

At 6:30 p.m., the Martin County Board of Commissioners met as the Board of Equalization & Review.

May 9, 2007

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Wednesday, May 9, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Martin County Governmental Center, 305 East Main Street, Williamston, North Carolina.

ASSEMBLY

Chairman Tommy W. Bowen, Vice Chairman Ronnie Smith, Commissioners Elmo "Butch" Lilley, Alphonzo Perry and C. Mort Hurst, County Manager W. Russell Overman, County Attorney J. Melvin Bowen and Clerk to the Board Linda G. Hardison were present. No one was absent.

Chairman Bowen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Vice Chairman Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance with Commissioner Lilley offered the Invocation. Chairman Bowen then made his usual introductions of fellow Commissioners, staff and elected officials in the audience.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Hurst made a MOTION to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Lilley SECONDED the motion, and it was unanimously APPROVED by the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one was present to offer any comments.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES

Sheriff Gibbs introduced our newest deputy, Andy Beacham. He then introduced William "Bubba" Stokes who had worked for Martin County before and has now returned. Although Sissy Knox has worked as a clerk in the Sheriff's Office for some time, she has been promoted to deputy and was introduced as such.

CONSENT AGENDA

Before the Board voted on the Consent Agenda, Manager Overman asked the Board to substitute the Budget Amendment which had been distributed for the one which had been mailed in the packet. The only change to the Budget Amendment was the removal of the Martin Enterprise entry. Ms. Becky Renn called to say she had worked out the funding and no budget amendment was needed.

Commissioner Hurst made a MOTION, with a SECOND by Vice Chairman Smith, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented with the substituted Budget Amendment. The motion was unanimously APPROVED by the Board.

The following items were approved.

- 1. Minutes of the April 11, 2007 Regular Session, April 18, 2007 Special Session and April 25, 2007 Special Session were approved.**
- 2. The Financial Report for April, 2007 was presented for informational purposes.**

3. Budget Amendment – 26 was approved.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – 26

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Martin County, North Carolina that the following amendments be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007.

Section 1. To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows.

	Increase	Decrease
Economic & Physical Development		
Cooperative Extension Service	\$ 7 000	
General Government		
General & Administrative	20,300	
Tax Office	20,000	
Human Services		
Department of Social Services		
Assistance Programs	32,635	10,000
Office of Aging		
Congregate Nutrition	1,750	
Home Delivered Meals	1,750	
Administration & Operations	12,000	
Public Safety		
Building Inspector	16,200	

This will result in an increase of \$101,635 in the expenditures of the General Fund. To provide an increase in revenue for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

Miscellaneous	\$ 7,000
Fund Balance Appropriation	20,300
Restricted	38,135
Permits & Fees	16,200
Taxes	
Ad Valorem	
Real & Personal Property – CY	20,000

Section 2. Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board and to the Finance Officer for their direction.

4. Tax Collector’s Report for April, 2007.

	April, 2007	Year to Date
Property Taxes	\$ 206,938.92	\$ 10,517,239.42
Motor Vehicles	101,918.26	1,152,902.53

5. Tax Relief Orders in the amount of \$1,991.59.

Year	Levy	Name	Remarks	Value	Total
2006		Lovick, William Jerrod	Error in Listing	9,720	88.74
2006		Neilsen Lorenzo	Out of County	7,820	123.95
2006		Brown Icscha	Error in Landfill Fee		150.00
2006		Hardison Thelma C	Unable to document/explain	49,860	416.33
2005		Hardison Thelma C	Unable to document/explain	49,860	416.33
2004		Hardison Thelma C	Unable to document/explain	49,860	416.33
2006		Bland Curtis	Repo	13,390	122.99
2006		Grace Family Fellowship	Error in Landfill Fee		150.00
2006		Stancil Janet Bullock	High Mileage	2,430	38.52
2006		Black Gregory Van	High Mileage	2,600	21.71
2006		Scott Christopher	Error in Value	3,970	33.54

2006 Drake Susie Faye High Mileage 1,575 13.15

TOTAL RELIEF ORDERS 1,991.59

6. **Landfill Availability Fee Release – Masonic Lodge:** According to Tax Administrator Tommy Roberson, Mr. James T. Fleming, representative of the Masonic Lodge located in Robersonville, is requesting that the landfill availability fees including interest prior to the 2006 tax year be released for the lodge since the lodge did not receive a tax bill for those years. **It has been verified by the Tax Collection Office that a bad address was the cause that the bill was never received by the membership of the Masonic Lodge.** Once the bill was returned as undeliverable and coded as a Bad Address in the computer, no other bill would have been generated since bad address entries are excluded from future mailings.

Manager Overman added that these people never received their bills because we had an inadequate address for them and the bills were returned every year. Mr. Roberson had already released the interest on this account and he thought they were going to work out a payment plan to pay the actual fees. They never did. There had also been discussion that they were going to request the Board release the fees but they would never come in with a letter and make the request. We have it now.

The address has been corrected and they now know they are responsible for the landfill availability fee even though they do not have to pay taxes. Manager Overman recommends that you release these fees since they never received the bills and they did not have an expectation that they owed the landfill fee since they were not responsible for paying taxes. Approval of this release will still leave them owing the 2006 fees which were properly billed to them.

7. **Tourism Development Authority – Resignation & Appointments:** A letter from Ms. Jean Rogers, Chairman of Martin County Tourism Development Authority, stated that Michael Goldberg, General Manager of Fairfield Inn & Suites/Marriott, had submitted his letter of resignation to this Board. TDA accepted his resignation and recommended that Mr. Vish Pathak, General Manager of the Hampton Inn, fill this vacancy.

The TDA Board also recommended the reappointment of the following members: Mrs. Catherine Davidson, Miss Molly Ann Long and Mrs. Thelma Purvis.

8. **Amend Employee Handbook – FMLA:** Manager Overman explained that Section 4 of Article X of our Employee Handbook provides that only unpaid leave used under the FMLA counts towards the 12 weeks that an employee is entitled to in certain circumstances under the Family Medical Leave Act. This Section 4 is contrary to federal law and is not enforceable. The Employee Handbook needs to be amended by deleting Section 4: Unpaid Leave Taken Under the FMLA and renumbering Sections 5-10.

9. **Clerk’s Report is included for informational purposes.**

PRESENTATION – MORATOC COMMITTEE

Ms. Sarah Katherine Adams, Executive Director of Martin County Tourism Development Authority, presented a power-point presentation on options for utilizing Moratoc Park. She said she was speaking for the Heritage Committee which is interested in enhancing Moratoc Park and making it a tourism attraction. She presented conceptual drawings and a Master Plan which was prepared by the Department of Landscape Architecture of North Carolina State University. This plan provides for an access point for fishing, hunting, canoeing, kayaking and birding which is the number one hobby in the nation.

She concluded her presentation by reviewing the following options for Moratoc Park.

- Martin County develops a parks and recreation program
- Moratoc Park is transferred to the Town of Williamston
- Partnership between Martin County and the Town of Williamston
- Moratoc Park is sold to a private developer contingent upon use/plans
- Moratoc Park is given to the Wildlife Resources Commission
- Moratoc Park stays as is now

Ms. Adams suggested that a feasibility study of the different options be conducted.

Each Commissioner had the opportunity to state his views and offer suggestions; however, the consensus of the Board was to partner with the Town of Williamston. Commissioner Hurst pointed out that Commissioner Perry was a former member of the Tourism Development Authority and Commissioner Lilley currently serves on this board, and they could add to the discussion when this presentation is given to the Town of Williamston.

Commissioner Hurst made a MOTION to authorize the TDA Director to make this presentation to the Williamston Town Board and bring the information back to the Commissioners.

Vice Chairman Smith stated that, as mentioned before, there are two Commissioners who have served or are serving on the TDA Board, and he felt that they should go with Ms. Adams when she makes the presentation.

Commissioner Hurst then AMENDED his motion to include Commissioners Lilley and Perry go with Ms. Adams when she makes the presentation to the Williamston Town Board. This amendment was unanimously APPROVED.

The previous motion was unanimously APPROVED AS AMENDED.

Commissioner Perry requested that Ms. Adams sent a letter to NCSU for the excellent drawings and master plan they prepared.

911 REPORT

Trash Report: Mr. Timmie Modlin who has worked the last eleven months on a special 911 project has also been checking the roads of Martin County for trash dumping. He indicated that some of the problem areas have improved while others sites have started. He commented that the Sheriff's office has helped him with identifying the "dumpers" and with getting the areas cleaned.

Commissioner Hurst asked that anytime the trash issue is on the agenda to have his 10 Point Plan provided for reference. He also commended Mr. Modlin for the report he prepared by stating that "this is the most impressive, thorough report presented in the 9 years I have served on this Board."

Road Signs Report: Mr. Modlin reported that he has traveled all 545 named roads in Martin County. During the last eleven months, eighteen days have been used to make 145 stops, install 336 blades, 78 posts and make 37 repairs. Installation of road signs is a two-man job.

He cited the reasons for repairing or replacing road signs as: larceny, vandalism, DOT mowing contractors and motor vehicle accidents. The Board discussed ways to hold the people responsible for the destruction of these signs accountable for the cost of repairs and replacement.

Commissioner Perry stated that road sign maintenance should not be under Emergency Management but under the County Maintenance Department.

Commissioner Lilley commended Mr. Modlin for the work he has done on this project stating that this information really helps fire and rescue responders.

911 Addressing Report: “The Martin County emergency 9-1-1 Directory has been in existence since around 1996. Since that time, basically only additions have been made to this book when new house numbers and road names were established. This directory serves as a vital reference which is used by all county telecommunicators to assist law enforcement, fire and emergency medical units in locating house numbers, road names, residences, property descriptions, phone numbers, and emergency service numbers or ESNs, which designate specific fire and emergency medical service units that serve each district.”

Mr. Modlin explained that the majority of his time during the last eleven months has been spent updating the information in this directory. Mr. Modlin found that approximately 80% of residences within Martin County had some type of address posted on their property or mailbox. However, over 20% of residences county-wide are either out of compliance or not in compliance at all.

The Board discussed how to get these folks to post their address according to the county’s addressing ordinance. Chairman Bowen stated that our main concern is fire and rescue but there are other agencies complaining about the lack of posted addresses, i.e. power company, cable company, UPS, etc.

Mr. Modlin concluded his presentation by thanking the Board for the opportunity to work on this project, and the Board thanked him for a job well done.

NEW BUSINESS

Deep Run Drainage District: Commissioner Perry asked to place this item on the agenda regarding the Deep Run Drainage District. He was inquiring about the possibility of the county maintaining the financial records for this drainage district rather than them contracting with an accountant for these services. The Manager checked with David Lawrence at the School of Government regarding this issue. Mr. Lawrence indicated that if the County Commissioners wish to provide that service for the drainage districts, then they could do so. He advised that the county enter into an interlocal agreement with the drainage districts if the accounting services were to be provided by the County. Their records would then be audited as part of the county’s audit.

Commissioner Perry made a MOTION to move forward with this request for the Deep Run Drainage District. He then RETRACTED his motion after Commissioner Lilley suggested that all the drainage districts be allowed to have this service.

Commissioner Perry made a MOTION that any drainage district has the option to meet with the Manager to sign an interlocal agreement to have the County maintain its financial records. Commissioner Lilley gave a SECOND to the motion, and it was unanimously APPROVED by the Board.

How to Save Money in Tax Department Discussion: Commissioner Perry stated that he has been checking with other counties about the costs generated by the Tax Office. He asked why we are mailing out several bills on real estate property and could they be combined into one bill. He stated that with 15,000 parcels of land in Martin County he could see this as a savings.

After a discussion, the Board asked if the Tax Administrator could work something out to simplify this process.

Sheriff Office – Governor’s Highway Safety Program: The Governor’s Highway Safety Program offers grant opportunities to start a traffic enforcement unit. This is a three-year grant. The grant would provide funding for four deputies and equipment with a cash match provided by the county. This grant reduces its funding year by year. Sheriff Gibbs is still waiting to hear from his application.

The Board then started a discussion on the Highway Patrol positions that are not filled in Martin County and the burden this puts on the Sheriff's Department. Commissioner Hurst asked for an official letter to go to the Governor's Office asking why Martin County is understaffed. He said the positions are in place and we shouldn't have to ask for something we are supposed to already have.

Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center: The Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center provides free equipment for use by Federal, State or local law enforcement agencies to aid officers conducting drug investigations. The Sheriff's Office Drug Team will utilize the equipment provided for surveillance operations. There are no costs associated with this program.

Commissioner Lilley made a MOTION, with a SECOND by Commissioner Hurst, to pursue the Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center grant as requested. The motion was unanimously APPROVED by the Board.

Transfer of Emergency Equipment: Sheriff Gibbs submitted a request to transfer a used Federal Signal Jetstream Bar Light, a Federal Signal PA300 Siren and a Federal Signal SW 300 switch panel for use by the City of Washington. The Martin County Sheriff's Office no longer uses this equipment due to upgrades in technology. The equipment was originally purchased in the early to mid 1990's. Chief Rose from the City of Washington has expressed the need for this equipment.

Commissioner Lilley made a MOTION, with a SECOND by Commissioner Hurst, to give the Emergency Equipment to the Town of Washington as requested. The motion was unanimously APPROVED by the Board.

BOARD REPORTS

Chairman Bowen informed everyone that the local JobLink Center has achieved Level 3 status. Only 17 centers in the State have reached this designation..

RECESS

At 8:10 p.m. the Board took a recess to prepare the room for the Joint Meeting with the Board of Education.

BOARD OF EDUCATION – BUDGET WORK SESSION

Chairman Bowen called the meeting back to order at 8:20 p.m.

Chairman Gene Scott called the Board of Education to order and the following members were present: Chairman Gene Scott, Addie Lou Leggett, Johnny C. Bryant, Sr., Moses Matthews and Van Heath. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Tom Daly, Secretary Vivian Slade and Finance Officer Karen Rogerson. Absent were Board members Jackie Carr and Kenneth Harrell.

CAPITAL OUTLAY

Chairman Gene Scott opened the presentation by offering the following comments on Capital Outlay requests.

- The majority of the Capital Outlay expenditures included in the budget request represent items that had to be delayed in previous years due to a lack of funds.
- The request does not include the major building additions or renovations that were included in the bond resolution that was presented to the citizens of Martin County. Currently the items requested again by the schools but not included in the budget under discussion are included in the "other needs" column.
- The need for those major projects has not diminished and, in fact, the facility needs at Williamston Middle School, Bear Grass High School, and Jamesville High School are becoming more critical and more expensive every year. Other projects such as the multipurpose rooms that were to be built at Jamesville

Elementary School and Rodgers Elementary School are also more critical because of the new State mandate that all children I grades K-8 must have thirty minutes of physical activity scheduled every day.

- As previously indicated the School Board has had to cut and delay maintenance projects every year. The delays are catching up to us and we need additional resources in order to ensure the continued safe use of the facilities.

<u>School</u>	<u>Priority Requests</u>	<u>Other Needs</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bear Grass	\$ 332,850	\$ 8,502,120	\$ 8,834,970
Williamston Primary	60,150	11,440	71,590
E J Hayes	86,927	30,000	116,927
East End	134,962	1,125,000	1,259,962
Edna Andrews	12,235	114,060	126,295
Jamesville Elementary	62,050	1,200,000	1,262,050
Jamesville High School	125,850	8,000,000	8,125,850
Roanoke High School	32,356	900,000	932,356
Roanoke Middle School	16,872	0	16,872
Rodgers	118,230	1,290,000	1,408,230
Williamston High School	149,251	38,505	187,756
Williamston Middle School	19,200	15,000,000	15,019,200
Transportation	97,325		
Maintenance	157,550		
Central Office	6,953		
Technology	295,000		
School Food Service	86,800		
Other	95,218		
Grand Total	1,889,779	36,211,125	38,100,904

Following Dr. Daly’s review of each school’s request, the Commissioners had an opportunity to discuss the requests. The boards then discussed the sales tax revenues. Commissioner Hurst stated that the Board of Education has two new members and he asked the Manager to explain the sales tax revenues.

CURRENT EXPENSE

Chairman Gene Scott began this presentation by offering the following comments.

“Among the many items listed in the Current Expense Budget that will be presented, I want to highlight two items that are needed for the continued success of Martin County Schools. The School Board feels very strongly that these items are critical in order to continue to make the progress we have been making.

1. We would like to increase the teacher supplement by \$300. From past comments from the Board of Commissioners, I do not think I need to emphasize this priority any further. We must become more competitive with surrounding districts. The cost of this item is projected to be \$129,411 including matching payments for social security and retirement.
2. The second is just as critical. In addition to losing teachers to surrounding school systems, we are continually losing our best non-teaching personnel to surrounding school systems and businesses because we have not kept pace with the State Salary Scale for our non-teaching employees. We need the additional funding to implement the second phase of the salary adjustments started last year for our non-certified staff. When fully implemented this will place our employees on a salary schedule similar to the one utilized by Martin County.

When we have fully implemented this plan, we will still trail other districts in the immediate area in most categories, but we will at least be competitive. We are not trying to fix everything at once; this is a five year plan and we will need your continued support to make it work.

Please note that the additional funds we are requesting are going to our clerical, custodial, maintenance, and transportation staff. These individuals are critical for our continued success.

We are not requesting any additional local funds for our district level staff other than funds needed to provide the pay raises mandated by the General Assembly.

There are other items in the budget that the Board feels are necessary, and Dr. Daly will outline them as he makes his overview presentation.”

Current Expense 207-2008 Budget		\$ 6,502,252
New Requests		
Three Teaching Positions	\$ 125,178	
Increase Teacher Supplement by \$300	129,411	
Textbooks for community college/virtual hours	42,000	
Staff Development Office Staff	9,358	
Instructional Technology facilitator	57,934	
Record Retention system	79,363	
Total	443,244	
Revenue Needed: Continuation + New Requests		6,946,496
County Appropriation 2006		5,214,203
Other Anticipated Revenue		642,565
Additional Funding Required		\$ 1,089,728

Both Boards discussed the presentations, unfunded mandates passed down to both the Board of Education and the Commissioners, lottery proceeds, etc. Both Boards expressed appreciation for the opportunity to sit down and discuss the needs of the schools and the funds that the county has to work with. Both Boards were receptive and understanding.

The subject of the “hospital money” was discussed and it was explained when and how these funds are to be used.

Manager Overman asked the Board of Education to help the Commissioners lobby the Legislature for Medicaid relief. If some type of Medicaid relief can be realized, the County will have more funds to provide the services this county needs.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hurst made a MOTION, with a SECOND by Vice Chairman Smith, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously APPROVED, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Tommy W. Bowen, Chairman

Linda G. Hardison, Clerk to the Board