

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD AT THE RUTHERFORD COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING IN THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING ROOM ON JUNE 25, 2008, AT 5:00 P.M.

**PRESENT: CHIVOUS BRADLEY, CHAIRMAN
PAUL MCINTOSH, VICE CHAIRMAN
MARGARET HELTON
CHARLES HILL
BRENT WASHBURN**

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CALL TO ORDER/INVOCATION

Chairman Bradley called the meeting to order. HR Director Judy Toney gave the invocation.

BUDGET 2008-2009/BUDGET ORDINANCE/DSS FUND/E911 ADDRESSING FUND/ICC CAPITAL RESERVE FUND/REGISTER OF DEEDS AUTOMATION ENHANCEMENT/GRANT FUND/REAPPRAISAL-MAPPING FUND/WATER-SEWER FUND/SCHOOLS CAPITAL RESERVE FUND/COUNTY BUILDING RESERVE FUND/DEBT SERVICE FUND/TRANSIT FUND/SOLID WASTE FUND/TOURISM FUND

County Manager John Condrey presented a spreadsheet on which the budget numbers submitted by each of the Commissioners had been compiled for use in determining the final budget. Julie Scherer facilitated the process by recording figures in the line items as they were tentatively approved.

Chairman Bradley led the discussion as the Commissioners worked their way through the items where their proposed numbers differed, discussing and agreeing on a figure for each item. Items discussed and agreed on included: one-tenth cent building fund contribution, \$55,000 to the Cliffside Sanitary District, 2.5% employee raise effective in October, a fuel contingency fund of \$160,000, \$276,000 toward the retiree state health insurance plan, a domestic violence officer but not a detention officer for the Sheriff's Department, an additional financial position in Social Services in anticipation of the retirement of the financial officer, Rutherford County's share in the production of an hour-long documentary on the Bechtlers by UNC-TV, an amount toward the cost of a new roof on the historic depot in Ellenboro, \$5,000 to Foothills Conservancy, and \$2,000 for IPDC housing programs,

On the subject of employee salary increases, Vice Chairman McIntosh noted that if the county falls behind in salaries for employees, it will only result in larger increases at the time of a salary study in the future. Commissioner Helton favored limiting any current increases to stay in line with the weak economy.

Commissioner Hill stated his position that if any new personnel is included in the budget, he would not vote in favor of the budget.

Finance Director Scherer said that it is important to have a financial person at DSS who understands the programs and policies of that agency in more depth than the Finance Office. Commissioner Hill thought that the anticipated retirement date of the DSS financial officer would be known in plenty of time for new staffing to be put in place.

Vice Chairman McIntosh emphasized that local projects, such as the one presented by Ellenboro, should exhaust all available sources of funding before coming to the county for assistance. Chairman Bradley said since the Commissioners had helped Forest City with McNair Field, he felt it was only fair to help a smaller town too. Commissioner Washburn advocated a process by which such projects could qualify for county funding.

On the Farm Museum, only two Commissioners favored funding to replace grants that were lost when Centura Foundation was folded into Western North Carolina Foundation; the others expressed concern that there is no plan in place to make the museum sustainable into the future.

Vice Chairman McIntosh asked that a list be made available of possible sources of funding. Julie Scherer noted that at one time Foothills Connect had assembled information of this kind and that it might be updated.

To bring the budget into balance, \$1,171,036 was drawn from the fund balance.

Vice Chairman McIntosh wanted to see annualized figures for items that were included in the proposed budget for less than twelve months. Julie Scherer said that a full year funding will result in an additional \$122,000 in the succeeding year.

Commissioner Hill expressed his concern that the budget calls for too much spending. He noted that the county is only in the second year after property revaluation, and he is concerned for the next year and the year after that.

Commissioner Washburn made a motion to approve the 2008-2009 fiscal year budget along with special funds. Vice Chairman McIntosh seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was 4 to 1, with Commissioner Hill voting no. (A copy of the budget ordinance is typed in the minute book.)

BUDGETS/SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Commissioner Helton made a motion to approve the budgets of the Special Districts which included fire departments and a sanitary district. There was a second by Vice Chairman McIntosh and a unanimous vote of approval. (A copy of these budgets is included in the Budget Ordinance.)

TDA BUDGET

Commissioner Hill asked that the Tourism Development Authority explain their budget. He expressed concern about the amount of money they have budgeted from their fund balance.

Donna McElrath, chairman of the TDA, said the fund balance is \$650,000, of which they have budgeted \$138,000 to expand their presence and hire additional personnel in Lake Lure. She assured the Commissioners that they examine their finances every month.

Keven McCammon also said that the TDA board was prepared to make adjustments to the budget later in the summer based on actual expenditures.

RETIREE HEALTH INSURANCE FUND

Commissioner Hill made a motion to authorize Finance Director Julie Scherer to pay out funds for the retiree health insurance fund if required by the state and to close out the retiree health insurance account. Vice Chairman McIntosh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMUNITY PET CENTER

Manager Condrey presented an outline for discussions of joint management/organization/responsibilities at the animal shelter. He recommended a planning committee to work on formulating terms of agreement that they would then bring to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Hill made a motion expressing the support of the Commissioners for the initiation of discussions between the county, the Sheriff's Department and the Community Pet Center for future collaboration. Vice Chairman McIntosh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

BECHTLER DOCUMENTARY

Chairman Bradley reminded the Board that an amount of \$5,000 had been included in the approved budget for the Bechtler documentary. This same amount is being considered by the TDA and the Town of Rutherfordton. The total local cost of the documentary is approximately \$150,000. If the three organizations make a five year preliminary pledge to continue funding at \$5,000 per year for a total of \$25,000 for each organization, it is believed that the balance could be raised locally. UNC-TV has indicated that the governmental intent will allow this project development to continue moving forward.

Commissioner Washburn made a motion to approve a grant of \$5,000 per year for five years, with similar amounts being considered by the TDA and the Town of Rutherfordton, toward the production of a documentary on Bechtler gold to be produced by UNC-TV. Vice Chairman McIntosh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

TECHNOLOGY REQUEST BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET AMENDMENT

Commissioner Helton made a motion to approve the request of the Board of Education to increase the commitment to technology needs from the School Capital reserve fund from \$500,000 per year to \$1,000,000 per year for the final two years of the five year plan. Commissioner Washburn seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

RUTHERFORD HEALTH BEHAVIORAL GRANT BUDGET AMENDMENT

Vice Chairman McIntosh made a motion to approve the disbursement of funds held by Western Highlands LME to service providers for grant applications as reviewed and recommended by the Behavioral Health Grant Committee. Commissioner Washburn seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

BLUE RIBBON 21ST CENTURY COMMISSION\RESOLUTION

Commissioner Washburn made a motion to approve the resolution establishing the Rutherford County Blue Ribbon 21st Century Commission to develop a technology plan for the schools. Commissioner Helton seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Resolution to Establish the Rutherford County Blue Ribbon 21st Century Commission

Whereas, the Rutherford County Commissioners and the Rutherford County Board of Education have shown through their leadership their vision that Rutherford County would have the tools and technology available so that both students and families can enjoy the optimum quality of life and so that Rutherford County can be a competitive player in our ever-changing global economy; and

Whereas, the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners and the Rutherford County Board of Education believe in order to achieve this objective, the citizens of Rutherford County must share this vision; and

Whereas, the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners and the Rutherford County Board of Education have agreed that a commission should be established that would develop a plan to reach this goal; and

Whereas this commission would be charged with the task of creating a systematic plan for providing educational technology for teachers, students, parents, and the community that would ensure the achievement of this exciting and essential goal.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners and the Rutherford County Board of Education approve the establishment of the Rutherford County Blue Ribbon 21st Century Commission.

Be it also resolved that Representative Bob England shall be appointed to serve as Chairman of this commission; and

Be it further resolved that the first meeting of this commission shall be held in August of 2008 at Isothermal Community College and there be an invitation to those who recognize this need to participate in the process.

Be it also further resolved that citizens are encouraged to signify that they wish to be a partner in this initiative by notifying Sybil Houser.

Approved this the 25th day of June, 2008

Manager Condrey reported that Representative Bob England has agreed to chair this commission. Sybil Houser will receive nominations for other members of the commission.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/RESOLUTION/AIRPORT

Finance Director Scherer went over the proposed budget amendments.

Vice Chairman McIntosh made a motion to approve the budget amendments. Commissioner Hill seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Budget Amendments
June 25, 2008**

	Expense	Revenue
GENERAL FUND		
Detention Center- Professional Services	\$ 5,000	
Fund Balance Appropriated		\$ 5,000
* insurance deductible		
Transfer to Grant Fund - Local Match	\$ 5,128	
Fund Balance Appropriated		\$ 5,128
* Local match for the FY2008 Rural Airport Development Grant		
GRANT FUND		
Revolutionary War Brochures - Printing/Professional Services	\$ 6,750	
NC Department of Commerce Travel & Tourism Division Grant		\$ 6,750
*update/reprinting Revolutionary War brochures		
FY08 Rural Airport Development Project Expenditures	\$ 5,128	
NCDOT Rural Airport Development Grant		\$ 200,000
Contribution from General Fund - Local Match		\$ 5,128
*NC DOT Grant - Project #36244.28.6.1		

Resolution

WHEREAS, a Grant in the amount of \$200,000 has been approved by the Department based on total estimated cost of \$205,128; and

WHEREAS, an amount equal to or greater than two and one half percent (2.5%) of the total estimated project cost has been appropriated by the Sponsor for this Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE AND IT IS RESOLVED THAT THE Finance Director of the Sponsor be and he hereby is authorized and empowered to enter into a Grant Agreement with the Department, thereby binding the Sponsor to the fulfillment of its obligation incurred under this Grant Agreement or any mutually agreed upon modification thereof.

CLOSED SESSION/N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6)

Commissioner Helton Vice made a motion to go into closed session to discuss personnel matters. Chairman McIntosh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7:03 P.M. – The Board went into Closed Session

7:16 P.M. – The Board returned to regular session.

PERSONNEL\APPOINTMENT\TAX ADMINISTRATOR

Commissioner Hill made a motion to appoint Clyde Kepley as Tax Administrator for Rutherford County for two years contingent on usual human resources procedures. Vice Chairman McIntosh seconded the motion.

Commissioner Helton asked that this appointment be contingent on Mr. Kepley's willingness to move. Chairman Bradley said such a requirement should be adopted as a general policy.

The vote on the motion was approved four to one, with Commissioner Helton voting no.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Bradley declared the meeting adjourned.

Adjourned at 7:20 P.M.

Chairman, Board of Commissioners

Vice Chairman, Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Clerk, Board of Commissioners