

CUMBERLAND COUNTY FINANCE COMMITTEE
APRIL 14, 2005, 9:30AM

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Commissioner Kenneth Edge, Chairman
Commissioner Talmage Baggett
Commissioner Jeannette Council

OTHERS

PRESENT: Commissioner John Henley, Jr.
Commissioner Diane Wheatley
James Martin, County Manager
Amy Cannon, Asst. County Manager
Cliff Spiller, Asst. County Manager
Howard Abner, Finance Department
Sara VanderClute – PIO
Marsha Fogle, Clerk

Chairman Edge called the meeting to order.

Invocation: Commissioner Baggett

1. Approval of Minutes: February 3, 2005

MOTION: Commissioner Baggett moved to approve.

SECOND: Commissioner Council

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

2. Presentation from Freddy Johnson, President, Fire Chiefs' Association, regarding funding for fire departments for EMS and Rescue

Freddy Johnson requested funding for fire departments which respond to EMS calls and Rescue calls. Mr. Johnson noted that prior to the 90's fire departments provided service for fire calls only. Now, they respond to fire calls, EMS calls and rescue calls.

This additional responsibility requires more training and more equipment which costs the departments more money. (Attached is the presentation made at the Finance Committee meeting). Mr. Johnson said he is not requesting an increase in the fire tax and is not sure how the Board of Commissioners can come up with the additional funding. At this point, all but two of the fire departments are providing EMS and Rescue assistance or are in the process of training to provide these services.

Although an increase in revenue as a result of revaluation has occurred, inflation has made it difficult for some of the departments to keep up with equipment needed for fire fighting, let alone additional money for EMS and Rescue equipment.

Mr. Johnson did not include in his request the specific amount of money needed to assist the fire departments.

MOTION: Commissioner Baggett moved that the Finance Committee will take this request under consideration.

SECOND: Commissioner Council

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Edge inquired if the fire departments do bulk purchasing. Mr. Johnson indicated they do sometimes when they can. Commissioner Baggett expressed concern that some fire districts are getting better levels of service than others. Commissioner Baggett noted that if more money is needed through additional fees it should be on a "household basis" or "dwelling unit" basis.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

3. Presentation from NCACC – Health Insurance

Information was received by the Committee regarding case management by member and an annual utilization study. The committee will review the information and discuss it at the next Finance Committee meeting – May 5, 2005.

4. Other matters of Concern – Request from Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina for funding in the amount of \$40,000

Mr. Fred Littlejohn, Executive Director of the Second Harvest Food Bank, requested the Committee consider its request for funding in the amount of \$40,000 to be used for operating funds through the first half of 2005. Mr. Littlejohn noted that a grant (Community Service Block Grant) that has helped provide funds ended in 2004. He noted he would be back again in July requesting more funding. Mr. Littlejohn said he does not receive any United Way funding or similar "recurring" revenue. Mr. Littlejohn noted that he is leasing a warehouse which costs \$69,765 a year. He indicated he would have an option to buy the facility in 2007 for \$250,000. Commissioner Baggett inquired if the building could be purchased now? Mr. Littlejohn said the lease indicates the next window of opportunity is in the year 2007. Commissioner Baggett inquired if Mr. Littlejohn planned to request funding from the United Way. He indicated that United Way indicated there is a long list of agencies waiting for funding. Mr. Littlejohn indicated fees had been increased for member agencies to \$30 a year (there are 200 member agencies in seven counties). It was suggested by Commissioner Edge that perhaps fees could be increased for member agencies. Commissioner Council inquired whether the County could assist the Food Bank in requesting funding from the United Way. Mr. Littlejohn said he was not sure how the County could help. Commissioner Wheatley noted that this requests comes at a time when the budget for this fiscal year has already been approved. The Board will be reviewing budget requests for FY06 during the next couple of months. Commissioner Wheatley suggested Mr. Littlejohn go through the county's budget process in requesting funding. Commissioner Edge, Chairman of the Finance Committee, said that the Committee appreciates the work of the Food Bank, but the County cannot continue to be a funding source for every non-profit agency. He noted the county now funds non-profit agencies to the tune of \$1.5 million per year. He stated that each member of the Food Bank should help to pay the expenses and that fees could be raised to accomplish this.

MOTION: Commissioner Baggett moved that the Committee accept this as information and that the Board would consider the request during budget deliberations.

SECOND: Commissioner Council

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

MEETING ADJOURNED: 11:00AM