planning and Development, Sheriff's Office, presented the budget request for Fiscal Year 2008-09.

Sheriff Hill informed the Board about the vacant positions in the detention facility.

Commissioner Heron asked the following questions:

- Can lapsed salaries be used to cover overtime?
- What is the City's responsibility as it relates to serving warrants?
- How could the Sheriff's office assist the County Commissioners with fuel?

In response to Commissioner Cheek's question, Sheriff Hill stated that the funding amount set aside for the four requested positions is \$273,666.

Sheriff Hill stated that research has been done to determine the most cost effective and efficient vehicle law enforcement used by Durham County Law Enforcement. Considerations included the following:

- Fuel Costs
- Maintenance & Equipment Costs
- Officer Safety relating to steering
- Handling and Durability of the Vehicle
- Space for Officers, prisoners, essential equipment, and full size spare tire
- Towing capacity
- Availability of police package

Directives

1. Review the requested amount for the four positions; look at budgeting the \$500,000.
2. Send recommendations to the Board regarding the quantity of warrants.
3. Consider a vehicle that has a GPS device that would allow for more efficient routes; consider fuel efficiency.
4. County Manager to continue working with the Sheriff's office regarding warrants.

Volunteer Fire Departments

Jeff Batten, Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Director, made the following comments:

“Good morning, Madame Chair, members of the Board and County Manager Mike Ruffin. I will be presenting an overview of the requested tax rate and associated budgets for the County fire departments. With us this morning are the fire chiefs from the various County fire departments, should you require additional details or information concerning their particular budget.

Bahama Fire Department

Bahama has requested their tax rate be set at .06. The revenue neutral rate is .0550. This will provide tax revenue of \$688,428.

Bethesda Fire Department

Bethesda has requested their tax rate be set at .090. The revenue neutral rate is .0820. This will provide tax revenue of \$1,530,531.

Lebanon Fire Department

Lebanon has requested their tax rate be set at .10. The revenue neutral rate is .0900. This will provide tax revenue of \$1,160,395.

Parkwood Fire Department

Parkwood has requested their tax rate be set at .1100. The revenue neutral rate is .0920. This will provide tax revenue of \$1,353,889.

Redwood Fire Department

Redwood has requested their tax rate be set at .1075. The revenue neutral rate is .0990. This will provide tax revenue of \$739,754.

Eno and New Hope Fire Departments

These Orange County Departments serve areas of Durham County that border Orange County. The tax rates for these districts are set by Orange County. The current rate for Eno Fire Department is .0570 and for New Hope Fire Department is .0675.

Our County fire departments provide a professional level of service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are out there providing service to the citizens of Durham County when most others are spending time with their families. The cost of providing a high level of professional service

is not costly when you think about what kind of service you are receiving. The services they are providing may save your personnel property or even your life.

The largest expense in these budget requests for the most part are salaries for staff. You have to have staff at the station to provide a timely response. You also need to have staff at the station ready to meet the standards of the insurance rating system. With a lower rating, homeowners may see a reduction in their homeowner's insurance. Another benefit of having career personnel in the departments have led to faster response times for both the fire departments and EMS.

While we all are thankful for the people that continue to volunteer to serve, the fact of the matter is we don't have the numbers willing to serve as before. Another issue that directly affects the budget increase is the seemingly never-ending rise in fuel cost. With diesel fuel at nearly \$4.50 a gallon (up well over a dollar a gallon from last year, this has caused the departments to cancel all non-essential use of apparatus. We have to run the emergency apparatus to provide the emergency service for the citizens, so that cost will increase as the call volume continues to increase.

I ask that you support the recommend budget request for each department.

I would like to thank the County Manager's Office, in particular, our Deputy County Manger, Ms. Carolyn Titus, for their support of our fire districts. Ms. Titus makes and takes time to meet with the individual departments. She truly supports our efforts for providing fire and rescue service throughout Durham County.

I would also like to thank the Board of County Commissioners for its support of the County fire departments during the year. Without your support, we could not do what we do. Again, thank you, and should you have any questions, we will try to answer them."

Mr. Batten and staff responded to questions asked by the Board.

Directives

1. Provide to the Board a breakdown of households and highways.
2. Persuade the City to participate with funding.
3. Consider asking the State about providing assistance as it relates to accidents on the interstate.

Criminal Justice Resource Center (CJRC)

Gudrun Parmer, Director, CJRC, highlighted the following regarding the Criminal Justice Resource Center:

- Employment
- Performance Measures
- STARR Program

Directives

1. Put together a history of state funding from the start of the Criminal Justice Resource Center.
2. Gudrun Parmer to attend RBA committee meeting regarding economic development; consider being appointed to the Workforce Development Board.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Reckhow adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela M. McIver
Staff Specialist
Clerk to the Board's office