

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

Tuesday, March 16, 2010
“Conversations with Commissioners”
7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Place: Little River Community Complex, 8307 Roxboro Road, Bahama NC 27503

Present: Chairman Michael D. Page, Vice Chair Ellen W. Reckhow, and Commissioners Becky M. Heron, Brenda A. Howerton, and Joe Bowser

Absent: None

Staff: County Manager Michael Ruffin; Deputy County Managers Wendell Davis and Carolyn Titus; Assistant County Managers Deborah Craig-Ray and Drew Cummings; County Attorney Lowell Siler; Director of Budget and Management Services Pam Meyer; Budget Analyst Gene Hodges; Assistant to the County Manager, Laura Jensen; General Services Director Mo Keambiroiro; and Clerk to the Board Michelle Parker-Evans

Presider: Chairman Page

Call to Order

Chairman Page called the meeting to order. He thanked the Little River Community Complex Board for hosting the meeting and welcomed citizens and staff to “Conversations with Commissioners,” a community meeting to allow citizens the opportunity to give input on the FY 2010-2011 County Budget. He thanked the citizens for their attendance and requested that they engage in positive, open dialogue with the Board and administrators as preparations are made for the upcoming County budget. Chairman Page noted that this is another challenging budget year for Durham County.

Mr. Edgar Johnson, Little River Community Complex Board member welcomed the Board. He introduced an Eagle Scout who earned his badge by performing repairs to classrooms in the complex.

Chairman Page reminded everyone to complete the Census information received in the mail and get it back in the mail immediately.

Introductions

The Chair introduced the County Commissioners and staff members to the citizens.

Durham County Current Budget/Financial Overview

The County Manager, Mike Ruffin, gave a brief overview of the upcoming budget and challenges.

DURHAM COUNTY FY 2010-2011 BUDGET FORECAST

- Property Tax Base has increased 1.3% vs. average of 3% growth seen in previous years
- Economic Factors continue to have impact on the tax base:
 - a) New Construction Permits
 - b) Business Personal Property
 - c) Public Service Values
 - d) Registered Motor Vehicles

CURRENT ESTIMATED DEFICIT FOR FY 2010-11 = \$1,982,000



Current estimated General Fund deficit for FY 2010-11

<i>Revenue</i>	<i>Net Change From FY 2009-10 Budget</i>
Property Tax	\$2,530,000
Register of Deeds Fees	(\$300,000)
Investment Revenue	(\$580,000)
State Inmate Fees	(\$280,000)
JAG Funding (Warrant Control)	(\$397,000)
State Hold Harmless Funding	\$500,000
Total Revenue Increase	\$1,473,000
<i>Expenditures</i>	<i>Net Change From FY 2009-10 Budget</i>
Medical/Dental Insurance Increase	\$1,960,000
LGERS Rate Increase for Employer Contr.	\$1,340,000
Natural Personnel Expenditure Growth	\$155,000
Total Expenditure Increase	\$3,455,000
Total Estimated Deficit	(\$1,982,000)

FY 2009-10 POTENTIAL BUDGET IMPACTS

Durham County Government



FY 2010-11 Potential Budget Impacts

- Opening of South Regional & Southwest Libraries in late spring 2009 (increased utility costs, staffing in both Library and General Services)
- Changes at the State level could continue to impact local revenues
- Continued reductions in operational expenditures will likely produce higher spending averages
- Continued decline in economy may result in lower over-collection of revenues (resulting in less revenue to offset fund balance appropriated)

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The Manager concluded by giving an overview of the Budget Approval process and schedule:

- Monday, May 24 - Manager's Recommended Budget to Commissioners
- Thursday May 27-Wednesday June 16 - Budget Worksessions with BOCC to be scheduled
- Monday June 14 – Public Hearing on Recommended Budget
- Monday June 28 – Board Adoption of FY2011 Annual Budget Ordinance

Community Conversations

Chairman Page asked for comments from the citizens. The citizens made the following comments:

Linda Huff-Smith, 1905 Old Red Mountain Road, spoke about the need for pedestrian facilities in the County. She asked that the sidewalk gaps between City and County be filled; consideration of a trail system in the county similar to the American Tobacco Trail (possibly between Little River Park and Eno River Park).

Donald Lebkes, 2507 W. Cornwallis Road, talked about the warrant situation. He was concerned about the 42,000 outstanding warrants which remain outstanding according to the Sheriff's Department. He asked to have a data person input the information into the system so that law enforcement will be able to serve the outstanding warrants.

Joe Haenn, 404 Shetland Road, asked the County to be more aware and considerate of the needs of residents of northern Durham County. He spoke about the increased fees for the carnival and the renovation of the Depot in Rougemont, the last historical train station left in Durham County.

Edgar Johnson, 122 Red Mountain Road, spoke about the Little River Community Complex. He expressed concern about the youth of the community. He also discussed teaching trades in the schools in northern Durham. Agriculture classes are currently only taught at Jordan although most of the farmland is in northern Durham.

Hallie Mangum-Bass, 10724 South Lowell Road, represented the Board of Directors for the Little River Community Complex. Her concerns included having no tutorial program because of lack of transportation (DATA ends at Snow Hill Road); programs including the day care, before and after school ended because of funding); the Complex also needs a satellite health clinic, a gym floor, grant writer, Bookmobile, and Wheels on Meals. She expressed disappointment regarding the \$5,500 fee for the carnival, the major fund raiser for the Complex. She also spoke about the need to take care of our elders.

Kate Busa, 8106 Willardville Station Road, President of Friends of Hill Forest, reiterated the need for trails for bikers and horseback riders. She was also a proponent of trade schools.

Ramya Mudugu, a student from Githens Middle School, made a plea for the Board to reconsider budget cuts to Durham Public Schools. She presented a petition signed by students from Githens Middle School in support of continued funding for the schools and programs such as free or reduced lunch and bus stops.

Kate Fellman, 4 Misty Morning Court, spoke about education. She asked the Board to please consider funding DPS education requests.

Kathryn Spann, 4900 Roxboro Road, spoke about the need for economic renewal. She also expressed the need for funding hands on programs at schools, especially agricultural and farming programs.

Kelly Leovic, 7 Penwick Place, asked the Commissioners to consider the funding requests for Durham Public Schools. She was concerned about the student/teacher ratio.

Stanley Parker, 2917 Moores Mill Road, expressed concern about the acreage requirement to building a house in northern Durham. He stated that it causes a hardship on individuals who want to build on family land. He also asked that the County consider donating any surplus materials to the Complex.

Emily Wilkins, 611 Ruby Street, asked the Board to fully fund Durham Public Schools' budget requests.

Toleda Crews, 4921 Guess Road, a retired educator, spoke about her vision for the Complex. She requested the Board to support making the facility a fully functional resource center.

Ricky Harris, 11703 Hampton Road, spoke about the County putting money back into northern Durham. He also expressed disappointment about the increased fees for the carnival.

Everett Johnson, 1811 John Jones Road, reiterated the need to fund the Durham Public Schools request. He expressed concern about the need for a senior citizens medical facility in northern Durham as well as alternative programs to help keep children off the streets.

Chairman Page thanked everyone who spoke and those who were in attendance who did not speak. He asked the Commissioners to make comments.

Commissioner Heron remembered the viability of the Complex when the County gave the building to the Little River Community. She agreed with the need to have a medical facility on site several times a week to address the needs of seniors. She also supported the need for having satellite facilities, including the Bookmobile, on site.

Vice Chair Reckhow thanked everyone for coming out. She concurred with Commissioner Heron that the Board needs to revisit the concept of the Complex. She encouraged the leadership to put together a task force on ways to rejuvenate the Complex. She also agreed that the curriculum at Northern needs to be reviewed. She pointed out that most of the cuts made to schools last year did not occur at the County level, but they occurred at the State level. She recommended that the group contact State legislators to support school funding.

Commissioner Howerton echoed the need for strategic planning for the Complex. She urged the group to keep the energy going and to stay in contact with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Bower spoke about healthcare needs. He invited the group to attend a meeting sponsored by Duke University at Union Baptist Church on Wednesday, March 17. He also spoke about a possible partnership with Person County. He agreed that the warrant situation needs to be addressed and completed.

Chairman Page asked the group to come up with a strategy for the Complex and community. He asked for the meeting date of the Board of Directors for the Complex. The Board meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm. He suggested talking with nonprofits about providing services to the community. He assured everyone that the Board heard the requests. He reminded the group about the current budget restraints the County faces, but encouraged them to continue to work with the Board to find long term solutions.

Ms. Mangum-Bass reiterated her plea to the Board to reconsider the increased fee for the carnival.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Page thanked the citizens, his fellow Commissioners, and staff for attending the meeting. He announced another “Conversation with Commissioners” to be held on Tuesday, March 23, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Holton Resource Center, 401 N. Driver Avenue. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Parker-Evans
Clerk to the Board