

MINUTES
CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
JUNE 04, 2007

The Board of Commissioners (“the Board”) of the County of Chatham, North Carolina, met in the Agricultural Building Auditorium, 45 South Street, located in Pittsboro, North Carolina, at 11:15 AM on June 04, 2007.

Present: Chairman Carl Thompson; Vice Chair, George Lucier; Commissioners Patrick Barnes, Mike Cross, and Tom Vanderbeck; County Manager, Charlie Horne; County Attorney Kevin Whiteheart; Interim County Attorney, Jep Rose; Assistant County Manager, Renee Paschal; Finance Officer, Vicki McConnell; and Clerk to the Board, Sandra B. Sublett

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 11:15 AM.

Work Session

Budget – Non-Profits
Board of Education
Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)
Performing Arts Center Feasibility Study

JOINT MEETING WITH THE TOWN OF CARY

By consensus, the Board agreed to schedule a joint meeting with the Town of Cary on Tuesday, August 21, 2007, at 7:00 PM in the Chatham County Superior Courtroom.

Chairman Thompson requested that the County Manager contact the Town of Cary regarding the joint meeting. Chairman Thompson then determined that no other items needed to be considered at this time.

Commissioner Barnes moved, seconded by Commissioner Lucier, to adjourn the regular meeting and open the Work Session. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY

Renee Paschal, Assistant County Manager, provided an overview of the request, noting there were three groups actively interested in constructing a performing arts center: Chatham Arts, the Chatham County Fair Association, and CCCC. She stated that when Central Carolina Community College (CCCC) presented its budget request, the issue of constructing an auditorium was discussed, and they convened a meeting of that group to discuss options.

Ms. Paschal stated that the group’s recommendation was: that a 200-seat auditorium be constructed and that the Library/CCCC architect, Louis Cherry, proceed with master planning that facility; as a separate issue, moving forward with the first phase of the plan for the performing arts center feasibility study, including a site study, and hiring a consultant; Chatham Arts will fund \$3,000 of the \$6,250 to hire the consultant; and, that the County Commissioners allocate up to \$4,000 to hire the consultant.

Commissioner Lucier asked if that funding should be considered along with the County’s Capital Improvements Plan. Ms. Paschal responded in the affirmative. Commissioner Lucier stated that he did not agree with Ms. Paschal’s suggestion.

Commissioner Lucier moved to approve the \$4,000 for the planning activities.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated the \$4,000 would accomplish some of the items noted in the Chatham County Fair Association’s non-profit request.

Margie Ellison stated that was true, noting it would help them in the process of determining the best location for the auditorium. She stated that it would also help in looking at the feasibility of the fair grounds as a location for the performing arts center.

Commissioner Cross stated that they did not address the need for a multi-cultural museum. Margie Ellison responded that would be included in the feasibility study.

Chairman Thompson clarified that there were two different issues: the master planning for the 200-seat auditorium and the feasibility study.

Commissioner Barnes asked if the multi-cultural museum and the performing arts center were going to be one facility. Reece Jones stated that was their initial plan, noting they were looking at one building satisfying both needs.

Ms. Paschal added that this was the first step in sorting out that issue, which was the purpose of the feasibility study. She stated that now was a critical time for the planning of these facilities, because if they did not go forward with master planning the library, they would lose some opportunities and possible cost savings associated with combining some facilities such as shared lobby space and restrooms.

Commissioner Vanderbeck moved to authorize the architect to continue with the master plan that included the auditorium.

Kathleen Hundley asked what would be included in the services offered to residents, such as teaching of arts and performance of arts. She asked if other artistic services would be provided.

Chairman Thompson responded he would say absolutely "yes". Karen Allen stated they currently had a number of theater classes offered, adding that an auditorium would allow them to bring in speakers, hold practice sessions and performances, as well as offer the space to the community for various uses.

Chairman Thompson called for a vote on Commissioner Lucier's motion to approve the \$4,000 for the planning activities. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

Commissioner Vanderbeck moved, seconded by Commissioner Barnes, to authorize the architect to continue with the master plan that included the addition of the auditorium. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

NON-PROFITS

Charlie Horne, County Manager, provided a brief overview of the process used by the County Commissioners to assess the needs of non-profit agencies. He stated there were some revisions to the recommendations, which were noted in the budget proposal, and asked that the Board outline a process to be used from this point forward to encourage agencies to use that process rather than coming directly before the Board with funding requests.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that the process of using citizen panels was a new process, and sometimes new processes needed adjustments. He said if any changes were made today, it was to deal with some of the minor inadequacies of the current review process as well as to deal with some subjective issues.

The County Manager stated at the end of this year's process, they would request a critique of the process to determine if any other adjustments should be made to the process for the coming year.

Commissioner Lucier stated that the citizen's panels had done an excellent job, and he was grateful for their hard work. He stated that he had gone through each application, and believed that in some cases, the recommended allocation had missed the mark: the Family Violence and Rape Crisis Center, whose allocation had been cut \$5,000 from last year, should be restored to last year's allocation, from \$25,000 to \$30,000; the Partnership for Children served

many children and he recommended they be funded at \$5,000; and, based on the discussion today, the Fair Association should receive \$5,000 for planning of the museum.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that he would like to provide some funding to EmPowerment for their work in affordable housing, adding he would like to have representatives return to respond to questions from the Board before a decision was made on that funding.

Chairman Thompson agreed that the citizen's panels had done a remarkable job. He stated he would like to see the Rocky River Heritage Foundation receive funding at \$5,000 for their database project.

Commissioner Cross stated he had no problems with what the non-profits were requesting, nor what the School Board or anyone else requested, but he wanted to make sure that where funding was substantially increased that the proposed tax rate increase was kept in mind as well as the upcoming revaluation and future projects. He stated that some of the support from these non-profits was for the very people who could not afford the tax increases, and the Board needed to tighten its budget and lower the potential tax increase as much as possible. Commissioner Cross stated that if they continued to increase giving and the tax rate continued to grow, the opposition to the Land Transfer Tax which would enhance Chatham County would continue to grow as well. He asked that the Board consider what the overall effect of the tax increase would be to the County and how the 1% Land Transfer Tax might be affected by what was done now. Commissioner Cross said anything that could be put off for a year should be delayed.

Commissioner Vanderbeck agreed with the need for general fiscal prudence. He stated that the non-profits were special in that they gave back to the community and they should be taken care of. Commissioner Vanderbeck said the Board had agreed to bring in a Grants Coordinator that would help all non-profits and other agencies in the County to locate other revenue sources, and wanted that kept in mind.

Commissioner Cross stated that one of the agencies recommended for funding had a grants writer. He asked if they should be given even more funding. Commissioner Vanderbeck said some agencies had grants writers, and that may mean they would not have need of the services of the County's grants coordinator. He said there were many grants that could be pursued by non-profits as well as by the County in general.

Commissioner Barnes stated what they were discussing was fiscal responsibility, and what he preferred to call it was "living within your means". He said they were on the verge of living beyond those means, noting that the Board needed to develop the criteria for next year to get better control of the overall budget including funding to non-profit agencies. Commissioner Barnes said limits needed to be set, including tax rate increases.

Commissioner Lucier disagreed, noting that the total funding for non-profits was \$341,000 with an additional \$20,000 suggested, for a total of \$361,000. He stated he was confident that the non-profits brought back into the County around \$25 million, so it was an extraordinarily good investment. Commissioner Lucier stated the extra \$20,000 was 1/5,000ths of the total budget, which would have essentially no impact on the tax rate.

Commissioner Lucier moved, seconded by Commissioner Vanderbeck, to fund the County recommendations for Non-Profits with four additions: Family Violence and Rape Crisis, additional \$5,000; Partnership for Children, \$5,000; Fair Association, \$5,000; and, the Rocky River Heritage Foundation, \$5,000. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

LUNCH BREAK

The Chairman called for a short lunch break.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 12:33 PM. He noted that representatives of the School Board would make a presentation.

Debs McManus expressed their appreciation to the Board for its support, particularly in the category of capital outlay.

Dr. Ann Hart, Superintendent of Chatham County Schools, provided a brief overview of the document provided to the Board regarding school planning including size, capacity, and amenities as well as program space and cost factors. She stated the last page of the document contained the budget for such a school.

Commissioner Lucier asked if the consultant was asked to do something with 800 students expandable to 1,200 students. Dr. Hart stated they had not done that, but were willing to go back and ask them to do so. Commissioner Lucier asked if that was with or without the auxiliary gym. Dr. Hart said without the auxiliary gym, noting it was not recommended as part of the typical design, which was estimated to cost \$1.7 million.

Chairman Thompson suggested that the Board proceed with discussion regarding the budget itself, starting with the potential expansion request.

Commissioner Lucier stated that the budget request to the County did not include what was received from the State or the federal government. Dr. Hart stated that was correct. Commissioner Lucier stated that, based on the number of students, the School Board received about \$45 million from the State, \$7 million from the federal government, and they were requesting another \$25 million from the County, for a total budget of roughly \$75 million without any school construction, although it did include funds for school renovations.

Commissioner Lucier stated that regarding teacher requests, the State paid for most of that and the School Board was requesting sixteen new teachers. He asked how the State made that determination. Dr. Hart said the State gave the Schools a conditional allotment of teachers based on its formula, but that they did not fund positions such as elementary school art teachers, physical education, or drama teachers. Dr. Hart said in order to be good stewards, they put their most expensive teachers on the State's payroll, adding that depending on the number of positions funded, they would prioritize where those positions were most needed.

Commissioner Lucier stated they were asking for one teacher per school, and it would have been helpful to know the number of positions funded at each school and the number of students at each grade, especially at the elementary school level. Dr. Hart said that information could be provided.

Commissioner Lucier stated that was a lot of money for sixteen teachers although he did not doubt they were needed, but it would have been better to have more specificity. Dr. Hart said these teachers were for enhanced programming, and she understood that with tight budgets it was a difficult choice to make.

Chairman Thompson stated it would be helpful to have additional information. Regarding a request for a second guidance counselor at Chatham Central, he asked was it typical for two guidance counselors to be at the same high school. Dr. Hart said Jordon Matthews had two and Northwood had three, based on student numbers. She said with the size of Chatham Central, the associated needs for at-risk students, and the need for college counseling, another guidance counselor was warranted.

Commissioner Lucier agreed that with 500 students at Chatham Central, that was a lot for one counselor to handle. Dr. Hart noted that position was a career development counselor.

Commissioner Lucier stated the Schools were also asking for three testing coordinators, one for each high school. Dr. Hart replied that was correct, noting the testing coordinators would conduct the actual testing which was very time consuming, but the counselors would continue to do the data interpretation.

Dr. Hart explained the positions being requested at the other schools, noting that many positions were part-time, several days a week positions. She said the schools were constantly requesting full-time teachers in those positions in order to meet their needs. Dr. Hart stated that in order to meet needs creatively, many times a teacher might be a full-time grade level teacher but act as the physical education teacher as well.

Commissioner Lucier stated that he agreed with the request to hire an additional nurse, but questioned why that was the responsibility of the school system and not the Department of Health. Dr. Hart stated that it varied across the State, but in Chatham County nurses were school system employees. Commissioner Lucier stated he believed the Board needed to consider if the County and the students would be better served if nurses were employees of the Department of Health to provide more direct connections to other existing services. He stated he was thinking in terms of vaccines, disease prevention and other programs. Dr. Hart said school nurses were ten-month employees because they operated under a teacher's schedule. Commissioner Lucier stated he had the same concern about the social workers, and whether they should be employees of the Department of Social Services.

Chairman Thompson asked about the addition of AVID implementation, noting it was an expansion of the existing program. Dr. Hart stated they had added it at all three high schools this year, because they were doubling the number of sections at each school to respond to student needs. She stated each school would have 1 ½ positions.

Chairman Thompson asked for a brief overview of that program. Dr. Hart responded that AVID was Advancement by Individual Determination, which took an average student who may be underachieving and pushed them into advanced, rigorous course work. She stated AVID focused on vocabulary, writing, tutoring, SAT preparation, and college preparation to allow students to be successful in post-secondary education.

Commissioner Lucier stated they were also asking for sixteen teaching assistants, but the kinds of teachers they were asking for did not necessarily require an assistant. Dr. Hart said that was correct, noting that many times such assistants worked in the office, the media center, or in other areas. She stated that the sixteen assistants would add one per school.

Commissioner Lucier stated to justify that request, it would be helpful to know how many teaching assistants were now at each school. Dr. Hart said there was one for every K-3 classroom at each school, but none in the upper grades.

Commissioner Lucier asked how many total teachers were in the school system. Dr. Hart responded approximately 600.

Commissioner Lucier asked how many teaching assistants were in the school system. Susan Little, Chatham County Schools Finance Officer, stated approximately 135. Commissioner Lucier stated that with the supplements the Schools were asking, that equated to only about \$300,000. He asked where the other \$550,000 was being used. Ms. Little explained that in previous years funding had not been provided to cover the supplements for all employees.

Dr. Hart said a breakdown was provided on page 16 of the document.

Commissioner Lucier stated he did not understand where the additional funds were going based on the expansion request. Ms. Paschal said the current funding was included as well as the expansion request.

Commissioner Barnes asked for a ballpark figure of an average teacher's salary. Dr. Hart said the median used was \$45,000 including benefits, but that varied from year to year based on the number of experienced teachers.

Commissioner Lucier stated based on the way the expansion request was worded, he was worried that some funds had been double counted. Ms. Paschal stated it had not been double counted as far as the Manager's recommendation. She offered to provide the Board with a spreadsheet to clarify the information.

Commissioner Lucier stated it appeared to him that the continuation had been added twice then added to the request for the supplement.

Dr. Hart said they had figured out what it would cost to give everyone the supplement at the increased rate, then backed out the amount received for the supplement last year, and that was how they arrived at the figure. She said the supplement was provided as a separate line item in the budget, and the increase would be an expansion of what had been previously received.

Commissioner Lucier asked what the \$500 addition would make the total supplement. Dr. Hart said for teachers, it would range from \$3,400 to \$3,900 based on level of experience. Commissioner Lucier said those numbers still did not add up based on the request.

Ms. Paschal stated what the schools had been given last year was in continuation, noting they had allocated for supplements totaling \$2,524,491 last year. She said this year the entire increases were in expansion.

Commissioner Lucier stated the numbers still did not add up for him, restating his concern that some numbers had been double counted. He asked that they be looked at again.

Chairman Thompson stated that was a reasonable request. He asked Dr. Hart if this was the first time supplements had been requested for employees other than teachers. Dr. Hart said they had not asked for that last year, so this was the first time for other employees.

Chairman Thompson asked what the supplement would be for employees other than teachers. Dr. Hart said it would be \$600.

Commissioner Lucier said regarding the increased allotment, he believed the schools spent a lot of money on supplies that perhaps the County should buy. He said he would like to increase that allotment from \$5 to \$10 per student. Dr. Hart stated they would love that.

Chairman Thompson asked if the \$5.00 increase would be sufficient based on past history. Dr. Hart said they did receive funds from the State for instructional supplies and textbooks, but a sufficient amount was not provided. She said they then had to provide funds to the schools based on needs.

Commissioner Lucier stated that he believed it was appropriate to increase the stipends for technology and student services teachers, as requested.

Chairman Thompson commented that they would now move to the capital outlay requests from the School Board.

Commissioner Lucier asked what justification was used when deciding which gym floor to replace. Dr. Hart said they followed a replacement schedule as well as looked at the level of deterioration, noting those facilities were monitored on a regular basis. She stated that the estimated \$70,000 was for a particular type of flooring that would provide for more long-term use, providing greater benefit in the future.

Commissioner Lucier stated he was concerned about the safety issue involved with the mats behind the basketball backboards on the concrete pillars. He said some additional safety barriers needed to be provided around the pillars as well as the concrete wall. Dr. Hart said they could provide an estimated cost for that.

Chairman Thompson stated regarding Category II under technology, that it was a huge request for 480 teacher laptops for K-8 teachers. Dr. Hart said high school teachers were currently supplied with laptops, and experience showed them that teachers needed to be proficient and have access to computers at all times.

Commissioner Cross noted that the County Manager had taken that out of his recommendation.

Dr. Hart noted she had a spreadsheet showing the supplement broken down, and asked if the Board wanted to see that.

Commissioner Lucier stated an expansion request was just that, and knew from the math that the total supplement was not included, so it was confusing. Ms. Paschal said the numbers were confusing, but the supplements were covered in the request and were not counted twice. Commissioner Lucier stated that information should be provided, because it was not clear from the information provided. He stated he wanted to cover the supplement, but not twice.

Commissioner Lucier asked about individual items requested for each school. Ms. Little explained that if classrooms were added, then those rooms had to be supplied.

Paul Joyce, Assistant School Superintendent, stated that many times furniture had to be replaced, resulting in additional costs.

Chairman Thompson said if there were no more questions, then the discussion should move to Category III.

Commissioner Lucier stated that the request was for two school buses at \$150,000 and an activity bus at \$70,000. He questioned another document which stated school buses purchased in 2006-2007 were \$315,000 and in 2007-2008 \$463,000, and asked why the numbers were different. Ms. Little stated that the State had a replacement cycle they used to provide for new buses at the end of its life cycle, but the schools had to provide for the initial buses to expand the fleet. She said the funds being requested here were to add two more buses to the fleet.

Commissioner Lucier asked what proportion of students in Chatham County rode the buses. Mr. Joyce responded about 55%, or around 3,800 students. Commissioner Lucier stated that if school population increased by 150 students, it would add roughly 75 bus riders each year. Mr. Joyce stated that bus capacity was 66 students, and they were nearly always full.

Chairman Thompson asked if there were questions regarding items funded through regular maintenance.

Commissioner Lucier asked about a 12'x 12' storage building for \$3,500. He wondered if such buildings, if needed, should be bought in bulk to lower the cost. Mr. Joyce responded that they would purchase the materials and their carpentry students would build the building.

Chairman Thompson said if there were no other comments, they would move on.

Commissioner Lucier stated that regarding the supplement increase of \$300 each, it stated it was not funded, but he believed it was funded. Dr. Hart said a dollar amount was awarded, which then had to be translated for all staff, so the amount awarded did not maintain the supplement for all staff so the school system had added to that dollar amount.

Commissioner Lucier stated that the 2006-2007 budget said that \$300 each was requested, or a total of \$260,465. He said that was the same total as in the school's budget noted as not being funded, but some amount was approved. Ms. Paschal stated that there was no increase last year.

Chairman Thompson asked had the current level been approved but not the increase. Dr. Hart responded that money was approved, but not the requested increase.

Chairman Thompson asked if there were any specific areas of the budget request that the Board wanted to discuss at this time.

Commissioner Cross asked when the next lottery check was due to be received. Ms. Paschal said the application had just been turned in, but it only took about a month.

Chairman Thompson asked how the Board wanted to proceed, noting the next issues up for discussion. He asked if the Board wanted to go through the items page by page, or discuss only particular issues. Dr. Hart noted that most of that information was an explanation of how the money had been spent the previous year.

Commissioner Lucier stated the only remaining question he had was regarding the Northeast Elementary School. He stated that was not on the Capital Improvements Plan but it was a capital improvement request. Dr. Hart said it was on the long range plan for construction in 2012 and 2013, and had been included to let the Board know what was anticipated.

Commissioner Cross stated on page 57, the first paragraph, second line, it read "funded partially by the 2 cent property tax." He said lower down it read "the balance of the 2 cents..." Commissioner Cross asked if they were talking about two cents or four cents. Ms. Paschal responded two cents. She said the 2 cents was the increase in teacher supplements, operating Virginia Cross Elementary School, and about \$300,000 in expansion. Commissioner Cross confirmed that made up a two cents increase on the property tax.

Commissioner Barnes stated that two cents made up about \$1.35 million.

BREAK

The Chairman called for a ten- minute break.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:41 PM.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

Chairman Thompson asked that prior to the Wednesday meeting that the Board look over the School's budget, noting that meeting would begin with a discussion of that budget.

The County Manager stated that the Board had requested a few changes in the CIP, including a change in funding of school facilities and the judicial facility.

Commissioner Barnes stated that the high school had been kept at \$44 million, that \$13 million was for the Northwood expansion and \$10 million was added for the judicial building cost estimate. Vicki McConnell, Finance Officer, said she had added \$12 million for the judicial facility, \$13.5 million for Northwood, \$1 million for the middle school and \$1 million for the CCCC campus.

Commissioner Barnes stated that added about \$27 million to the budget, and that was where the two cents tax increase came from. Ms. McConnell said that was correct, noting that \$12 million was about one penny on the tax rate.

Commissioner Lucier asked about the \$12 million for the judicial building. Ms McConnell stated originally the figure was \$14 million; now it was at \$26 million.

Commissioner Cross stated that they had switched from a high school to a middle school needed first, and they still had a wing at Horton School that was not filled. He said if a redistricting took place and the policy was changed on where a student had to attend school, would the middle school actually be needed first. Commissioner Cross said it was hard for him to justify building a new middle school when there was an entire wing at Horton School not being used.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that was a good point, noting that using the formula, there were four schools that fed into the Northwood system, and that resulted in it being about 100 students under capacity. He stated that Horton School was about 180 under capacity; Moncure was about 100 under capacity; and, North Chatham and Perry Harris were over capacity. But, he stated, if you added it all up it was about 90 under capacity; in contrast Northwood was 170 over capacity. Commissioner Vanderbeck said there was no doubt a new high school and a new middle school was needed since the population was growing.

Commissioner Cross stated that if the policy was changed, he believed that could be delayed for a time.

Commissioner Barnes said he believed redistricting and some policy changes were worth discussing.

Commissioner Cross stated that citizens in the Siler City area had mentioned many times that their schools were becoming predominately African-American and Hispanic, since those with the means preferred that their children attend Silk Hope School, which caused them to be overcrowded.

Commissioner Lucier stated that he had heard the same statements.

Commissioner Barnes stated if the schools could be delayed, it would give them time to generate more revenue, mentioning the revaluation next year as well as governmental rebates.

Commissioner Barnes stated that if they were planning to fund the judicial facility at \$26 million, he had a problem crowding the schools and funding a judicial facility that was under capacity. He stated that perhaps some cost savings on that facility should be considered.

Commissioner Lucier stated that building in that extra space in the judicial facility was by far cheaper to do now than putting it off until later. He said cutting back on that facility was false economy.

Commissioner Barnes stated he did not disagree with that, but there was only so much money to be distributed.

Chairman Thompson said they were considering a four cent increase which no one wanted, but it would fund everything.

Commissioner Cross stated three cents of that was for the schools and one cent was for the judicial building.

Commissioner Cross stated that the Northwood expansion had a cost of one cent, and the judicial facility was another one cent. Ms. McConnell stated that was correct. Commissioner Cross said the high school was budgeted at \$44 million, and if \$6 million could be saved that would amount to a savings of ½ cent on the tax rate. Ms. McConnell said that was correct, if that was possible. Commissioner Cross said if the Northwood expansion was cut to \$10 million that would save another ¼ cent.

Chairman Thompson stated he believed they could do some cost cutting on the judicial facility. He said he agreed that they should not put off building the facility, but the Board had not yet been given any options to consider for perhaps half the additional cost. Chairman Thompson said he would like to consider that before they considered the Northwood expansion.

Chairman Thompson stated if he were to say he wanted to cut the requests by \$12 million, someone should be able to provide options to do that.

Commissioner Barnes asked when payments on the judicial facility would begin. Ms. McConnell responded March, 2010. Commissioner Barnes asked if they had to commit to building two or three floors this year, or could that wait until the fall to determine if they would be given the additional 1% revenue from the General Assembly.

Commissioner Barnes asked if they committed today to leave it as is, and then determined that they did not receive the 1% revenue, could they then go back and cut the budget. Ms. McConnell responded in the affirmative. Commissioner Barnes suggested leaving the budget as is until September and then see what the options might be.

A brief discussion ensued regarding funding for the schools and the justice facility, and what the fiscal impacts might be if some delays or cutbacks occurred. There was also discussion on when fiscal impacts would be felt and when final decisions had to be made regarding commitments to those facilities.

Commissioner Lucier said his solution would be to cut the cost of the judicial facility from \$26 million to \$20 million; cut the Northwood School expansion from \$13 million to \$7 million; and, take the new high school now budgeted at \$41 million and ask that it be built as an 800-student school expandable to 1,200, and cut that back to \$38 million. Commissioner Lucier said that would save a total of \$18 million, equal to 1½ cents on the tax rate, and then the existing budget would need to be cut by another \$350,000 to save the other ½ cent.

Commissioner Barnes said that what Commissioner Lucier was suggesting was false economy, noting what was being proposed did not necessarily have to take place. He agreed there were items that could be cut, but being able to do that and having the choice to do that was the issue; having the choice did not mean they would absolutely spend \$13.5 million on the Northwood expansion; and, making dramatic cuts in the judicial facility would cripple it. Commissioner Barnes said enough undesirable County facilities had been built, and he did not believe anyone wanted another one.

Commissioner Lucier said he believed a \$20 million judicial building that was expandable could still be built.

Commissioner Barnes said what he had proposed would cut the tax increase to 2 cents, saving 2 cents.

Chairman Thompson agreed that the Board definitely needed to get some additional information to determine where that \$13.5 million was going for the Northwood expansion, noting they could cut that in half and see how far it would go. He said with the judicial facility, they needed to get some idea from the planners how that facility might work with a reduction in the budget of about \$6 million. Chairman Thompson said no one wanted a 4 cent tax increase, so they needed to get more information in order to determine where cuts could be made.

Commissioner Lucier said regarding the Northwood expansion, there would not be much variation in a \$2.3 million or \$2.5 million stand-alone auxiliary gym, plus they needed additional classroom space. He stated that the Board needed to know how many students could be accommodated with \$4.5 million, noting that should help with the overcrowding issues at Northwood.

Ms. McManus stated that they were not prepared, at this time, to offer specifics on how the \$13.5 million was to be used.

Chairman Thompson asked if that information could be provided for the meeting on Wednesday morning. Ms. McManus said information could be provided, but she did not know how detailed it would be.

Chairman Thompson asked the County Manager to provide similar information on the judicial facility. Mr. Horne said the problem was not whether the facility could be reduced from \$26 million to \$20 million, rather it was how to design it to get to that figure.

Commissioner Cross asked for a status report on the Highway #42 water line at New Hill and Church Road. Mr. Horne responded it was being redesigned, but did not know the current status.

RECESS

Commissioner Lucier moved, seconded by Commissioner Vanderbeck, to recess the meeting to reconvene on Wednesday, June 6, 2007, 9:00 AM, in the Central Carolina Community College Multi-purpose Room. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0), and the meeting was recessed at 2:22 PM.

Carl Thompson, Chairman

ATTEST:

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