

April 19, 2005 Reconvened Meeting

The Martin County Board of Commissioners reconvened the meeting of April 19, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Martin County Governmental Center, 305 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

ASSEMBLY

Chairman C. Mort Hurst, Vice Chairman Tommy W. Bowen, Commissioners Elmo "Butch" Lilley and Alphonzo Perry, County Manager W. Russell Overman, County Attorney J. Melvin Bowen and Clerk to the Board Linda G. Hardison were present. Commissioner Ronnie Smith was absent.

Chairman Hurst reconvened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. After Commissioner Lilley led the audience in the *Pledge of Allegiance*, Vice Chairman Bowen offered the Invocation.

Chairman Hurst then introduced the Board members, staff and media to the audience.

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

Three of the Department Heads could not be present for the April 19, 2005 meeting due to previous commitments; therefore, presentations will be made by Register of Deeds, Inspections and the Water Department.

Register of Deeds: Ms. Tina Manning explained that there were few changes in her budget for the coming year. The supplies line item was increased due to the increase in the cost of binders, etc. She is also asking that her two deputies be reclassified to assistants since all of her staff is cross-trained and can perform any task within the department. The cost of this reclassification is less than \$1,000.

Chairman Hurst asked Ms. Manning if she has been able to get the office furniture that was removed from her budget several years ago. She stated that she has been able to purchase work stations for her staff and they are already in place. She thanked him for remembering.

Inspections: Mr. Jody Griffin was not available to make the presentation for Inspections.

Water Department: Mr. Kirk Rogers, Water Manager, presented the proposed budgets for Water Districts 1 and 2. Since some of the administrative costs will be divided between the two districts, it will appear that the expenses for Water District No. 1 has decreased.

Mr. Rogers stated that the salaries for his department need to go beyond the one step increase because all employees have been trained and another district is being added to the work load. He also asked for a part-time person (at least 3 days per week) for the next two years to help in the field.

Manager Overman explained that he and the Finance Officer were looking at possibilities of having a separate water department. All costs would fall within this department and the costs could be charged to the appropriate district. This will eliminate confusion when an item is purchased to be used in all districts or just one particular district.

Chairman Hurst addressed the \$73,000 which remained at the completion of the Highway 17 Project. Initially, this money came from the hospital fund. Instead of being returned to the hospital fund, this money was used to purchase equipment for the water district. Chairman Hurst explained that the Water District is supposed to become self-supporting. These funds must be properly returned to the hospital fund. He went on to explain that there are people in District No. 1 who cannot get water, and it is not equitable for general fund monies to be used to subsidize the water district.

Chairman Hurst commended Mr. Rogers for his work in the water department. He then pointed out that Martin County is missing out on grant money and asked why the engineers have not been seen in a Board meeting in over a year.

Commissioner Lilley interjected that there are numerous people who would sign-on, now that they see the pipes going into the ground, if the cost of sign-up was not \$550. Chairman Hurst stated that the amount had been reduced to \$400. Commissioner Lilley stated that folks are still complaining about that being too high. The group then discussed the cost to sign-up. It was suggested that now is the time to place some ads in the local paper and encourage everyone to sign-up.

Vice Chairman Bowen then questioned why the whole district has to be completed before any customers can be turned on. He stated that we need to be generating revenues as soon as possible.

Chairman Hurst also discussed the possibility of returning the \$75 sign-up fee that citizens paid as much as seven years ago and still do not have water. Mr. Rogers stated that the district may be able to furnish these folks with water since the new equipment has been purchased.

Manager Overman stated that the County is going to have to grow the customer base in order to may the district work.

The Board then discussed having one standard rate for all districts as a future goal.

Inspections: Manager Overman stated that he did not know where the Building Inspector was or why he did not attend the meeting. However, Manager Overman stated that the Building Inspector had included in his budget a new position (½ for inspections and ½ for building maintenance), a vehicle (truck or SUV) to be used for the department instead of his personal vehicle, and the computerization of his department.

With no further business to discuss from the April 19, 2005 meeting, MOTION by Commissioner Perry, SECOND by Vice Chairman Bowen, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION APPROVED by a unanimous vote of the Board, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

C. Mort Hurst, Chairman

Linda G. Hardison, Clerk to the Board