

MINUTES
CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET INPUT SESSION, APRIL 30, 1997

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 Manager's Recommended Budget in the Chatham County District Courtroom, Courthouse Annex, Pittsboro, North Carolina, at 7:00 PM on April 30, 1997.

Present: Chairman Margaret Pollard; Vice Chairman Betty Wilson;
Commissioners John Grimes, Uva Holland, and Henry
Dunlap; County Manager Charlie Horne; and Assistant
County Manager Reneé Dickson

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 7:03 P.M.

Commissioner Pollard, Chairman, welcomed those in attendance.

EDUCATION

Charlie Horne, County Manager, Reneé Dickson, Assistant County Manager, and Vicki McConnell, Finance Director presented the education budget. Ms. Dickson answered numerous questions regarding the school funding formula.

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Patsy Stanley, new principal at the Perry Harrison Elementary School scheduled to open during the upcoming fall session, questioned whether the \$242,589 in appropriated funds will be sufficient to help the school meet its needs during the first year. She stated she hoped that the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education would keep up their efforts to increase funding to meet school needs.

Wade Lehman, 310 Northwood High School Road, Pittsboro, NC, questioned how much collaboration there is between the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education. He asked how the Commissioners could successfully work on a budget when the Board of Education had not completed their budget. He stated that he felt that the children are the ones that will be shortchanged by the funding formula in the long run.

Owen Crankshaw, 215 Tanager Lane, Pittsboro, NC, stated that he was concerned with the quality and consistency of services to the students in the different districts within Chatham County.

Theresa West, 154 Forest Creek, Pittsboro, NC, a resident and active parent in the PTA of a middle schooler in the North Chatham school district, stated that the PTA has raised over \$250,000 in the last six years to finance supplies and playground equipment and to make capital improvements to the school. She questioned how test scores at the school may have differed if that money could have gone to classroom supplies. She stated that the Perry Harrison School will not have adequate supplies when it opens in the fall; that she feels once again, the PTA and parents will have to assist in this matter. She asked that the County fund the budget at one hundred percent and hire a full-time grants writer.

Robert Grant, 21 Fearington Post, Pittsboro, NC, addressed two points as follows: 1) County

government - He stated that he feels the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education are blaming each other, and that the Board of Commissioners need to straighten out the Board of Education. 2) Funding formula - He thinks that the funding formula is unsuitable with an inappropriate baseline. He stated that another formula should be worked out using more solid information.

Rick West, 154 Forest Green Creek Drive, Pittsboro, NC, applauded the raise in tax proposal stating that the needs at the new schools are great. He reiterated the need for more school personnel, computers, supplies, calculators, and other equipment.

Barbara Alates, 613 Fearington Post, Pittsboro, NC, stated that both she and her husband are tutors at Pittsboro Elementary School. She asked the Commissioners why they did not pursue impact fees stating that she sees them as a good source of County revenue.

Gerald Totten, 108 Petty Road, Siler City, NC, stated that the bond referendum has been abused in the past and that the Board of Education were the ones that caused the shortfalls in spending.

Wade Lehman, 310 Northwood High School Road, Pittsboro, NC, continued his discussion concerning the Board of Education. He stated that the Board of Education had asked the Board of Commissioners for a change in the meeting date because they would be out-of-town. He stated that the Commissioners would not change the meeting date. He noted the shortfalls in the funding formula and raised the question, "Where do our children in Chatham County stand?"

Mary Metter, PO Box 182, Pittsboro, NC, voiced concerns from the older school districts such as Pittsboro noting that the PTA is funding basic services in the classrooms there. She stated that the funding formula was hard to understand; that the increased need for technology is not factored in; and that Chatham County would continually be playing catch-up.

Ray Greenlaw, 2 Jordan Drive, Chapel Hill, NC, pointed out the change in past budget allocations. He stated that he thought it was a good idea for the schools to prove usefulness of funds before other funds are allocated. He stated that he would provide further comments in writing to the Board of Commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Dunlap moved, seconded by Commissioner Wilson that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0) and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Margaret Bryant Pollard, Chair

ATTEST:

Sandra B. Lee, Clerk to the Board
Chatham County Board of Commissioners