

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
ROWAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BUDGET HEARINGS  
MAY 31, 1982

The Board of Rowan County Commissioners met in Adjourned Session in the Community Building on May 31, 1982 at 7:00 P.M. to hear Department Heads personnel present their FY 1982-83 budget.

Commissioners present were: Chairman Eugene McCombs, Commissioners Rufus Honeycutt, Hall Steele, Jim Sides and Jim Cohen.

Department Head personnel present were: Phil Barton, Director of the Library, Larry Parrish, Tri-County Mental Health, John Stirewalt, Sheriff, and Seth Murdoch, County Manager.

Chairman McCombs called to order and Commissioner Rufus Honeycutt opened with prayer.

Phil Barton, Library, presented his \$573,976 budget along with Chairman of the Board, Tom Caddell. Mr. Barton stated that it cost the county \$700 to be put on the County payscale because some workers had to receive minor raises to bring their salaries in line. He stated that some salaries were not paid for a full year. He revised the budget to reflect this change. Mr. Barton stated that periodicals, binding and processing materials had increases, especially processing by \$9,000. Mr. Barton explained that \$9,252 had been included for a temporary employee who is now working on conversion of the card catalog to a computerized or COM, library catalog; also slight increases were made in telephone, utilities and postage to reflect increased rates. Line item 6418 Maintenance and Repairs to building and grounds shows an almost \$15,000 increase. This involves a job much needed in repairing to gutters. The S. Rowan Library branch in order to get it into operation needs four part-time workers.

Mr. Sides recommended cutting the maintenance from \$20,000 to \$10,000-\$12,000 and to delay widening doors for handicapped. Mr. Barton said in order to widen doors- there would be a fee of \$1700 for masonry. A cost of \$8,000 for ice-guards for guttering which Mr. Sides recommended cutting out.

Mr. Honeycutt recommended letting their building committee come in and look at it and take their recommendation.

Commissioner Sides stated that he had only been on the board for a short time and that he had found Mr. Barton to be very cooperative and doing an excellent job.

Larry Parrish and his administrative secretary presented the Tri-County Mental Health Clinic budget- which reflected tax revenue to be up by about \$3,000 and ABC taxes expected to be given next year are down. Commissioner Sides recommended giving them the same amount of money that they received last year.

Sheriff Stirewalt and Lt. Potts presented the Sheriff's Department budget. It included 10% raises for deputies. Commissioner Honeycutt asked Stamey Carter, Accountant to read out the figure in line item #5424- Gas and Oil used through May- It read \$90,419. Mr. Carter said once you accrue June bills, line item 5435 New Equipment and machines- Mr. Murdoch stated that part of \$68,281.42 was reimbursed due to a car bought for Cleveland. The budget was amended that much.

Commissioner Cohen questioned the Sheriff's light weight cars. The Sheriff said he used them in civil process- and stated that they did not get good gas mileage. He said the station wagon requested should be ready in July. Commissioner Honeycutt said the station wagon should work out good at the landfill.

Commissioner Sides said he would not vote for two additional personnel for the Jail-pertaining to the request for two Janitors. This budget is up 35 ½%. Line item 3907- Bedding and Linen- change in law reads that operation of Local Confinement Facilities regarding mattresses must be in compliance with requirements established by the NC Department of Human Resources. A total of fifty-one (51) mattresses must be replaced prior to August 1, 1982 for us to comply with this law. So an increase of \$1,100 has been requested. An increase also in food and physician's fees, has been requested.

Sheriff Stirewalt informed the Board that there was a pending lawsuit in Gaston County. A prisoner is suing that County for not giving him access to recreation facilities and a law library. Commissioners felt like this was a problem for Gaston County.

The Sheriff also informed the Commissioners that air conditioning might have to be installed in the jail soon. A state Jail Inspector had ordered thermometers installed in all cells and bullpens and check each hour. If the temperature went over 92 degrees the jail would have to be air conditioned. The Sheriff also said the leaky roof was in bad need of repairs. Mr. Murdoch was instructed to get in touch with the contractor who installed the roof.

At this time, Chairman McCombs called a five minute recess- after the recess Commissioners heard from County Manager Seth Murdoch. Mr. Murdoch explained that he had submitted a 4.8% budget increase- 2 areas 5%-17% increase in telephone \$1.00 increase in dues and subscriptions. He then preceded to take each line item – Under coroner- Increase in autopsy- line item 3540-doctor and lab fees- increase from \$200 per autopsy to \$250. Mr. Murdoch requested a two step increase for Paul Canup, Engineer for money that he had saved the county for jobs at the airport and landfill. Line item 3642-Fire department radio service-increase added equipment. Line item 3662-increase because of city contract. 3692- County fire departments- increase due to a new station in Mt. Ulla.

Commissioner Sides recommended reducing the Arts Council and Chamber of Commerce to 0; and Rowan County Ambulance subsidy to \$80,000 and reduce Ambulance Service to the point where it would be operating on its own.

Mr. Murdoch then gave a run down on line item increases under General Administration. Explaining 5.08% increase in this budget.

Commissioner Sides was reassured that the County Audit was going out for bids the 1<sup>st</sup> of July.

Mr. Murdoch gave two suggestions for use of revenue. One make a study of county pay plan and classification and look at consolidating a merit plan. Suggested Ron Gillespie and Julean Self, former state employees who have set up a personnel consultant service. Mr. Sides said he would be opposed to hiring former state workers because their way of thinking had been influenced. Mr. Murdoch then recommended getting bids from other firms. Two- also a study of the county computer. Estimated cost \$8,000 to 10,000 each.

Chairman McCombs recommended setting up a contingency fund of \$200,000 for salaries. He explained that he had talked with Mr. Murdoch about his and he felt that some of the County salaries were too low.

Commissioner Sides suggested a merit pay system and hiring new workers at minimal salaries for their positions.

Commissioner Honeycutt said in the past, the merit system was abused. Department heads got raises.

Commissioner Cohen said in 1980 when he was running for County Commission, county salaries were no lower than adjoining counties. Mr. Murdoch said he had a study conducted by Catawba County officials that interest Commissioners. Commissioner Sides commented that “I don’t necessarily agree that what another County is doing, is what we should do.”

Mr. Murdoch said Dr. Lee Mandell of a systems development group at NC State University offered to study the data processing department. He would evaluate the existing IBM computer system and write a contract for it. He would also check out the new system.

Mr. Murdoch said adding components would require more personnel, while getting a new one would call for less staff. Mr. Murdoch was instructed to contact other counties that had taken advantage of the service.

Chairman McCombs adjourned the meeting until June 1, 1982 at which time decisions would be made concerning the salary study and computer matter. Commissioners will meet at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda L. Honeycutt, Clerk  
Board of County Commissioners