

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
FY20 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING/WORK SESSION  
117 DICK STREET, 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR, ROOM 118 / 5<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, ROOM 564  
JUNE 10, 2019 7:00 PM  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Commissioner Jeannette Council, Chair  
Commissioner Marshall Faircloth, Vice Chair  
Commissioner Glenn Adams  
Commissioner Michael Boose  
Commissioner Charles Evans  
Commissioner Jimmy Keefe  
Commissioner Larry Lancaster  
Amy Cannon, County Manager  
Melissa Cardinali, Assistant County Manager  
Tracy Holder, Assistant County Manager  
Sally Shutt, Assistant County Manager  
Duane Holder, Assistant County Manager/Interim Health Director  
Rick Moorefield, County Attorney  
Vicki Evans, Finance Director  
Deborah Shaw, Budget Analyst  
Heather Harris, Budget Analyst  
Jeffrey Brown, Engineering and Infrastructure Director  
Brenda Jackson, Social Services Director  
Cumberland County Board of Education  
Dr. Marvin Connelly, Cumberland County Schools Superintendent  
Clyde Locklear, Assoc. Superintendent of Business Operations  
Candice White, Clerk to the Board  
Kellie Beam, Deputy Clerk to the Board  
Press

Chair Council called the special meeting to order and stated the purpose of the meeting is to hear from citizens regarding the proposed FY20 budget. Commissioner Faircloth provided the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Chair Council called on Amy Cannon, County Manager, who explained the Board of Commissioners' procedures for public hearings.

This is the duly advertised/noticed public hearing set for this date and time.

Chair Council opened the public hearing.

The clerk to the board called the following speakers:

Brian Tyler – Mr. Tyler appeared as the Chair of the Public Library Board of Trustees. Mr. Tyler stated the Board of Trustees reviewed the proposed budget and approved it to the extent they can and encouraged the Board to approve it as such. Mr. Tyler thanked the Board of Commissioners for the funds they provide for the library and library staff.

Tomika Walker Kelly – Ms. Kelly stated she is a parent and educator and asked the Board of Commissioners to fully fund the budget request made by Cumberland County Schools. Ms. Kelly stated funding is needed for social workers, counselors, nurses, special education, English Language Learner (ELL) positions, security and technology.

Denise Montgomery – Ms. Montgomery stated as it relates to the budget, property taxes are the first thing to go up when there is a need for money. Ms. Montgomery asked the County to look at areas for funding other than taxes.

Mark Crowe – Mr. Crowe stated he is a Cumberland County educator and asked the Board of Commissioners to fund the school's budget request so there can be a nurse in every school.

Greg West – Mr. West appeared as a member of the Board of Education and chair of the Budget and Finance Committee. Mr. West stated the school's budget this year is the most thorough and business-minded budget he has seen in seventeen years of public service and justification was provided for the ask of an additional \$8.9 million. Mr. West stated the ask was not taken lightly and represents the phased in approach to many of the school's chronic shortages. Mr. West stated there is a need to increase the number of social workers, counselors and school nurses because Cumberland County Schools are below national averages and peer districts in North Carolina. Mr. West stated although some say the money is not for the low performing schools, much of it will be targeted to low performing students wherever they are. Mr. West stated \$3.2 million of the request is based on the projected legislative impact on the school's budget and the school system will likely have to make cuts elsewhere if the \$89.04 is not fully funded.

Carol Stubbs – Ms. Stubbs appeared as the local president of the Cumberland County Association of Educators and asked the Board of Commissioners to fund the school budget because a guidance counselor is needed in every school.

Carmela McKeller-Smith – Ms. Smith stated she was present because of the robo call she received from the Cumberland County Schools. Ms. Smith stated the irony that there was not a public hearing for the board of education budget proposal does not escape her. Ms. Smith stated she has engaged in her share of protests but they have never been incited by elected officials of a government entity. Ms. Smith stated the Board of Education's decision to solicit attendance of this meeting through robo calls to protest the County's proposed budget was a questionable decision and posed a slippery slope for democracy. Ms. Smith stated as it relates to the school's budget, resources need to be allocated to address the crisis of black students because the lack of resources allocated to low performing schools, to poor and black children, indicate they are not a priority for the Board of Education. Ms. Smith stated she supports fully funding the school system while at the same time realizes that if something different is not done, the children in these schools will continue to suffer.

Richard VanWy – Mr. VanWy stated he has been told the Cumberland County Schools have a surplus of money that is not earmarked for anything but neighboring counties can provide tablets for their students. Mr. VanWy stated Cumberland County Schools should take the slush fund and put tablets and other supplies in the classrooms or give teachers a \$1,000 bonus.

Liza Denis – Ms. Denis stated she is a school bus driver and a bereaved parent whose son collapsed in a gym in Alamance County during PE class and did not survive. Ms. Denis asked the Board of Commissioners to support the school's budget request to provide more CPR and emergency training and nurses in the schools.

Leslie B. Craig – Ms. Craig stated she has been an educator for twenty-two years and school social workers, counselors and nurses are needed at all grade levels because the schools are facing challenges and needs reflective of society at large unlike ever before. Ms. Craig stated kids cannot learn if they do not feel safe, are stressed or if they are operating in survival mode.

Gerhard Guevarra – Mr. Guevarra stated he has four children in Cumberland County Schools, is involved in the Parents and Teachers Association and is the Ft. Bragg Schools liaison officer. Mr. Guevarra stated Cumberland County Schools have the greatest percentage of military connected children and asked the Board of Commissioners to provide funding for school social workers, counselors and nurses to aid children growing up in a military life style.

Steve McRae – Mr. McRae stated he is a parent of three Cumberland County School children. Mr. McRae stated individuals who consider moving and relocating to this community evaluate it based in part on its support for public education and businesses likely conduct the same type of evaluation. Mr. McRae stated social workers, counselors and nurses are core functions of the school system and are appropriate of the additional budgetary ask. Mr. McRae asked the Board of Commissioners to fully fund the Board of Education's funding request.

There being no further speakers, Chair Council closed the public hearing.

Chair Council provided closing remarks and thanked the speakers for their comments. Chair Council stated the Board will take the comments and concerns into consideration and thanked everyone for their support for public education.

MOTION: Commissioner Evans moved to adjourn.

SECOND: Commissioner Adams

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (7-0)

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Approved with/without revision:

Respectfully submitted,

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Candice H. White  
Clerk to the Board