

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

Thursday, May 28, 2009

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 Michael D. Page, Vice-Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow, and Commissioners Joe W. Bowser and Becky M. Heron

Absent: Commissioner Brenda A. Howerton

Presider: Chairman Page

**Durham Public Schools**

Chairman Page welcomed everyone to the Thursday, May 28, 2009, Budget Worksession of the Board of County Commissioners. He recognized the Durham Public Schools (DPS) Board of Education Chair Minnie Forte-Brown for introductory remarks.

Ms. Forte-Brown began her remarks by thanking the Board of Commissioners for the opportunity to present DPS' requested budget. She proceeded to discuss the role of the Board of Education, its responsibility to the DPS budget, and cited budget requirements per state statutes. Ms. Forte-Brown further discussed budget components (i.e. successful programs and achievement gaps in DPS).

Dr. Kirsten Kainz, DPS Board of Education Member, elaborated on programs and resources offered by DPS. She commented on the County Manager's recommended budget presented at the Board of County Commissioners May 26, 2009 Regular Session.

Dr. Kainz expressed discontent with a portion of the presentation that disparaged DPS and its leaders, which is harmful to the Schools and the community.

Stephen Martin, DPS Board of Education Member, mentioned DPS budget reductions, state employee raises, and the DPS employees who would not receive raises.

Leigh Bordley, DPS Board of Education Member, discussed Central Office funding and the possibility of raising taxes to compensate for the recommended budget cuts.

Omega Curtis Parker, DPS Board of Education Member, emphasized the importance of teachers and teacher assistants; she spoke about their challenges.

Dr. Carl Harris, Superintendent, DPS, explained adjustments to occur in DPS due to the budget reductions and how the State budget reductions would impact DPS.

Commissioner Heron opposed Ms. Bordley's suggestion to raise taxes.

Commissioner Bowser echoed Commissioner Heron's opposition to raising taxes.

Commissioner Bowser spoke to information he requested from DPS regarding Central Office salaries, which he had not received.

Fredrick Davis, DPS Board of Education Member, noted that the information Commissioner Bowser requested was forwarded to the Commissioners.

Chairman Page added that the information was sent the night before via email.

Commissioner Bowser stated that the information he received via email pertained to the transportation allowance for the Superintendent, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Academic Officer, and the six Assistant Superintendents.

Staff supplied Commissioner Bowser with the data he requested.

The Commissioners and the Board of Education members discussed the following:

- Potential cuts in teacher workforce
- The County Manager's recommended \$2.9 million decrease in the DPS budget
  - Overpayment for students who did not attend DPS
  - Anticipated decrease in number of students to attend DPS next year
  - Anticipated increase in number of students to attend charter schools
- Is the anticipated reduction in students included in DPS' \$649,000 budget reduction?
- How would County funds be used to offset DPS budget cuts?
- Federal stimulus funds
- Per pupil funding
  - DPS vs. Top 10 NC counties
  - Justification for increase in DPS funding
- Central Office staff salaries and supplemental costs

County Manager Ruffin addressed Dr. Kainz's allegation that the comments regarding DPS during the County Manager's May 26 budget presentation were disparaging.

Commissioner Bowser expressed concern with receiving previously requested information the day of the meeting. He requested that Commissioner requests be submitted in a timely manner.

Chairman Page recognized Dr. E. Lavonia Allison for comments.

Dr. Allison expressed her desire to receive copies of handouts distributed to the Board during meetings.

Chairman Page concurred with Dr. Allison and requested that copies of written statements and presentations also be distributed to Commissioners.

Chairman Page communicated that potential dates for the next budget worksession with DPS would be relayed to the Administration and Board of Education members. He asked that they respond immediately upon receiving the dates.

Directives

1. County Manager and Superintendent to work together to obtain a better understanding of how federal stimulus monies would impact DPS' budget.
2. Schedule another budget worksession within the next week to discuss the DPS budget and to allow citizen comments and questions.
3. Send Commissioner questions to the County Manager, DPS administration, and Board of Education members; submit responses prior to next budget worksession.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Page adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne R. Jones  
Deputy Clerk to the Board