

IREDELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FY 06-07 BUDGET REVIEW MINUTES
MAY 16, 2006

The Iredell County Board of Commissioners met for a Budget Review Session on Tuesday, May 16, 2006, at 5:30 P.M., in the Iredell County Government Center (South Wing Conference Room), 200 South Center Street, Statesville, NC.

Present were:

Chairman Sara Haire Tice
Vice Chairman Godfrey Williams
Steve D. Johnson
Marvin Norman
Ken Robertson

Staff present: County Manager Joel Mashburn, Deputy County Manager Susan Blumenstein, Assistant Finance Director Debra Alford, and Clerk to the Board Jean Moore.

Media present: Daniel Goldberg with the Record & Landmark.

CALL TO ORDER by Chairman Tice.

GROWTH OPTIONS: County Manager Mashburn said the planning staff would not be ready to discuss growth management options at the May 23 regular board meeting, and he suggested for the presentation to be given at the May 30 budget session. (The board members agreed to the change.)

CALDWELL COUNTY RESOLUTION REGARDING FUEL: Chairman Tice shared a resolution regarding E-85 and B-80 fuel blends, and the board requested that the topic be placed on the May 23 agenda.

FUND BALANCE COMPUTATION: Deputy County Manager Blumenstein said the Local Government Commission required an eight percent fund balance; however, it was recommended that an average of like-sized counties be used in computing an adequate amount. She said this would be around 17% for Iredell County. Blumenstein said the proposed budget had a 13.51% fund balance for the \$142,862,000 general fund, and the estimated unreserved, undesignated fund balance at June 30, 2006 would be \$19,302,839. (She noted that \$499,000 would be taken from the FY 05-06 fund balance for the Carolina Farm Credit Building rather than borrowing Solid Waste funds, and a correction to the budget amendment approved on April 18 would occur at a future meeting.)

NEW POSITIONS: County Manager Mashburn said 37 positions had been requested, and 32 were recommended. He then reviewed the justification for the new positions.

In regards to the Inspections Department, a question was asked about incentives to encourage employees to earn certifications in different fields.

Mashburn said the inspections department did recognize employees earning additional certifications. Additionally, he mentioned the incentive proposal approved for the animal control department, and he said an overall program would be reviewed and developed next year.

Chairman Tice said an employee with inspections had mentioned that other counties had higher salaries.

Mashburn said this was probably true. He said Iredell County had a schedule (four-year cycle) to review employee classifications, and the inspection positions were supposed to be reviewed next year.

Commissioner Johnson asked about an interpreter position for the Social Services Department.

Blumenstein said the Hispanic interpreter would be 50% state/federally funded and the remaining costs would be in local funds. She said federal law mandated that an interpreter had to be available, and the county currently contracted out for the service.

CAPITAL OUTLAY REQUESTS: Mashburn reviewed the capital outlay items costing \$3,794,468 (includes solid waste).

Tax Dept./Reval: Mashburn noted that a hybrid vehicle would be purchased for the reval department.

Both Johnson and Robertson expressed concerns. Johnson said he didn't think the hybrid technology was advanced enough at this point in time, and he said a new battery would cost \$3,000. He said "real world" testing had not occurred. (There were no objections to purchasing two replacement vehicles for the reval department, but they need to be something other than hybrids.)

Courts: The county manager said a video arraignment package for the Government Center-South costing \$60,700 was being recommended, as had been proposed by Clerk of Court Rena Turner. (Costs presented were: Bell South \$572.81; York Communications \$194.08 and VuGate at \$60,679.)

Commissioner Williams said Crossroads Director David Swann had recently described a similar system that did not cost nearly as much.

Commissioner Robertson also voiced concern about the high cost of the equipment and whether or not a less expensive system could be found.

Staff was directed to research the costs more thoroughly.

560 – Planning: Mashburn said the staff had discussed a \$50,000 contract with the Soil and Water Office for stormwater assistance. He said the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources managed erosion control problems, but if the board wanted more stringent oversight, the cost was estimated to be around \$150,000. Mashburn said the inspections/planning director had provided the cost estimate and indicated that four additional employees would be needed.

Commissioner Norman voiced concerns about the county already absorbing too many services that were the state's responsibility.

Commissioner Johnson asked what the county would be doing if it decided to work on erosion problems.

Mashburn said all aspects of erosion control.

Commissioner Robertson said developers graded sites, and then the silt went into the lake. He said the county needed to be proactive on the problem, especially since subdivisions were being approved.

Mashburn said stormwater was a "local issue" while erosion was different. He acknowledged, however, it was hard to differentiate between the two.

Johnson asked about the stormwater method with Soil & Water.

Mashburn said Soil and Water would work with the developers and then inspect the projects. He said any enforcement would revert to the county. Mashburn said nothing definite had been pursued, but the Soil and Water representatives were interested.

Robertson said he would be interested in using the agency as a first step. He said water quality issues would become more stringent, and the day would come when the county would be responsible for the people “downstream.”

Johnson said criteria would have to be established -- ten home subdivision and so forth -- who is regulated -- who is not.

Mashburn said the staff would provide additional information at a future budget meeting.

532 Animal Control: Commissioner Williams asked if a Mooresville facility, as requested by the “Friends of Animals” group at the winter planning session, was included in the budget.

Mashburn said no, primarily because the nonprofit making the proposal would not be ready in FY 06-07. He added, however, that an animal shelter was being considered for north Mecklenburg, and the local group was concerned about charitable donations going to this site rather than to the proposed Mooresville center.

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All other budget schedules and charts were then reviewed. At 7:30 P.M., the board began to review the individual departmental budgets.

410-Commissioners: The board approved a \$150 travel allowance for the clerk to the board. (This method to be used rather than having to complete monthly travel reimbursement forms.) No other changes.

415-Administration: No changes from the manager’s recommendation.

420-Human Resources: No changes from the manager’s recommendation.

425-Elections: No changes from the manager’s recommendation.

Commissioner Norman mentioned that several people had complained about the lack of parking at some of election sites during the primary.

It was noted that there were additional costs for the elections budget due to the anticipated relocation to the former Carolina Farm Credit Building.

430 Finance: No changes from the manager’s recommendation.

435 Tax Administration & Land Records: No changes from the manager’s recommendation.

450 Register of Deeds: No changes from the manager’s recommendation.

455 Facilities & Support Services: No changes from the manager’s recommendation.

457 Vehicle Service Center: No changes from the manager’s recommendation.

458 Government Center South: No changes from the manager’s recommendation. It was noted that the second floor would eventually house Crossroads Behavioral Healthcare and judicial offices.

Blumenstein said the revenues from the government center-south paid the debt service for the building. She said it was a “wash.”

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Tice adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Approved: _____

Clerk to the Board

