

MINUTES
LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2003

The Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners and the Planning Board met for a budget work session on June 3, 2003 at the Citizens Center, Commissioner's Room, 115 West Main Street, Lincolnton, North Carolina at 6:30 PM. The meeting was recessed from the June 2, 2003 meeting.

Commissioners Present:

Jerry W. Cochrane, Chairman
Larry S. Craig, Vice Chair
Thomas R. Anderson, PE
Carrol Mitchem
Buddy Funderburk

Others Present:

Stan B. Kiser, County Manager
Amy S. Long, Clerk to the Board
Leon Harmon, Finance Director

Call to Order: Chairman Cochrane called the June 3, 2003 budget work session to order.

Social Services: Susan McCracken, Lynn Scruggs, and Ruth Miller reviewed the Social Services budget with the Board.

Health Department: Maggie Dollar and Joanie Belk reviewed the Health Department budget with the Board. This is only a maintenance budget, there are no additions.

Tax Department: Madge Huffman reviewed the Tax Department budget. They are requesting 1 new full time position for the debt setoff and bankruptcy claims. They are also requesting 1 reclassification to full time in Revaluation. There will also be reclassifications from Clerk to Customer Service Representative in Listing and Collection. Ms. Huffman stated that she had requested \$125,000 for aerial photography, but this was cut by the County Manager. Staff should also be added to the reappraisal department, since we are under the state recommendations.

Recreation: Erma Deen Hoyle reviewed the Recreation budget. She stated that one of the main increases was workman's comp insurance.

Stan Kiser, County Manager, stated that last year each Optimist Club received \$16,575.00. This year, North Lincoln has formed their own Optimist Club. He stated that he did not fund the North Lincoln Optimist Club.

The Board discussed having maintenance contracts with local businesses for oil changes to see if money could be saved.

Water Department: Steve Gilbert reviewed the Water and Sewer Department budgets with the Board.

EMS Budget: Ron Rombs reviewed the EMS budget. He discussed the advantages of having quick response vehicles instead of ambulances on the road.

Commissioner Craig mentioned taking the money out of fund balance to avoid a tax increase. He stated that he feels that if this is done, the Board should agree to not lower taxes next year after the reevaluation.

Leon Harmon stated that the fund balance was 15.9% last year. He estimated that the fund balance is at roughly 12% now. The absolute minimum is 8%, but it is good to stay at 15 – 16%. He stated that 12% is really low, especially with the uncertainty in the economy. One percent of the fund balance is around \$700,000. There is roughly \$9 million in the fund balance. To keep 8%, it will be between \$5.8 and \$6 million.

There was a discussion concerning services that could be cut, including Recreation, Chamber, Arts Council, Main Street Program, Block Smith Gym, and the bookmobile.

Commissioner Craig asked if the Board was in agreement that County employees should not get a raise this year. He asked the Board's opinions on giving employees their birthday as a holiday.

The Board agreed that they did not feel like they could afford to give employees a raise this year. They discussed giving the COLA at a later time in the year if the money is available.

A MOTION by Commissioner Anderson to direct the County Manager to come back to the next budget meeting with a revised budget which reflects any additional reductions he can achieve through consultation with county department heads and a recommendation as to the amount of money that should be taken out of the fund balance to support the budget he is recommending at a tax rate of 62 cents.

Discussion: Commissioner Craig stated that he feels Stan has already done this to the budget.

**VOTE: 4 – 1 AYES: Anderson, Cochrane, Funderburk, Mitchem
NOES: Craig**

The following items were discussed that could be eliminated from the budget: Block Smith Gym, Bookmobile, Arts Council, Chamber of Commerce, and Main Street Program.

The Board recessed until Thursday, June 5 at 3:30 p.m.