

**MINUTES**  
**CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BUDGET PUBLIC**  
**HEARING**  
**JUNE 7, 1995**

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The Board of Commissioners (the "Board") of the County of Chatham, North Carolina, met in special session for the purpose of receiving public comment on the 1995-1996 Recommended Budget in the District Courtroom, located in the Courthouse Annex, Pittsboro, North Carolina, the regular place of meeting, at 7:00 PM, on June 7, 1995.

**ATTENDANCE**

Present: Chairman Uva Holland; Vice Chair Betty Wilson; Commissioners  
John Grimes, Margaret Pollard, and Henry Dunlap; County Manager Ben  
Shivar and Clerk to the Board Sandra B. Lee

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 7:12 P.M.

**INTRODUCTION**

County Manager Ben Shivar explained that as required by North Carolina law, the Commissioners must hold a public hearing on the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year 1995-96. He stated that over the past several weeks, most of the information about the budget had been made available to the public through the media and by placing copies of the budget in the library and Clerk's office. He stated that the purpose of the public hearing is to hear comments on the budget and any matter that may pertain to the upcoming fiscal year in the County's plan of work.

The Chairman declared the meeting open to the public and asked the Clerk to call the names of those who wished to make public comment.

**Gerald Totten**, 108 Petty Road, Siler City, NC, stated that he believes this year's activities to be the most responsible and reasonable over the last six years. He stated that the Manager's Preliminary Needs Assessment last January, the first cut of his budget last month, and the workshops and presentations by the County agencies have shown a sincere interest to communicate and to attempt to justify their funding requests; that he believes that there are still areas which can be reduced but also believes that there are areas which might be increased; that he believes that the Commissioners are looking at innovative ways to provide County government for all residents, not just the pupils who require two-thirds of the revenues to fund education and administrative/central office benefits; that he also believes that they will take a responsible approach to permitting new residential developments and will consider that every one approved severely impacts on an already overloaded infrastructure; that he recognizes a need to expand the industrial base in Chatham County and has recommended adding a one cent increase to the tax rate and dedicate the money raised to responsible spending for new industrial economic development only.

**Ray Greenlaw**, 2 Jordan Drive, Pittsboro, NC, concurred that the process which the staff used to bring the budget forward is superior to anything seen before. He spoke on behalf of the Water Advisory

Committee and gave an account of utility operations with a summary of their track record. He stated that measured from a base fiscal year 1992-93, their earned revenues have increased by 40%; that the Utility Fund Balance has increased to \$1.5 million; that since the Board of Commissioners' adoption (1993) of the Development plan for Chatham County Water System and the companion "Fiscal Plan", the debt service costs for the initial major project (Jordan Lake Treatment Plant and associated transmission line) were reduced by \$2,151,283, having the immediate effect of virtually eliminating use of Ad Valorem tax monies and this project will be completed well ahead of schedule (Fall of 1995 instead of Spring 1996) and well under budget; that during the past four years, water system mains along State roads were extended by 21%, plus major extensions of lines interior to such major developments as Fearington Village and Governors Club; that other facilities, such as large storage tanks and pumping stations, and associated high tech electronic control systems have been added; that the system's distribution network extends to the extreme reaches of the County; that the number of customer accounts has increased more than 20%; that staffing remains at the same level authorized for fiscal year 1990-91 with the exception of one billing and collection technician authorized to work 45% of full time. He asked the Commissioners to make an investment in staff comparable to the capital investment authorized two years ago; that they authorize addition of one utilities maintenance person; that they authorize and increase the part time billing and collection technician from 75% to 100%; that they conduct an immediate audit of each position currently authorized for Utility Operations and change the position descriptions to conform to current responsibilities and functions and based on audit results, reclassify positions as appropriate; that they allocate an additional \$45,000 to the Personnel Section of the Utility Fund budget to cover potential increased costs resulting from the preceding actions.

**Annette Henry**, 8500 Kempton Road, Raleigh, NC, Director of Triangle Radio Reading Service, Inc., stated that this is an important program made available to blind and print impaired people throughout the County; that they have 137 volunteers who read newspapers, magazines, and books in their Raleigh studio which are broadcast using special radios which are then lent to elderly, visually, and physically impaired people; that they lend special radios which cost \$85 each; that a sub channel of WUNC broadcasts the readings; that many are not able to pay their way; that they read a great deal of news of local interest; that they enrich the lives of the people who need the service. She asked for support from Chatham County for people living within the County who would greatly benefit from it.

**Sheriff Don Whitt**, stated that he had taken one of the special radios around the County and found coverage available in all areas of the County. He stated that he thinks it is a good program.

**Karl Ernst**, 711 Red Oak Drive, Siler City, NC, thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to speak. He stated that as a whole, he was pleased with the overall efforts made in the 3% reduction in budget; that it was a start toward making an attempt to get government under control; that he did have a concern about the 180% increase in the building maintenance area; that he wondered what caused it; that social services, public assistance, there is a 216% increase in AFDCEA requests and a 233% increase in AFCFC requests; that at the same time, there is a 2.5 reduction in the Council on Aging request, which provides an underspoken but a commendable service to our senior citizens; that the massive increase in total property increase should be reconsidered. He asked the Commissioners to review certain areas of the budget and scale down the areas that can be scaled down.

**Ed Holland, Jr.**, 3956 Silk Hope-Gum Springs Road, Pittsboro, NC, stated that he understands reasonable business decisions need to be made while looking at tax funds and determining how they are to be spent; that the children of Chatham County are one of the best investments that we can have. He presented a letter on behalf of Charles Stewart who was unable to be in attendance, and asked for additional support for County recreational programs and facilities. He stated that as a soccer league, they are in great need of support, particularly for soccer goals; that fees that they charge for players and some funding received from local businesses are their only funding efforts; that they have to mark their fields, uniforms, and other basic

supplies but field upkeep and goals are very expensive; that the children need and deserve high quality recreational facilities. He asked for two specific requests: 1) continue to support the soccer league as well as other recreational groups in the community by making available funds to help keep the equipment safe and up-to-date; 2) look at recreational facilities; that there needs to be some long term planning; that one approach would be to build a park in the community that would serve soccer, baseball, picnic areas, etc.; that if this is not feasible, we should look seriously at the opportunity to combine the resources of the County with the school system. He asked that the Commissioners continue their support and work to improve the available facilities in a careful and systematic way.

**Tim Hubbard**, PO Box 929, Pittsboro, NC, brought several members of his T-Ball, Blue Jays Team of youngsters. He stated that he has twenty-one kids who play on the field at one time; that because of field restrictions and budget limitations, there are only six teams to accommodate 120 kids; that they spend a lot of time in crowd control; that the kids work real hard and have improved throughout the season; that there are 210 girls playing softball on 13 teams. He asked that the Commissioners continue to support them; that with a little help, they might be able to have twelve teams with fifteen players. He invited everyone to their next game Monday at 5:30 P.M.

**Larry Hicks**, 128 Persimmon Hill, Pittsboro, applauded the Manager in terms of budget preparation. He stated that he was impressed with the comprehensive budget compilation by the County Manager's finance and budget staff; that the agencies have been very receptive to the requests of the Commissioners; that the budget as it stands in terms of the current goals is a pretty lean budget. He stated that he is the Associate Director of Housing for Administrative Services at the University of North Carolina where he is responsible for a \$15 million annual budget, long range planning, facility construction and renewal; that his department is self-supporting and must maintain its facilities and services with no State or university support; that his department utilizes a combination of annual revenues, fund reserves, and debt service in managing annual operation expenses, maintenance, services, renovations, and new construction; that in floating \$9 million in revenue bonds, they received a AA- rating; that the strong rating was attributed to the use of fund reserves, instead of strictly debt service, for long range renovation and construction planning; that he is concerned with the reduction and elimination of the County's construction reserves; that this will threaten the County's current bond rating and will result in the exclusive use of tax revenues to fund any future debt; that in the next year or so, we will be looking at another \$9 million in bond indebtedness; that interest in the first year alone at 7% would cost \$630,000; that over the course of a twenty year debt, the County's cost of borrowing would almost equal the amount borrowed; that he recommends \$.05 per \$100 of the ad valorem tax to go to a construction reserve. He listed several initiatives in support of a vision which the Board must support if the vision is to be achieved. He stated that all have seen the impact of growth on this County which include overcrowded schools, the need for additional emergency services, water and sewer issues, and economic development. He stated that now is not the time to reduce taxes; that the Commissioners need to look beyond a one-year political gain; that it is time to place the University Watershed rezoning issue back on the agenda; that our environmental future must be protected. He thanked the Commissioners for their time and this opportunity.

**Tommy Glosson**, 738 Mt. Olive Chapel Road, Pittsboro, NC, thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to speak. He stated that he had problems with \$90 solid waste fee; that it started at \$45 and has doubled; that people in an adjoining county can have their garbage picked up at their door for \$174; that another concern is that it is set up for land use planning and zoning within the County; that it is taking away property rights from the people; that some of the money be used to inform people and educate the people; that there is enough control already.

**Larry Mabe**, 173 Cardinal Court, Pittsboro, NC, thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to speak. He stated that the parents, teachers, and students in the school system need the Commissioners

support; that he believes everyone indicated they would support education in Chatham County; that the public was kind enough to support the Board of Education's and the Commissioners' request for more funding for Chatham County Schools. He thanked the Commissioners for that opportunity and the public for that support. He stated that every amount of funding invested in young people, now and in the future, will cost the people less as tax payers than the \$25,000 per person spent on putting people in prison; that among the few things that are more expensive than an education is the lack of it; that we can not afford that expense.

**Susan Helmer**, 410 Dowd Street, Siler City, NC, Director of Chatham County Together, stated that the County recently cut Chatham County Together's budget their 3% which amounted to \$69. She stated that she knows the Commissioners have had a lot of difficult decisions and how much they support and deeply care about what goes on in the County for children, old people, and everyone in between. She urged the County to stick with the tax base that we have. She stated that a \$.03 increase or decrease would not make that much difference in terms of money but that it adds up to a lot that can help in the children's lives and the quality in this community; that it costs \$40,000 to send one child to training schools for one year; that programs like hers and others are keeping kids out of training schools; that her program had \$70,000 worth of volunteer hours in it last year; that they receive \$2093 from County for which they get a lot of bucks for their return; that the Commissioners shouldn't be pushed to cut taxes because everyone else is doing it; that the needs are there, the services have to be there, and what we pay today will be returned tomorrow.

**Rick West**, 112 Forest Creek Drive, Pittsboro, NC, stated that for the benefit of the individual who spoke about zoning, he does think there is a lot of misunderstanding about zoning; that he usually gets calls from people in unzoned areas but he always tells them that if the people meet the minimum regulations, they can put anything they want to next to the property owner and that there is nothing they can do about it; that they need to be involved in the process and get the County zoned by professionals the way it should be zoned. He stated that on behalf of the schools, the Commissioners took the bond issue to the people and the people said they wanted schools built; that the people have given the Commissioners the message that they believe in education; that he wishes they had the same opportunity to fund the services; that they want the facilities, but the facilities are nothing but buildings if the teachers are not put in it and given the supplies to do what needs to be done and let the professionals in education do what they need to do; that 95% of education funds are spent in the schools and only 5% are spent on administration; that there seems to be a notion that the budget needs to be cut and that education needs to be cut; that he doesn't see how the budget can be cut and services maintained at the same level; that the County can pay now or pay greater later; that the teachers use the money that is given as a supplement to buy extra supplies for the children in their classrooms; that the State and the County do not adequately fund education; that many things have been done at the schools with free, volunteer, parent labor; that the parents would like to be able to buy some of the frills for the schools if the basic needs are met and if the tax rate needs to stay where it is, leave it there.

**Daphne Hill**, 2690 Goldston Road, Pittsboro, NC, teacher in Chatham County and President of Local Education Association, stated that a list of goals had been presented to the school board and that the school board in their expansion budget had in turn addressed two priorities as follows: 1) to reduce class size; that this is the most important thing that can be done to help the teachers in their job of teaching; 2) increase teacher supplement; that Chatham County becomes a training ground; that teachers start here, get a couple of years experience and then move on to adjoining counties who have greater supplements; that there are good teachers in the County who are loyal, dedicated; talented; hard-working; that if the teachers don't meet the children's' needs, they will not be met; that each additional teacher requested by the school board will impact directly on the quality education given to the children.

**Hilda Glosson**, Old Graham Road, Pittsboro, NC, Director of Housing Authority, stated that everyone in the County is not rich; that the Commissioners shouldn't forget that there are poor people living in the County; that everyone has to pay. She asked that the Commissioners be fair to everyone when they set their

rates.

Commissioner Grimes moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson, to close the public hearing and adjourn the meeting. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0) and the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 P.M.

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Uva R. Holland, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Sandra B. Lee  
Clerk to the Board