

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

Monday, March 25, 2002

4:00 P.M. Special Session

**MINUTES**

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

Present: Chairman MaryAnn E. Black, Vice-Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow, and Commissioners Joe W. Bowser, Philip R. Cousin Jr., and Becky M. Heron

Absent: None

Presider: Chairman Black

**Discussion of FY 2003 Budget with County Department Heads**

At the request of the Board of County Commissioners, County department heads were invited to discuss their FY 2003 budget requests. The Manager requested that department heads be prepared to provide a three-minute briefing regarding how the state shortfall will affect their requests.

Resource Person(s): Mike Ruffin, County Manager, and Pam Meyer, Budget and Management Services Director

County Manager's Recommendation: Receive the presentations and advise the staff if additional action is necessary.

Chairman Black welcomed all the department heads to the Special Session. She thanked them for coming and for taking this opportunity to present to the Board the impact of the state shortfall in the individual departments.

Chairman Black asked the department heads to follow the order of presentation and to give their name and department.

County Manager Michael Ruffin said this presentation grew out of a statement Chairman Black made at the last retreat. The statement was that the Board would like to have a "snap shot" given to them by department heads at the Manager's direction to reduce spending by 5 percent. How is that translated in terms of budget reductions in your department?

Chairman Black advised that the Commissioners not ask questions during the presentations. First, department managers should be given time to make their presentations. Questions could be asked later.

County Manager Ruffin asked staff to begin the presentations according to the order on the agenda.

Remarks of the Department Heads are recorded below with the exception of the Register of Deeds, Emergency Communication, and Mental Health. The summary was prepared by Heidi N. Duer, Assistant to the County Manager.

### **Departmental Proposed Budget Reductions**

At the request of the County Manager, departmental budget requests for FY 02-03 reflect a 5 percent reduction over the previous year budgeted amounts. This report summarizes the highlights of these reductions and the impact on programs, services, and personnel as presented to the Board of County Commissioners.

#### **Attorney's Office**

Proposed is the elimination of one Assistant County Attorney position. This position, the Child Support Attorney, is currently vacant. Since child support must continue, the remaining attorneys will pick up those duties. However, services to child support and adult protective services will be reduced. Currently, a person is dedicated to performing this work on a full-time basis. If the position is eliminated, this will not be possible. Additionally, since other attorneys' time will be taken up doing child support, their workload will have to be reduced. Since litigation goes on, and the time limits are not controllable, the only thing that can be reduced is support to other departments. The County Attorney's Office will no longer be able to staff committees. This will undoubtedly be inefficient, but we have no other real alternatives. It will also tend to make litigation more likely since actions taken by the committees will not necessarily have legal review.

#### **Board of Elections**

The three most serious impacts for the Board of Elections are:

1. We have reduced the number of precinct assistants from 6 to 4. This will decrease the efficiency of the polling places and increase the time citizens will have to stand in line to vote.
2. We are forced to cancel our requests for technology. We have 1992 computers that cannot link with many newer systems and are too small and slow to do the job required of them. We will not be able to purchase any new voting machines. We do not have a comfortable number of backups. We are not able to enter any agreements with vendors to test Direct Record Electronic voting systems.
3. There is no money in our budget for any recounts, special elections, or extra elections.

The biggest impact is not having the ability to plan. Last year we had to cut all temporary/relief employees, computers, office supplies etc.

### Budget

Eliminate one full-time occupied analyst position; eliminate all training funds, reduce printing by approximately 1/3 and take other operational cuts in office supplies and advertising. Impacts: would have to RIF an employee, but would keep enough funds for a part-time position; less staff would result in longer review times for agenda items/budget transactions/response to Manager's office and citizens. Lack of training funds would delay the office keeping up on new trends and initiatives, especially as it relates to the mainframe budget system (tied to the AMS Financial System).

### Clerk to the Board

No positions proposed to be cut.

Advertising for appointments to boards and commissions will have to be reduced. The budgeted amount for FY 2002-2003 will be \$5,256 compared to \$20,000 in FY 2001-2002. The reduction of \$10,000 in the Miscellaneous Contracted Services could have an impact on the number of ordinances that can be codified.

The Training Related Travel account in the County Commissioners' budget will have to be reduced by \$12,661. The budgeted amount for FY 2002-2003 is \$11,814 compared to \$24,475 in FY 2001-2002.

The Food and Provision account will have to be reduced by \$3,000 to \$5,000 for FY 2002-2003. The budgeted amount for FY 2001-2002 is \$8,000.

### Cooperative Extension

Cooperative Extension is impacted not only by the county 5-percent reduction, but also by the state's reductions to the university budget. This directly impacts the organization since county funding and university funding are contingent upon each other.

Cooperative Extension will meet the 5 percent reduction by eliminating two positions. The agricultural program assistant offered support for production agriculture, would provide nutrient management training required for Neuse River Rules Compliance, and supports the pesticide re-certification program for homeowners and commercial organizations. Cooperative Extension will provide these services using the current horticulture agent, but will not be able to offer any proactive programming in this area. The shift to the horticulture agent for this support will reduce the services available to homeowners and the commercial landscape industry. The loss of the second position will reduce the number of youth and community programs available to citizens and to nonprofits in the community.

We are not aware of the true impact of the university cuts on our department. We do recognize that for each vacancy created, the position will be eliminated. Early retirement packages have been offered to more tenured employees.

We have begun to experience an increased number of requests by other departments and nonprofits for training and educational programming because these organizations have fewer dollars to use to purchase programs they've purchased in the past. In order to reach our 5 percent reductions, we will not be able to provide resources needed to meet the current level of programming, much less the increased programming demands. We will eliminate security for the building and training and development and will reduce printing and program supply funding.

#### County Manager's Office

Proposed reductions of approximately \$53,000 in the Manager's office budget include:

- \$9,500 in operating line items including: telephone, dues & subscriptions, operational travel, and advertising
- \$3,100 reduction of training related travel
- a cut of \$31,250 in miscellaneous contracted services, the impact of which will be less flexibility to implement or absorb costs of one-time and unanticipated projects.

In the Travel Reduction Program:

- a reduction in the transit subsidy by 50 percent or \$5,000, which will impact all Durham County employees by offering fewer transit incentives to making it more difficult to meet the goals of the Travel Reduction Plan.
- For this program, the biggest challenge has been the increase in our contract with the Triangle Transit Authority to implement the Ordinance. Although the cost of this contract is shared with the City of Durham, the contract last year was \$74,300 and this year is \$108,025, representing an almost \$34,000 increase due to program expansion.

#### Criminal Justice Resource Center

Multiple challenges: reduction in County allocation, reduction in CJPP grant, and expiration of two Governor's Crime Commission grants.

- Just Us Program: Program in its fourth year of grant funding, portion of grant was used to offset regular operating expenses (telephone, rent, office supplies, etc.) One position associated with grant will be eliminated, approximately \$60,000 shift back to county budget. Program will be terminated; however, some services to the target population will be available at the Center.
- Juvenile Day Reporting Center: Program is entirely grant funded and in its second year of funding. Four positions and the entire program will end if outside funding

can't be secured. Applications have been submitted to GCC, JCPC, Duke Community affairs, and Senator Helms' office. Additional grants being written.

- Reduction in all possible operating lines, training, contractual, etc. No request for equipment or furniture, severe reduction in training. No other cuts possible without jeopardizing basic operation.
- In addition to the five provisional positions, elimination of 2.5 FTE County positions necessary to meet target budget.

No program or service will be completely eliminated, but reduction of some level of services across all programs, e.g. establishing program capacities, creating waiting lists for substance abuse treatment.

#### Emergency Medical Services

Planned FTE reduction: 8.45 plus restrictions on overtime use for other personnel.

Impacts: (only 2 primary related to FTE reduction)

1. Potential reduction of adequate number of emergency vehicles on duty at any given time.
2. Increased emergency vehicle response times.

#### Engineering

A reduction of one position that is currently vacant is proposed. Impacts include delays in CIP project implementation, increased response time to requests for services and inspections and deferral of technology, vehicle and capital purchases, which may increase maintenance costs.

#### Finance

The Finance Department will recommend the reduction (non-funding) of three positions for FY 2003 budget.

Operational Impact:

- The delivery time for the Purchasing Area will be extended.
- The redistribution of responsibilities may require salary adjustments.
- The cost of our external audit may be increased because of the reduction in the number of single audits performed. (Added responsibilities for our compliance officer and staff reduction for internal auditor.)

We currently have two vacant positions and two employees with performance issues. We will meet the budget requirements through the elimination (non-funding) of a position (to be determined) once the performance issues are settled and the non-funding of the Staff Assistant position in Purchasing (currently vacant).

### Fire Marshall/Emergency Management

We plan no position reductions at this time.

The three areas that will be the most impacted are: We will have no capital request this year. That means we will have 10-year-old computers for our Emergency Operations Center and 1994 vehicles with over 100,000 miles as primary assignment vehicles for fire and EM response. We also have not been able to attend any continuing education training at the Spring Fire Prevention School.

### Forest Protection

Due to the budget cuts, we have had to cut environmental education programs and training required for certifications. Training for county volunteer fire departments and equipment needed for fire control has been severely or completely cut making us unprepared for certain emergency situations. The budget has also deeply affected our office supplies and the amount of stationary and supplies we need to function effectively. There is also the issue of no overtime and after-hours meetings or seminars, which is causing a lack of communication and support from and for related agencies. With any use of equipment, a degree of maintenance is required but due to budget cuts, it's only a matter of time before operating old equipment becomes a hindrance or hazard to efficient operations. In addition, one position may be cut if budget cuts go deeper than anticipated. These problems and unforeseen others will greatly affect our ability to serve the citizens of Durham County.

### General Services

The General Services budget reduction was met and exceeded for totals of 14.65 percent for a total reduction of \$1,054,564.

#### IMPACT STATEMENTS

- a) The vast majority of requested project support (*wish list items*) by other county departments has been eliminated due to a loss of funding.
- b) Originally, there was hope for additional manpower to support our ever-increasing inventory of aged properties; however, daily issues with properties continue to reduce the effectiveness of our staff increasing inconveniences, longer response times, and timely repairs.
- c) The reduction or elimination of some contracted services.

General Services will not utilize any reduction in force; however, Animal Control is forced to reduce one position of the total eight Control Officers and the replacement truck for the officer. (The eighth officer position does have a truck but requires replacement.)

The Animal Control budget reduction was met and exceeded the totals of 6.30 percent for a total cost reduction of \$61,892.

## IMPACT STATEMENTS

- a) Animal Control will be down seven out of eight officers which will impact the response times for Animal Control issues with the inability to respond to 2,500 calls per year. (*10 per day, per officer*)
- b) Funding will not be available for emergency carcass disposal.
- c) Funding will be lost for training and new, replacement animal traps.

### Human Resources Department

Reduction in Positions: 0

Frozen Positions: 2

Three major cuts:

- \$37,000 cut in internal training and development and external tuition reimbursement.
- \$15,500 cut in advertising for recruitment of employees for vacant positions.
- \$19,500 cut in contracted services, which includes elimination of unemployment compensation claims administration contract, elimination of a wellness contract with the YMCA, elimination of a benefits consultant, and a reduction in the drug testing line item, which will delay implementation of pre-employment drug testing for all employees and routine random drug testing for those in the high-risk, safety sensitive categories.

### City-County Inspections

The City's Budget office gave all City Departments target budget figures for FY 2003. Our Department's target budget figure is \$2,554,875.

In order to meet this target figure, the following positions will be eliminated:

- (1) Plumbing Inspector Position (\$39,282)
- (1) Permit Clerk Position (\$28,050)
- (1) Senior Plans Examiner Position (\$42,810)
- (1) Mechanical Inspector Position (\$43,896)
- (1) Electrical Inspector Position (\$44,304)

An additional \$13,062 will be recognized when the incumbent in the Department's Management Assistant position retires at the end of the current fiscal year and the position is filled after July 1, 2002, at an entry-level salary.

These combined cuts total \$211,404, which is the amount needed to meet the \$2,554,875 target.

Needless to say, the elimination of these five positions will have a significant impact on the Department's ability to provide the level of customer service that developers, contractors, homeowners, business owners, and the general public have come to expect.

### Information Technology

Staff Reductions. Although IT does not expect to reduce the number of permanent employees, we will have to significantly reduce outside services for specialized technology and emergency help. The shortage of staff continues to be a major factor in our inability to provide more than marginal support to the network.

Operating budget cuts will be required in nearly every line item particularly in communications, M&R Equipment, and software upgrades. Most of these cuts can be absorbed, but we will be limited in our ability to respond to outages or increasing requirements.

Planned and sorely needed replacement of critical network components will be delayed. Needed upgrades for communications for Sheriff's department and for City/County fiber loop will be eliminated from the IT budget this year.

Planned upgrades for County Intranet and Internet servers have been eliminated as well as Windows 2000 clients. MS Office Suite upgrades have also been postponed for the next fiscal year.

### Internal Audit

There are no proposed position cuts for Internal Audit.

The greatest impacts from the budget reductions are:

1. Training related travel has been eliminated. A Certified Public Accountant is required to obtain 40 hours of continuing professional education (CPE) each year. Additionally, Durham County has a policy of providing its auditors with 40 hours of training each year.
2. Office supplies have been cut in half. Access to paper and other supplies will be limited.
3. Miscellaneous supplies have been cut by 88 percent. Will not have access to publications, software, and other materials.

The impact of the above is a less efficient and less effective audit function. While the travel budget has been cut, Durham County Internal Auditors must still obtain the required 40 hours of training each year. We will have to resort to self-study courses to meet the 40-hour requirement. Self-study courses are much less expensive than formal training; however, such courses are inefficient in that one hour of credit requires from 2 to 3 hours of study. Consequently, we will spend much more in time than would have otherwise been required. To save \$4,400 in training, we will spend \$7,100 in staff time to obtain the same CPE credit.

Obviously, the cuts to supplies will require that expenditures be monitored very closely. We will not be able to acquire the publications, software, and materials that in the past have made the function more efficient. Consequently, audit assignments will take a bit longer to complete and the quality of the work may suffer.

Overall, Internal Audit will be less effective in its efforts to help the County meet its own goals and objectives.

### Library

5.6 positions are proposed to be cut. It has been proposed that all libraries be closed on Fridays and the bookmobile service on Fridays will also be eliminated. A reduction in new book budgets and the elimination of sheriff's deputy protection at the main and Sanford L. Warren libraries is proposed. Another option for consideration is to close the Warren branch during its upcoming eight-month renovation.

### City-County Planning

The Planning Department is proposing the elimination of 3½ positions. Three would be eliminated at the beginning of the fiscal year and one at mid-year when the incumbent will be resigning.

In addition to the loss of staff, the other major impact of the budget cuts will be the inability to undertake a variety of special plans and studies, which the Commission and/or Council have identified as priorities. This includes deletion of the Tower Siting Master Plan, the Compact Neighborhood Plans, the Historic Neighborhood Identification Study, and the design and construction of trails in acquired open space.

Operational cuts will reduce our ability to keep the public informed of the status of the Comp Plan and Unified Development Ordinance update and eliminate the budget for any special meetings. We will attempt to utilize e-mail for public updates to address a portion of this concern.

### Public Health

The Health Department will eliminate 7.4 FTE positions for FY 02-03. Eliminating nurse positions will result in Home Health service delays and delays in new pregnancy examinations, and elimination of the Nutritionist III will result in elimination of medical nutrition therapy to homebound elderly.

#### Impact of Operational Cuts:

- Reduced ability to buy supplies, etc. needed to provide services would eventually lead to waiting lists in the clinics.
- Eliminated financial support for staff that is required to wear uniforms.
- Reduced financial support for external continuing education and training opportunities.

### Sheriff's Office

Eleven positions are to be frozen.

- Detention services operating budget cut--\$127,000.
- Law Enforcement services operating budget cut--\$573,000.
- Personnel service represents 82 percent of our \$21 million budget. Had to cut \$448,000. Had to absorb the \$300,000 in salary, benefit, retirement increases for over 400 positions.
- No new capital equipment purchases, vehicles, or computer equipment.

#### Impact of the Requested Cuts:

##### Vehicles

- Unable to replace fleet vehicles.
- 46 of 55 vehicles needing replacement have over 100,000 miles.
- Pose serious concerns for officer safety, response time, and effectiveness.

##### Training/Travel

- Training limited to only maintaining certifications.

Traditionally, we train our own recruits. We are one of only a few in North Carolina that holds the distinction of an accredited Sheriff's Training agency. No money for supplies, ammunition, training materials, etc.

- Any new officers hired will have to be sent to the 16-week school elsewhere.

##### Range

- Officers normally offered two opportunities to qualify during year. Range usually open for practice/additional training.
- Due to cuts, range will be closed except during a single qualification period.

##### Investigations

- Decrease "buy/flash money" by 1/3 from \$32,000 - \$22,000. Will impact number and scope of undercover drug operations investigated.

##### Communications

- All mobile telephones eliminated except for Command Staff.
- Will cause a substantial delay in officer responses to pages.
- Will hinder coordination efforts.
- Will reduce efficiency and effectiveness. (Example: Civil deputies will no longer be able to conduct business from the field, detectives will have limited communication when called out to crime scenes, etc.)

##### Building Security

- The Burns Security contract responsible for Judicial and County Administration security will be cancelled.

##### Personnel

- Overtime reduced 50 percent.
- Overtime only allotted for briefing time/schedule rotation, etc.
- No security for BOCC meetings, special events, etc.

- Freeze 11 positions.

Any further reductions will cause dramatic effects and result in the loss of proven community services that will severely impact our agency and the citizens of this community. Programs such as Probation, Truancy, TRIAD, and Pre-Trial Screening may be services we can no longer provide.

### Social Services

The elimination of 17 temporary positions and a reduction in administrative expenses, the impacts of which will be seen and felt in the following ways:

- Leaving the department vulnerable to any crises needing resources that may arise such as technology needs, etc.
- Reduced ability to respond to the growing numbers of families in need as well as the needs of the growing Hispanic population.
- Cuts in preventative-type services to elderly, resulting in more out-of-home placements.
- Vulnerable to more court-ordered placements of children in out-of-home.
- Plan to open 4th group home for children in DSS custody has been put on hold and we may not have enough funding to meet the demand for services for children in our care who are undocumented non-citizens.
- Reduction in our administration budget will give us very little flexibility and will put us at great risk of overspending next year.
- Significant growth in our public assistance spending, particularly for Medicaid and Food Stamps, means that many more people are coming to the agency for assistance. Without an increase in staff, it will mean longer waiting times and more frustration for the families we serve.

### Soil & Water Conservation

The Soil and Water Conservation Department is proposing no position cuts at the moment. Our operating budget has been proposed for reduction to the lowest possible level. Any further cuts would have to come from salaries and these are salaries of present employees, not vacant positions. If the salary line item were hit, then we would experience a reduction in work force from a staff of three. This would prevent landowners and users from receiving administrative and technical assistance needed to stay in compliance with Federal and State regulations affecting them. Second, water quality subsidy programs such as the North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program, Environmental Quality Incentive Program, etc. would suffer from a reduction in force due to lack of staff. The majority of the above mentioned occurs in the watershed of Durham's drinking water. Third, programs such as Conservation Easements/Farmland Preservation and the reviewing of Sediment and Erosion Control plans would be affected as well.

### Tax Administration

The elimination of 5 positions is proposed.

Consideration is being given to keeping the eight-year revaluation cycle and outsourcing.

#### Youth Coordinating Board

For the Youth Coordinating Board, there is no impact from the cuts. YCB will cut 27 percent county dollars, instead of just 5 percent. The county dollars cut are funds to match grants, which will no longer exist next year. Therefore, there were no planned expenditures against them.

#### Youth Home

The three greatest impacts the reduction will have on the Youth Home budget are:

- \$2,900 was requested in the line item Overtime Wages to meet the 5 percent overall reduction. This amount is not sufficient to maintain a safe and efficient facility.
- Training line item was cut \$2,000 (half) and the State Mandatory certification training has increased to a 4-week period (was 2 weeks). This will impact the overall department selections on training for employees.
- Youth Home will need to update its telephones and office furniture. The furniture is very old, soiled, and has missing parts. The telephones do not have voice mail capabilities, and the reception desk system is obsolete.

#### **Questions, Comments, and Observations**

Chairman Black made comments and observations about the presentations. She called on the other Commissioners for questions, comments, and observations.

Chairman Black made comments in her closing remarks. She said that the Commissioners will continue to fight to get the funding the state is withholding by meeting with the legislators, writing letters to the Governor, and sending resolutions to the appropriate people and organizations. We may have to talk about other options as a Board.

No official action was taken at this Special Session.

#### **Adjournment**

Chairman Black adjourned the session at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry E. Umstead, CMC  
Clerk to the Board