

**MINUTES**  
**CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING**  
**JUNE 02, 2010**

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The Board of Commissioners (“the Board”) of the County of Chatham, North Carolina, met in the Siler City Courthouse, 311 North Second Avenue, located in Siler City, North Carolina, at 6:00 PM on June 02, 2010.

Present: Chair Sally Kost; Vice Chair, George Lucier; Commissioners Mike Cross, Carl Thompson, and Tom Vanderbeck

Staff Present: County Manager, Charlie Horne; Renee Paschal, Assistant County Manager; Finance Officer, Vicki McConnell; Performance Manager, Sybil Tate; Clerk to the Board, Sandra B. Sublett; and Deputy Clerk to the Board, Elizabeth Plata

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair welcomed everyone in attendance and called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

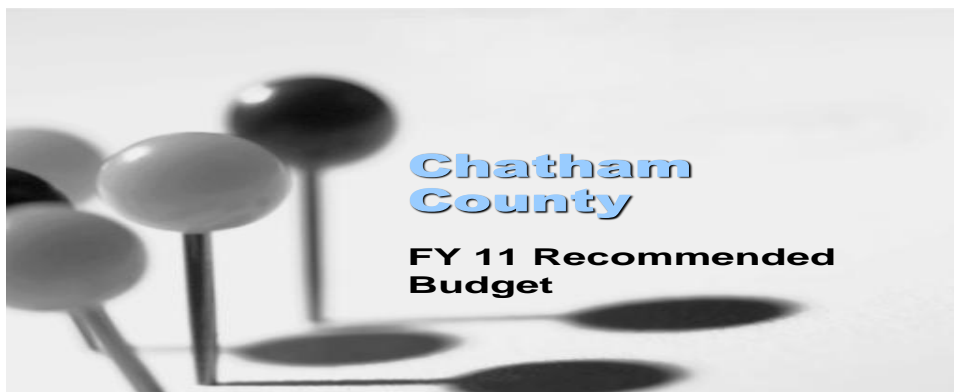
**BUDGET PRESENTATION**

**FY 2010-2011 Recommended Budget Presentation:** Presentation of the recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2010-2011

Charlie Horne, County Manager, reviewed specifics of the budget. He explained that property values total \$8.6 billion; that staff is recommending a tax increase of 2.5 cents; that one penny generates \$836,504; that anticipated property tax revenue would be \$53,530,541; that the General Fund Fund Balance appropriated is \$3,907,708; that the Water Fund budget totals \$5,688,535; and the Waste Management Fund totals \$3,080,558.

Sybil Tate, Performance Manager, presented a PowerPoint on the FY 2011 Recommended Budget. She reviewed the budget process, economic conditions, new commitments, mandated services, revenue highlights, major funds, expansion, improvements to the budget document, Commissioners’ goals, fund balance, the Capital Improvements Program, Chatham County Schools, and non-profit agencies. The PowerPoint follows in its entirety:

**SUMMARY OF CHATHAM COUNTY FY 2011**  
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET**



## Budget Process (Page 10)

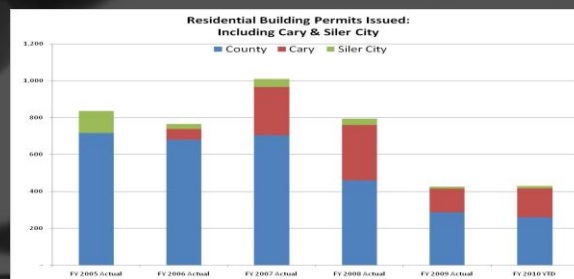
- Staff is presenting the Manager's Recommended Budget—*this is just the 1<sup>st</sup> step*
- Before the budget is finalized, commissioners will:
  - Hold 2 public hearings to hear from the public
  - Hold a series of budget work sessions in early June
  - Make changes based on public input, etc.
- Goal is to have the budget finalized on June 21

## FY 2011...A challenging year

- Revenues continue to decline
- Local economic indicators improving, but slowly
- Several new commitments in FY 2011, including opening 6 new facilities

## Economic Conditions (Pages 35-36)

- The number of building permits improving slightly over FY 2009



## Economic Conditions (Pages 35-36)

- Property tax base expected to grow only 2.1% in FY 2011; motor vehicle values continue to decline
- State budget shortfall may mean more cuts to counties and schools
- County estimated shortfall in FY 2010 is about \$450K (0.5%)

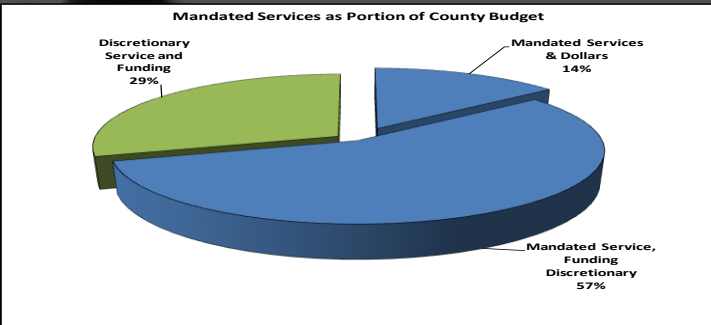
### New Commitments

- Margaret Pollard Middle School opens January 2011--\$788K
- Chatham Community Library opens fall 2010--\$362K
- Two new community college buildings open in the fall--\$91K
- Two new parks open--\$224K

### New Commitments

- Recommended increase for schools to offset state cuts--\$709K
  - Mandated increase in retirement contribution--\$274K
- Total=\$2.4 million

### Mandated Services (Page 230)



### Highlights

- Overall, revenues are expected to decline slightly in FY 2011, including:
  - Interest down 52%
  - Sales tax down 8%
- Without new commitments, the general fund budget was cut 4%



## Revenue Highlights

- A 2.5-cent tax increase is recommended—generates \$2.1 million (less than the new commitments)
- Most fire departments requesting small increases in fire tax rates
- Fund balance appropriation recommended: \$3.9 million—all earmarked for one-time items
- Budget also reflects expenditures for 6% occupancy tax rate



## Major Funds

- General Fund: \$84.6M, 2% increase
- Water Fund: \$5.7M, a 10% decrease
- Waste Management: \$3.1M, a 21% decrease



## Expansion (page 26-29)

Recommended expansion (2.09 cents on tax rate)

- 1.83 cents for new facilities (Margaret Pollard Middle, Chatham Community Library, 2 community college buildings, and 2 parks)
- 0.15 cents for new positions in Emergency Dispatch, Health, Sheriff, Sustainable Communities, and Social Services
- 0.11 for other expansion (codification of ordinances, electronic tax listing, etc.)



## Commissioner Goals (Pages 4-7 & Appendix D)

- Open Government
  - Improves budget document to comply with GFOA
  - Purchases sound system for commissioner meetings
- Land Use Planning
  - Funds Land Use Plan update
  - Reallocates 2 positions in Sustainable Communities to address affordable housing, green building, and resource conservation



### **Commissioner Goals (Pages 4-7 & Appendix D)**

- Fiscal Management
  - Implements recommendations of Performance Team
  - Reduces operating budget (not including new facilities)
- Conservation
  - Funds completion of energy upgrades to county buildings
  - Funds waste audit
  - Continues the Pittsboro Express
  - Funds Utility Service Worker to improve valve exercising and reduce water loss



### **Commissioner Goals (Pages 4-7 & Appendix D)**

- Public Safety
  - Funds several capital improvements to enhance public safety
  - Funds positions in dispatch and Sheriff's Office
- Personnel/Hiring/Staffing
  - Funds cultural competency survey
  - Retains all filled positions
- Economic Development
  - Funds operating costs for 2 new community college buildings



### **Commissioner Goals (Pages 4-7 & Appendix D)**

- Schools
  - Increases base funding for Chatham County Schools to offset loss in state funding
  - Increases time for school health position in Health Dept.
- Other Goals/Issues
  - Includes \$4,000 in revenue from Town of Pittsboro to partner on storm water services



### **Fund Balance (Pages 7-10)**

- Staff estimates we will use about \$450K in FY 2010
- Stated goal is 20%; should be at 26% at the end of FY 2010
- Recommending an appropriation of \$3.9 million in FY 2011; all earmarked for non-recurring expenses, including school capital outlay and CIP
- Staff estimates fund balance will drop to 23% at the end of FY 2011
- Five-year model shows fund balance will be above 20 percent



### **Capital Improvements Program (Pages 32-33 & Appendix E)**

- Recommended changes:
  - Appropriate additional \$350K from fund balance for 964 East Street renovations
  - Postpone emergency services building to FY 2013
  - Remove schools facilities condition assessment
  - Fund auditorium upgrades with Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB's)



### **Chatham County Schools (Pages 78-79)**

- Staff from the county and school system worked closely to develop the recommended budget
- Keeps school CIP projects on track
- 7% increase in current expense
- Maintains teachers supplement



### **Non-profit Agencies (Pages 122-127)**

- Manager made minor changes in panel recommendations
- Written recommendations from panels were provided
- Commissioners have \$10,000 to allocate directly



### **Public Invited to Participate**

- Public Hearings:
  - June 1, 6 p.m., Agriculture Auditorium, Pittsboro
  - June 2, 6 p.m., Siler City Courtroom
- Copy of the budget available on the website: [www.chathamnc.org](http://www.chathamnc.org) (click on quick links)
- Copies of the budget available in each of the county's libraries



### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Commissioner Lucier thanked Ms. Tate for making the presentation. He questioned the 2010 approved budget stating that that budget was \$85,939,000; that this year's proposed budget is \$84,552,000; that Ms. Tate stated that it was a 2% increase, but he believes this to be a decrease in the proposed budget.

Renee Paschal, Assistant County Manager, explained that the budget approved last year was approximately \$81,000,000; that the budget reflected in the budget document for 2010 is the amended budget and it is \$82.8 million; that the amount to which he refers may have been a combination of the operating funds, but it was not the general fund.

Chair Kost asked if this was the general fund only or if it included utility funds. She reminded those in attendance that this was the recommended budget by the Manager, but had yet to be discussed stating that the first work session was to be held the next day on June 3, 2010 in the Henry H. Dunlap Building Classroom beginning at 9:00 AM.

**Janak Patel**, 1515 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Siler City, NC, provided handouts on the occupancy tax and thanked the Board for allowing him the opportunity to speak. He stated that he had been operating a lodging operation in Chatham County for eleven years and had been in the hotel business for twenty-seven years; that this has been one of the most difficult times he has ever seen; that the proposed existing occupancy tax almost doubled the existing tax; that in a time where the nation has seen an almost 10-15% decline in hotel revenues, Siler City has seen a decline of approximately 40%; that it is a very tough situation; that during this time of recession, tough decisions have been made including cuts in labor and other costs in order to survive; that an increase in the occupancy tax will have a great impact in their businesses; that they offer competitive rates; that they had the same rates ten years ago that they offer today; and that neighboring counties, Guilford, Alamance, Moore, Lee, and Wake Counties charge 3% because they have attractions.

Chair Kost responded that there will be a special public hearing on the occupancy tax issue at the Board of Commissioners' June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. She stated that they have the legislative authority to increase the tax; that is why it is on the agenda; and the money goes to support the Business Bureau and hopefully generate more customers for local businesses.

Mr. Patel stated that he was for the occupancy tax increase fifteen years ago; that at this time, he does not agree with it; and that any additional expense will jeopardize their businesses.

Commissioner Lucier asked if the Board decided to do this, if Mr. Patel preferred that it come out of the property tax rather than an increase in the occupancy tax.

Mr. Patel stated that he definitely did not prefer an increase in the occupancy tax; that when the economy improves, an occupancy tax would be welcomed.

Commissioner Thompson asked if there is an organization that exists for businesses like his in the area and if he is contact with them.

Mr. Patel stated not in Chatham County; that there is an Indian Merchant Association of which he is chairman.

**David Simmons**, 3188 Siler City Snow Camp Road, Siler City, NC, stated that he would like to address the expansion of the occupancy tax from 3% to 6%. He stated that there are eleven lodging industries in Chatham County; that when they give a bill to their guests, it includes a 10.75% tax liability that could increase to 13.75%. He asked what other business in Chatham County asks their customers for a tax liability of either 10.7% or 13.75% for goods and services. He stated that he didn't know of any other business in the County that asked their customers for this kind of tax. He stated that when his customers ask why the tax is so much, he tells them that it is to help pay for the governor and the County Commissioners. He asked why is it that just eleven businesses are being asked to support the tax burden of the travel and tourism development authority that is not shared by the others of the County.

**Claire Kane**, 150 Walnut Glen, Moncure, NC, presented her comments to the Board and provided them in their entirety for the record as follows:

"I work at UNC in the Department of Public Safety where I assist with the planning and administering the park & rides free transit and everything else for those who do not park on campus. That includes the PX, or the Pittsboro bus.

I am here tonight to thank you for requesting the continuation of the Pittsboro bus. In April, the route served 2,520 individual trips, over 22 days of operation. That's an average of 115 trips per day.

The Pittsboro to UNC vanpool, in operation for over 12 years, happily dissolved because of this bus route and they are all thrilled with the service.

I also want to urge the Commissioners to consider the subject of the Pittsboro bus in a broader context. Performance measures used to assess urban transit such as the cost per mile or per trip are not valid when assessing rural transit. How can we possibly compare? We have farther to go and there are less of us going!

Instead, it's best to look at whether or not the installation of transit serves our local, regional and even our state's goals.

The northeast end of Chatham is in a nonattainment 8-hour ozone area according to the Division of Air Quality. The more people use alternative transportation, the easier time we will have keeping our county from contributing to this problem as we grow.

Wise planning now can insure we demonstrate a better way to go, rather than follow the rest of the Triangle down a polluted congested highway.

As important as this is, the impact of the bus on employment in Chatham means more to me. For the first time, those living in Siler City don't need a car to work in Chapel Hill. I know a woman that commutes from Siler City. She is in my Department, and she benefits from the connectivity between the Chatham Transit Network and the Pittsboro to UNC bus, for which she gets a free pass.

But even more significant, is that there are many people who don't know about this bus. It takes time to market and to just plain inform the public about these options and even to get everyone used to the idea once they do know. **No native Chathamite** grew up taking the bus. That's a given.

Among those that haven't thought about it yet, there are many one-car families, especially with the current economy. There are folks who, before this bus, have not been able to think of getting a job that was located anywhere they couldn't walk, bike or get a lift from a friend or family member. So they have mostly been unemployed."



With the investment of time, its inescapable that developing the transit system in Chatham County will lead to higher rate of employment. It will also lead to more opportunity for our citizens who could not even think about it before, to take advantage of all the Triangle has to offer in the way of education.

That's wonderful for our County. If given the option and the encouragement, most people will work and enrich and better themselves. But to start out, we all need the resources and the tools and the vision that it can happen for us. Putting these tools in place for the first time will have a profound impact. Along those same lines – although I no longer have children at home, I definitely support increased investment in the public schools. Those growing up here now hold the creativity we need to create an even more vibrant community in the years to come.”

**Don Lein**, 13 Crosswinds Estates, Pittsboro, NC, presented his comments to the Board and provided them in their entirety for the record as follows:

“Madam Chairman, Members of the Board, and County Executives, the Western Chatham Club of Boys and Girls Clubs of America wishes to take this opportunity to thank you, give you a very brief status report and seek additional funding.

Last September you issued us a challenge grant of \$20,000 which was intended to help us have enough money to hire our CPO, which we did out of approximately 90 resumes received and hired Sarah Marion in late March. She has more than lived up to our expectations and she has us on a schedule which will allow us to open this month, finances allowing. Your grant also spurred our fundraising, by adding more credibility that a Boy's and Girl's Club was indeed going to happen. Between then and now we have raised approximately \$100,000 and that is not easy in our current economic climate.

Before BGCA will allow us to open our doors, however, they require us to have the first year's budget either in house or in bona fide pledges. This budget must meet BGCA standards and since they have under their aegis over 4000 operating clubs, they know what they are talking about.

We submitted a grant request to the County for \$25,000 and Ms Paschal and her team recommended that we receive \$15,000 and for that we are grateful. However, with the ambitious fiscal goal we have, every penny counts and we are asking you to consider supplementing this amount, either to the amount you gave us last year or the amount we originally requested.

We have given Sandra a copy of 4 documents which she will distribute subsequently, which will give you a better understanding of what we have done and are doing. First is a copy of a demographic analysis of our first 103 members, printed on our BGCA-WCC letterhead with our Board Members and Officers listed, Second is a barometer of the status of our fundraising, Third is a Newsletter that we sent out a short time ago to our contributors and interested parties - please look on the second page to see the extent of contributors and Fourth is a list of partnering/cooperating agencies that we have engaged in our efforts.

Thank you very much for the time and we would request that you both consider our request and, secondly, set aside some time at an upcoming meeting where we can go into these items in greater detail.”

Commissioner Lucier thanked Mr. Lein for his and everyone's efforts on this project. He stated this is filling a huge gap; that what they are doing is important, and that the Board will consider his request as what they are doing is an important service to the County and the Siler City area.

**Yvonne Carter Stegenga**, 4389 Siler City-Snow Camp Road, Siler City, NC, stated that she is a co-owner and operator of Heart Friends Inn Bed and Breakfast and a registered nurse at Chatham Hospital. She stated that she does not complain about paying taxes, not payroll, sales, property, federal, state, county, or occupancy taxes; that as a member of society, she realized that it is part of her responsibility; that she is in attendance to give her

opinion about doubling the occupancy tax for lodging; that as a small business owner, it is her considered opinion that this will negatively affect her; that she will have choice but to pass on this increase to her guests which will increase their expenditures; that she does support a minor increase in the occupancy tax but thinks doubling it is harsh and unnecessary; that the majority of North Carolina's one hundred counties currently have a 3% occupancy tax; that all have between 3% and 6% occupancy tax except Mecklenburg County which has an 8% tax; that most of the counties that have a 6% occupancy tax have major tourist attractions such as beaches, mountains, or major metropolitan living; that in the absence of such attractions in Chatham County, is increasing Chatham County's rate from 3% to 6% warranted; that at the Pittsboro meeting last night, several folks spoke about events and festivals being well attended and bringing in revenue for Chatham County; however, this does not address the issue of visitors staying overnight in Chatham County; that there has been a steady downward trend over the past two to three years while tourists may support day events, the economy has seriously affected people's ability to pamper themselves with a weekend get-away; and that she respectfully requests that the Board reconsider this issue and if there has to be an increase at all, that it be a 1% increase.

**Oscar Moncada**, 4421 Manns Chapel Road, Chapel Hill, NC, presented his comments to the Board and provided them in their entirety for the record as follows:

**"OPPOSITION TO OCCUPANCY TAX INCREASE & HELP TO ELIMINATE MONOPOLY BY SIENA HOTEL in Chatham County:**

1. If you increase the Occupancy Tax you will put me out of business.
2. Taxes are an issue for guest making a reservation. When people call to make a reservation they ask about the rates, taxes, and the total cost of the stay. Several people had questioned the present 10.75%, they think is too high.
3. Present Situation – Serious Competition in Orange County (Chapel Hill)
  - I am losing guest to two types of competition:
  - Hotels and extended stay lodging cut-throw rates of \$69 and last minute deal discounts of 50%
  - Siena Hotel monopoly – exclusive agreement with Governors Club, Briar Chapel, and Chapel Ridge. The Siena put out of business the Governors Club Cottages (\$24k loss in tax revenue for Chatham County), this is a very clear and detrimental trend.
4. I must be competitive in order to survive
  - I cut my room rates \$40 to compete but still losing business to Chapel Hill hotels. Please check my occupancy rates with the Chatham County Finance Department, is really depressing.
  - Orange County charges only 3% Occupancy Tax; Durham and Wake charge 6% Occupancy Tax because they can leverage the entertainment that they offer.

**WE MUST OFFER INSENTIVES TO BRING MORE GUEST TO THE AREA – LIKE IT WAS DONE WITH THE LOW REAL ESTATE TAXES.**

If you increase the Occupancy Tax you will put me out of business."

Commissioner Lucier stated that they obviously want to increase travel and tourism; that that is what the money is used for; that they need to make sure that businesses such as these thrive. He asked what the Board could do as a county to help his business thrive and put him at a competitive advantage.

Mr. Moncada stated that he could not improve his property because he did not have the money. He again expressed concern with regard to raising the occupancy tax. He welcomed the Board to visit anytime they could.

Commissioner Thompson stated that he is hearing that an increase in the occupancy tax would put Mr. Moncada and others at a disadvantage to compete at this time; that by keeping the present tax rate, it allows everyone to keep rates as low as possible.

**Mary Helen Moody**, NC Arts, Inc., PO Box 643, Siler City, NC, presented her comments to the Board and provided them in their entirety for the record as follows:

“During the past few months, NCAI Board has been working to revise our operating procedures, job descriptions, by-laws and the structure of the Board of Directors. In the process of the revisions, we have been working to streamline our expenses. At this time we are not able to provide salary for a paid director. We are functioning at this time with an all volunteer staff except for a small salary paid to an assistant treasurer. A paid director is a very viable need for the arts incubator, whenever funding for that purpose can be procured. We currently have 15 artists in our studio with have 3 “hatching” to set up their own studios/gallery in the old Hadley Hotel, which is in our art district. The spaces being vacated have either been rented again or people have expressed interest in the space. The sales gallery is doing well and is staffed every morning by a woman whose services are paid for by an outside organization through a grant that they have. The afternoons are staffed by volunteers.”

**Charles Johnson**, 161 Loves Creek Church Road, Siler City, NC, welcomed the Board of Commissioners to Siler City and thanked them for their support of Siler City agencies. He praised the NC Arts Incubator, Chatham County Literacy Council, Chatham Trades, and the efforts of the Economic Development Corporation.

**Joe Glasson**, 11408 Governor Drive, Chapel Hill, NC, stated that this budget process has been the most inclusive process that he has seen within the County especially among the staff and department heads; that he looked to see how well the Commissioners engaged the public in the process and how well they effectively listened to them as they speak to them; that he has looked at the assumptions made about the coming year; that having made reasonable assumptions about the economic environment in which they are dealing, and at the same time being conservative, he thinks they have done a very nice job of balancing it; that the Board has said loud and clear is that they support education and the budget shows it; that when they talk about economic development in this County, one of the first questions they get asked of anyone thinking about relocating or locating in Chatham County is about the schools; that the Board of Commissioners worked very well with the Board of Education; that the Board has also looked at how well the citizens are being kept safe; that they have also looked at their own departments to determine greater efficiencies; that he thinks the Board has done a good job in laying out initiatives and priorities for the future of the County within the current operating budget and the Capital Improvements Plan; that the Board has done a very good job of collaborating with the towns and have made the towns and the County one in the same; and that we do not move unless we move together.

Commissioner Lucier thanked Mr. Glasson for his comments. He stated that the County’s bond rating had just increased which will help with economic development and that Chatham County is number one in terms of the bond rating for counties Chatham’s size.

**Molly Matlock**, 145 Bynum Hill Road, Pittsboro, NC, presented her comments to the Board and provided them in their entirety for the record as follows:

“Thank you Commissioners for the very difficult job you do. I’m very glad *you* are doing it.

I’m also very grateful that you understand the value that our strong arts and cultural heritage lends to our local economy and to reinforcing a positive sense of Chatham identity. This heritage ranges from our string band artists like Tommy Edwards and Charlie Daniels, who grew up in Goldston to our rich visual arts presented at the NC Arts Incubator and through the latest Siler City arts initiative with Chatham Trades to Gospel, not to mention the gospel traditions in Moncure and the Latino foodways and dance heritage presented through such agencies as Shakori Hills and the Hispanic Liaison. As Nancy Trovillon, Deputy Director of the NC Arts Council says, “Chatham County is sitting on an arts goldmine.”

Indeed we are lucky, and the goldmine Trovillon references offers a pre-existing foundation for economic growth and investment. Did you know that North Carolina shows more growth in the creative industry than any other state in the U.S. ([www.artsnc.org](http://www.artsnc.org))?

In 2010, North Carolina’s creative industry employs 300,000 people and pays out \$10 billion in employee compensation. The market value of goods and services produced by this

creative industry is more than \$41.4 billion. However, arts, as well as environmental agencies, still earn 80% less in grant and private donations than any other kind of non-profit ([http://www.afpnet.org/ka/ka-3.cfm?content\\_item\\_id=12886&folder\\_id=2345](http://www.afpnet.org/ka/ka-3.cfm?content_item_id=12886&folder_id=2345)).

To supplement what our ChathamArts board president, Lesley Landis has already shared, in FY09.10, ChathamArts:

- a. Won the 2009 Independent Weekly Arts Award, the 2009 Village Pride Award from WCHL Radio, and the Jerry L. Markatos Award for Diversity in Media.
- b. Doubled our attendance numbers at all of our major events. Nearly forty percent come from outside the county to spend money in local restaurants, retail establishments, and at our events.
- c. Launched an arts radio talk show through a partnership with WCOM 103.5 FM in Carrboro, NC.
- d. Partnered with Briar Chapel Development to present the Glenn Miller Orchestra at Northwood High School.
- e. Presented celebrity artists such as Clyde Edgerton, Angus MacLachlan, William Henry Curry, Jaki Shelton Green, and "Rhett & Link" at our Chatham County events.
- f. Met with Progress Energy, the Chatham Economic Development Corporation, the Chatham Artist Guild, and the NC Arts Incubator to begin conceptualizing a Cultural Heritage Trails Tour and Map project.
- g. Coordinated ten arts-in-education public school residencies statistically proven to reduce drop-out rates, narrow the achievement gap, heighten academic achievement, and increase student volunteerism in the community.
- h. Partnered with William Henry Curry and the Durham Symphony Orchestra to present the first full symphony concert in Chatham County.
- i. Integrated our agency "brand" by unveiling a new website ([www.chathamarts.org](http://www.chathamarts.org)), a new brochure, and other matching marketing materials.
- j. Launched our "Shooting 4 Change" Youth Documentary Filmmaking after school program with at-risk youth from SAGE Academy Alternative School in Siler City.

And we not only closed our \$9,000 anticipated budget gap, but we are ending FY09.10 with a 3% reserve, a difficult feat for a small, rural arts non-profit in an economic crunch. Still, 30% of ChathamArts' \$168,000 budget comes from corporate and foundation grants whose budgets have been slashed for the upcoming year. For this reason, ChathamArts faces a 12% decrease in anticipated funds in FY10.11 & FY11.12.

Again, thank you for the incredibly good and hard work you do. I feel that you and the manager's office have done an amazing job with the proposed budget. I understand that the proposal allows for \$35,000 for the arts and that \$45,000 was requested. There are many arts efforts and agencies in Chatham and few funds to support them. As you know, these agencies create a lot for our community with very, very little resource. So, that additional \$10,000 would go a long way. Whatever you decide, I want to thank you for the support your decisions demonstrate."

**Diana Hales**, 528 Will Be Lane, Siler City, NC, treasurer of the Rocky River Heritage Foundation, presented her comments to the Board and provided them in their entirety for the record as follows:

"The Rocky River Heritage Foundation (RRHF) supports continuing expenditures that protect the environment and the special rural/urban landscape of Chatham County. With the pressures of residential growth squeezing in from Chapel Hill and Cary, and eventual

growth on the western edge of the county, the county's Environmental Review Board is an important tool to make sure the hidden costs of development don't destroy our quality of life.

The Rocky River is 37 miles of beautiful pools and riffles that resemble a mountain stream. More than 35% of the county is in the Rocky River watershed. Land practices make a direct impact on this river, and development can do harm or, in the best case, help protect the Rocky River. The RRFH encourages the continuation of both the Environmental Review Board and the Sustainable Communities program in the County. Both are forward-thinking programs that show Chatham County cares about its environmental future. Those bodies will have a positive impact on the Rocky River and help preserve it for future generations.

A park on the Rocky River is essential. People need the opportunity to see, experience and appreciate this special river. The RRHF requests that the 2010 recommendations of the Triangle Land Conservancy be followed. One of those recommendations is for the creation of a walking trail along the Rocky River in the Chatham Business Campus, off Hwy 64 in Siler City. This trail, which could serve the new Chatham Hospital, and the new community college campus, could become a destination as a river walk. The economics of parks include not only the direct recreational benefits for citizens, but also the health benefits provided by the open space, trees, and cleaner water that have a calculable financial impact in terms of county expenditures.

Thanks for the opportunity to support this budget and a park along the Rocky River.”

Commissioner Lucier stated that they have asked the County Manager to look at the Business Park and see what can be done in terms of access to the river.

**Gary Phillips**, 97 Box Turtle Road, Siler City, NC, stated that he would support Ms. Hales' comments regarding the Rocky River. He stated that when the property was first purchased by the Board of Commissioners, one of the reasons they purchased it was to protect the Rocky River's heritage; that it was always intended to become a park that would be useful to the community and would become a river walk for Siler City and other residents of Chatham County.

Mr. Phillips presented his comments to the Board and provided them in their entirety for the record as follows:

“I have come here tonight as a board member of the Family Violence and Rape Crisis Center to support our current level of funding instead of what is recommended in the manager's budget. I believe that the committee did not understand the nature and importance of the funding and how this cut would have a direct impact on the services we are able to provide the community. We asked for partial funding of our development coordinator and volunteer coordinator positions. They may sound like extras, but they are not.

While this funding is not for direct services, our ability to provide direct services is directly related to raise the +/- \$1M each year required for services, such as shelter, counseling, support groups and prevention projects, and to recruit and train the volunteers required to provide direct services, such as the crisis line, and other support—that was more than 5000 volunteer hours last year.

We have used this funding and our volunteer hours to match state and federal money, providing match for more than \$300,000 last year. Without this money we may have a hard time matching these funds.

This funding has helped us write collaborative grants to fund two positions in the Sheriff's Office over each of the past several years, as well as officers in the two police departments, and assistance in funding for Family Visitation Services. We want to continue to support the county's efforts to build a strong response and this funding helps us do that.

We have been recognized across the state and nation as an outstanding domestic violence program winning the following awards:

- 2005 Mary Byron Award (National award)
- 2006 NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence Excellence Award (given to 1 program in the state every 2 years)
- 2009 GSK Impact Award (Triangle Regional Award)
- NCDVA Awards

In closing, the county was who originally suggested that we use our request for funding from you in this way, more than 10 years ago. They saw it as an investment then. We still see it as an investment, one that leverages additional community resources, both for our agency and the county. You have been getting an excellent return on your investment with us. Thank you.”

Commissioner Lucier stated that they would look into the Rocky River request. He stated that it was a pleasure for Commissioners Cross, Vanderbeck, and he to be part of the talent show raising funds for the Family Violence and Rape Crisis Center.

**Margaret Worth**, 105 Fidelity Street, Apt. A-24, Carrboro, NC, stated that she worked in Chatham County for two years for North Carolina Rural Community Assistance Program (NRCAP) and that she also represents the Affordable Housing Advisory Board. She urged the Board to support the proposed position for Affordable Housing stating that lots of those working in the community have struggled particularly during this economic crisis; that a focus on affordable housing will bring benefits to the County; that many families of young children are moving into the County and live in older, deteriorating homes where lead exposure occurs; and that she encouraged the Board to support the requested position.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and adjourned the meeting at 7:13 PM.

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Sally Kost, Chair

ATTEST:

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Sandra B. Sublett, CMC, NCCCC Clerk to the Board  
Chatham County Board of Commissioners