

POLK COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING  
Monday, June 11, 2012, 7:00pm  
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice, Womack Building  
Columbus, NC  
MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Gasperson, Vice-Chair McDermott, Commissioner Owens, Commissioner Pack and Commissioner Walker. Also in attendance were County Manager Whitson, Clerk to the Board Fehrmann, staff, media and citizens.

1. Call to Order – Chair Gasperson called the meeting to order.
2. Invocation – Commissioner Owens gave the invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Vice-Chair McDermott led the pledge.
4. FY 2012/13 Polk County Annual Budget – The purpose of the public hearing was to hear citizen comments on the proposed annual budget. Citizen comments: Keith Holbert said that for the county to pay for the Mill Spring Volunteer Fire Department (MSVFD) audit, and not pay for audits for the other fire departments and the Polk County Rescue Squad, pits volunteer groups against one another. Charles Green, MSVFD volunteer, said it is in their contract with the county for the county to request, and pay for, the MSVFD's audits. Mr. Green said that, by not giving the MSVFD the requested 1 cent tax increase until MSVFD can present a current audit, the BOC is punishing the fire department for not doing something the county is responsible for carrying out in the first place.
5. Commissioner Comments – Commissioner Pack presented his proposed fuel budget, which increases each department's 2011-2012 annualized actual fuel expenditures (usage based on 4/25/12 numbers) by a uniform 25%, and eliminates the \$90,000 in fuel contingency. A copy of this proposal is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. Commissioner Pack said the \$66,585.50 difference from the Manager's recommended budget could be put into a regular contingency fund. County Manager Whitson requested that his authority as manager to move money from fuel line items to other line items within departments be curtailed if Commissioner Pack's proposal is accepted, so that a vote by the BOC would be required for each transfer of this type.

Commissioner Owens said a citizen had expressed concern to him over the limitations placed on the Polk County Rescue Squad. He also said Mecklenberg County has announced a tax cut, and he wished Polk County could make the same announcement.

Sandra Halford, EMS Director, said the Polk County Rescue Squad's (PCRS) limitations are a result of State, not local, protocols, and she proceeded to detail

these protocols. Specifically, nitroglycerine cannot be administered by a basic EMT unless the patient being treated has a prescription for the medication; PCRS (volunteer) ambulances cannot carry nitroglycerine, and basic EMTs can only assist a patient in taking his or her prescribed nitroglycerine medication. Only EMT Intermediates and EMT Paramedics are allowed to give nitroglycerine without a patient prescription.

Ms. Halford explained that EMS ambulances carry 12-lead EKGs, and volunteer ambulances carry automatic defibrillators. 12-lead EKGs allow the paramedic to read the EKGs and diagnose the condition. Basic EMTs cannot be trained on 12-lead EKGs because it is beyond their scope of practice to read an EKG. Ms. Halford said there is no advantage for anyone other than EMS to have 12-lead EKGs on their ambulances because it is not going to change the way basic EMTs treat the patient. (Note: No PCRS representative was in attendance.)

Commissioner Walker inquired about the specifics of the Mill Spring Fire Department's contract and, following discussion, it was determined that all of the fire departments' contracts would be reviewed regarding audit requirement particulars.

Vice-Chair McDermott recommended accepting the County Manager's proposed departmental fuel budgets, but suggested moving the \$90,000 out of fuel contingency and into general contingency. She also said that while she would like to see a tax decrease, she does not think it is fiscally responsible at this time, especially given the many foreseeable future capital needs.

Commissioner Pack reiterated that he would not support a 1 cent tax increase for the Columbus Fire Department, but recommends taking money out of the general fund for the Columbus and Mill Spring Fire Departments, as well as the Polk County Rescue Squad.

Chair Gasperson reminded everyone that the ½ cent sales tax will go away in the next fiscal year, resulting in a decrease in revenues of approximately \$300,000 - \$400,000.

Following a brief recess it was determined that the Board would reconvene at a special meeting on June 14, 2012, at 4:30pm to enable the Board to reach a consensus on the budget, thereby ensuring presentation of a complete budget ordinance at the June 18, 2012, regular BOC meeting. (The special meeting was subsequently cancelled on 4/12/12 by Chair Gasperson.)

6. Adjournment – Commissioner Walker moved to adjourn, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD  
OF COMMISSIONERS

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Beth Fehrmann  
Clerk to the Board

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Ray Gasperson  
Chair