

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
Budget Work Session  
June 14, 2006 – 3:30 PM  
J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

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Present: Arnold S. Chamberlain, Chairman  
Jim Sides, Vice-Chairman  
Steve Blount, Member  
Frank Tadlock, Member  
Chad Mitchell, Member

County Manager William Cowan, Clerk to the Board Carolyn Athey and Finance Director Leslie Heidrick were present.

Chairman Chamberlain convened the meeting at 3:30 pm.

Chairman Chamberlain provided the Invocation.

County Manager William Cowan provided a handout and reported that EMS had received a grant in the amount of \$37,000. Mr. Cowan explained that this would be revenue against some of the funds the department had requested and would therefore decrease the amount needed for the new fiscal year.

Mr. Cowan shared a copy of a letter he received from District Attorney William Kenerly asking the County for temporary funding of 2 Assistant District Attorneys.

Mr. Cowan said the Personnel Board would be meeting the next day to discuss the Codes Enforcement positions and what it would take to attract and retain qualified Codes Enforcement personnel in Rowan County. Chairman Chamberlain felt the Personnel Board should review the matter and provide suggestions for the Board of Commissioners at a later date.

Mr. Cowan said the Personnel Board would also discuss the classification of all Department Directors. This could potentially affect the budget by about \$9700 if approved. Mr. Cowan said the matter would be brought before the Board at its meeting on June 19, 2006 and could be incorporated into the budget.

Chairman Chamberlain read the applicable General Statute regarding Commissioners compensation. It was noted that the Board of Commissioners should publicly and annually set their salaries.

Chairman Chamberlain moved to exempt the board from the cost of living adjustment (COLA) if it was voted in for all county employees and to make their salary what it is currently at present. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion.

Commissioner Blount said a previous Board had made a decision to tie Commissioners salaries to COLA to prevent a future Board from being faced with the awkward job of setting their own salaries.

Upon being put to a vote, the motion on the floor passed 3-2 with Commissioners Sides and Blount dissenting. The Chairman's salary was approved at \$14,650.22 and the Commissioners salary at \$12,208.30.

Commissioner Steve Blount provided 2 handouts and reviewed his research on tax cuts. Commissioner Blount reiterated his feelings from the previous budget work session of May 30, 2006:

- Funding schools at state average
- Tax Cut - Don't think we can afford tax cut and fund the schools.
- Rufty Holmes Senior Services - \$7,000 additional
- Telephone Surcharge- not in favor of that motion
- COLA - leave at 3.4% level
- Jail Pod – suggest debt finance that project
- RCCC- Always in support of Community College
- Health insurance—reduction in benefits, increase premium as presented
- Rescue Squad - additional \$118,000
- The rest of the budget as presented.

Commissioner Chad Mitchell voiced his support on the following budget items:

- Health Insurance as presented
- Rowan Cabarrus Community College as presented
- \$3.4 million appropriation to the schools
- 3.4% Cola to County employees
- \$7,000 to the Rufty Holmes Center
- Rescue Squad as presented
- Jail Pod – supported whether it be financed or paid cash

Commissioner Mitchell questioned the County Manager and Finance Director regarding the Fund Balance. After some discussion regarding reoccurring

revenues and the Fund Balance expected for the coming year, Commissioner Mitchell brought up the ramifications of a tax cut and financing the Jail Pod.

Commissioner Sides stated his support of the budget as follows:

- Tax cut – scaled back from 3 cents to 1.5 cents.
- Rowan Job Initiatives – would not support \$100,000 as requested
- COLA – support 1.5 cents
- Merit – supports merit bonus
- Sheriff’s Department Software – felt this purchase was premature in this year’s budget.
- EDC – fund at \$150,000
- Rowan Rescue Squad - \$34,000 could be cut
- Schools – support \$2.8 million as suggested by the County Manager
- Telephone Surcharge – Felt this charge was intended to be temporary and that it should be removed.

Commissioner Sides stated with these changes there would still be \$1.5 million, which would be enough room for a tax cut.

Commissioner Tadlock commented that a lot of good things had been brought up regarding the budget. Commissioner Tadlock said good services come with a cost and that the County must have the revenues to perform the services. Commissioner Tadlock said he was not in favor of raising taxes. Commissioner Tadlock supported the proposed budget with the exceptions of the changes in the following:

- Ruffy Holmes
- Schools
- COLA
- Tax Cut- leave tax rate as is

Chairman Chamberlain stated his support as the following:

- Fund the schools in the amount of \$3.4 million.
- COLA –3.4 percent
- Health Insurance for employees – as proposed
- Rescue Squad –\$118,000
- Sheriff’s Department – Felt the Sheriff’s Department had not received enough attention to its past funding requests and said he wanted to change that pattern this year. Chairman Chamberlain added for the record that he was proud of the Sheriff’s Department and that he felt they were doing a good job.
- Rowan Jobs Initiative – Supported
- EDC – Supported

Chairman Chamberlain said he was in favor of the proposed budget as presented by the County Manager, with the exception of \$3.4 million for the schools as opposed to the proposed \$2.8 million, and \$7,000 for Ruffy Holmes

Senior Center. Commissioner Blount said if the Board was seeking a straw vote, he was in support of the proposal. Commissioner Tadlock seconded the motion. Chairman Chamberlain opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Blount referred to the additional \$600,000 for the school system and he clarified that an additional 5% would be needed for the Kannapolis schools. Chairman Chamberlain said the 5% (\$35,000) was included in the straw vote.

Commissioner Mitchell stated that he would not support a tax cut if it would cause decreased funding to the schools, Sheriff's Department or Rescue Squad. Commissioner Mitchell finished by praising the County Manager and Staff for an excellent job in the budget preparations.

Upon being put to a vote, the motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Sides dissenting.

Commissioner Mitchell moved, Commissioner Blount seconded and the vote to adjourn the meeting at 5:10 pm passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Athey  
Clerk to the Board