

MINUTES

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF HENDERSON

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 29, 2008

The Henderson County Board of Commissioners met for a special called meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Courtroom/Commissioners' Conference Room of the Historic Courthouse.

Those present were: Chairman Bill Moyer, Vice-Chairman Charlie Messer, Commissioner Larry Young, Commissioner Chuck McGrady, Commissioner Mark Williams, County Manager Steve Wyatt, Assistant County Manager Selena Coffey (arrived late), County Attorney Russell Burrell, and Clerk to the Board Elizabeth W. Corn.

Also present were: Research/Budget Analyst Amy Brantley, Deputy Clerk to the Board Terry Wilson, Communications Officer Pam Brice, DSS Director Liston Smith, Sheriff Rick Davis, Engineering/Facility Services Director Marcus Jones, Board of Elections Director Beverly Cunningham, Assessor Stan Duncan, Human Resources Director Jan Prichard, Soil & Water Conservation District Director/Conservationist Jonathan Wallin, Health Director Tom Bridges, Emergency Services Director/Fire Marshal Rocky Hyder, Finance Director J. Carey McLelland, Planning Director Anthony Starr, Internal Auditor Darlene Burgess, Code Enforcement Director Toby Linville, and Environmental Health Director Seth Swift.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Moyer called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance, stating the purpose of this meeting was a public hearing with respect to our FY2008-2009 Budget.

Commissioner Messer made the motion for the Board to go into public hearing. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Chairman comments re: editorial

Chairman Moyer spoke to an editorial that was in this morning's Times-News. It stated that the Commissioners ignored the request to pay for two new school nurses. He stated that the Commissioners had a lengthy discussion with Tom Bridges, Public Health Director, with respect to the need for additional school nurses. The Board also heard from the school system on that subject. There were a lot of questions and answers but no action has been taken with respect to any items in the budget other than preliminary action with respect to the fire departments because if we were going to have to bring all the fire departments in we would have had to schedule that. We had discussion to whether that was necessary and decided it was not. Despite what the newspaper said implying that the Board took action on this, there was no action taken with respect to any of these items. He doubts whether there will be action taken this evening as well. The Board will have a public hearing and hear from the citizens. The Board had a good workshop with a lot of discussion. The Board will try to move some of these issues to resolution at the meeting next Monday, June 2.

Public Input

Chairman Moyer explained the process for addressing the Board, stating that the Clerk to the Board will identify the person who is first on the list and then will give the name of the next person who will speak so they can be ready. Each person will have three minutes to speak. When the timer beeps your time is

DATE APPROVED: JULY 7, 2008

up so please wrap up your comments at that time. He explained that this is a time for the public to make comments, not a time for dialogue.

1. Maureen Adams – Ms. Adams distributed a hand-out and spoke from it. She is Executive Director of the Children and Family Resource Center. She addressed a question that was raised at the Budget Workshop on May 27 regarding funding requests from the Children and Family Resource Center. Ms. Coffey asked her to come and explain the differences. Ms. Adams stated that these are two separate requests. The County is not funding the same thing twice.

The first request through the Alliance for \$17,700 will be used for programs and services of the Children and Family Resource Center which are programs that directly impact the quality of early care and education of children. What these programs do is make it possible for families to stay in the workforce, decrease the burden on social services, decrease root causes of abuse and neglect, and prepare children to succeed in school. Please consider fully funding this request. Not one dime of money you give to CFRC program and services through the Alliance is used for United Agenda for Children.

The second request was sent directly to the County for \$25,000. This would provide a second year of funding for the United Agenda for Children. The Children and Family Resource Center is the fiscal agent for the United Agenda for Children, a coalition of over 50 organizations --- that is why this request came in from the Children and Family Resource Center. United Agenda for Children is a three year project. They are at the end of year 2 of the project and year 1 of county funding. This year, county funding will allow them to develop and implement appropriate strategies around the priority issues identified. What they are about dovetails with the county's own strategic goals. She spoke briefly to the need for additional school nurses, stating that in the wings there is excitement building around the possibility of school based health centers. While this does not solve the school nurse ratio issue it will provide more access to health care specifically mental health, another United Agenda priority. She stated the Board of Commissioners has made an investment and asked them to help them capitalize on that investment by seeing implementation through. With Board support the United Agenda for Children can help the Board of Commissioners achieve it's goals. She said "Please consider funding the United Agenda for Children at some level. Thank you."

2. McCray Benson – Mr. Benson is President and CEO of the Community Foundation of Henderson County. He offered four points in the Board's consideration of this budget process:
 - 1). Recognizing your leadership role and responsibility
 - 2). The vital link between our community's public sector and the community's independent sector
 - 3). To highlight some advantages currently available in our community
 - 4). To challenge us to use our Dollars and Sense to the greatest good possible.

He thanked the Board for holding this hearing and for their personal contribution of leadership to our community. "The responsibility you carry to support achieving successful outcomes and improving the quality of life is central to everyone's life in this community. We know by experience that a slowing economy will make short-term assistance more urgent while we also require a long view for preventing costly future consequences. Our community started building momentum when together the County Commission and the Community Foundation, along with others, sponsored the United Agenda for Children. Approximately 300 persons representing the diverse characteristics of our community spent a full day expressing concerns and putting a voice to top priorities. In every category by age, gender, race, and income level school nurses took the number one spot and then mental health services, affordable housing and four more top priorities. These top priorities were further supported by the recent Henderson County Community Health Assessment conducted by the County's Health Dept. and the Partnership for Health, school

nurses were called out as a high priority. The last up-date of the needs assessment conducted by the Alliance for Human Services showed Health and Mental Health as the top issue in Human Services. It is important that our public officials and administration take an active role in hearing and responding by actively supporting solutions to these top issues. This support will keep our human capital engaged. I urge you to use your leadership for collaborating beyond budget lines. These issues require everyone's commitment to finding solutions. I challenge you to bring some sense of using this momentum to our community's advantage. Help us find the cross-cutting solutions to these top priorities and keep the civic engagement building while addressing both near-term and long-term objectives. You have the influence to bring the major players together and address workable solutions for these top issues. Again, I thank you for this hearing and your leadership in these matters."

3. Bill Reedy – Mr. Reedy is principal of Flat Rock Middle School. He thanked the Board for their support in the past for public education. Over the last four years Rugby and Flat Rock Middle Schools have had ten room additions that housed a grade level, improving the facilities. Hendersonville Middle School has a new facility Apple Valley School is just over 12 years old. He stated "We must start now to support the elementary, middle and high schools to meet the capital needs of our students and staff. We have a good group of custodians and maintenance personnel who work daily 25 facilities covering over 2,000,000 square feet. These men and women have great pride in their work but they are fighting a battle of having roughly 700 to 1,000 people daily entering and using each of the facilities. We need your help to do what is right for the children and adults of the community and to properly fund our daily maintenance costs. . . We must adequately repair and maintain existing structures. We are addressing what we can with volunteer efforts. For example, painting is done by prisoners during the summer. Volunteers during the summer and school year also work throughout the schools. Volunteers can help with landscaping issues or have helped with landscaping issues, irrigation plans as well as construction projects. Volunteerism is a support effort and one we are proud of in Henderson County; however, it is not the way to meet such complex budget needs of a school district of our size. Henderson County has outstanding schools that are constantly ranked in the top 15% of the schools in the State. . . we have evidence of academic success in all four classes and all four subjects, increased usage in the application of technology in the classroom. We have class sizes that allow students and adults to develop both educational and trusting relationships that develop and support a successful school experience as we prepare the students for the future, programs that address both the social and academic needs of our students. We have outstanding elective and exploratory programs. We have good counseling programs to work with the growing social, family, and economical issues that our students face daily, issues that we as a school system need help with to maintain our current success. An increasing diverse population, both by economic indicators as well as changing ethnic indicators, attracting professional staff in a competitive market for quality educators. An increase in the local supplement is a step in the right direction to maintain and compete with surrounding districts. Extending programs like school nursing and social workers to meet the variety of needs of our students present to any school. A number of years ago I heard a Governor say that the road to success must go by a schoolhouse. It is our charge as educators to make sure that we educate our students to the best of our ability in offering effective programs that allow our students to be successful. Obviously we need your help

to make sure that Henderson County Public Schools is properly funded to support education. Let's not play the "what if" game five years from now."

4. Jerry Smith – Mr. Smith is a teacher at Hendersonville High School. He is also the Chairman of the Apple Country Greenway Commission. He is the father of three children, one of which is in the current school system and another that will begin in July and the third will begin school in four years. He stated that as a voter he trusts his School Board. The people on that School Board have been elected and re-elected and know a lot about how that school system runs. They have come to the County over the last few years with a budget which is detailed in the needs for our county and he trusts that they know what we need. His question to the Board was "Why don't you?" They put together a detailed budget that explains the needs. "I encourage you as a teacher, as a father, and a voter that you take to heart what they have asked for in this budget 'cause I promise you they are not wasting your money. As we look to the future, we're going to need another High School probably by the time my children get to be in High School by the way our growing needs are and the way our High Schools have grown. I agree with the previous speaker that if we're going to set a standard for meeting these needs, the time is now. And if every year the School Board puts together a budget, you cut it; it's going to be hard for us to justify those expenditures in the future. I know it's difficult in this climate where we have voters who vote against tax increases. I feel for you 'cause you are simply representing their views up here on the board but there's got to be a way to find the money for a School Board that's doing everything they can to educate our kids. There are thousands of parents out there volunteering their time everyday and we want to know that the County Commissioners who are here, sitting in front of us tonight, reward that work that we put in our school system by paying for the things that we need. . . I encourage you as you think about this that some of us are going to be around a long time with kids in this school system for up to twenty years, please think about that as you're funding and set the standard now that our School Board can be trusted in what they put together for your budget. Thank you."
5. Melissa Germain – Ms. Germain is a teacher at Hendersonville High School. She spoke to the need of the school budget and the need to fully it, including an increase in the supplement pay for teachers. She said it is time to show teachers that they are valued and appreciated the way other counties value their teachers. If this doesn't happen Henderson County will lose good experienced teachers and will not attract new ones. "Without good teachers and the necessary resources how will we continue to be the best?"
6. Matthew Gruebmeier – Mr. Gruebmeier is a freshman Principal at East Henderson High School (EHHS). He addressed buildings and facilities. He is thrilled to be in this job, and especially thrilled to be at EHHS because he works in a place that supports education. The East Henderson community has been extremely generous. East Henderson has a new field house that was built with very little local money, very little school money, but was built instead because of the volunteers of basically one individual. We certainly appreciate that. Just this year we received a brand new piano because of the needs of our vocal and other musical groups. We've received tuxedos. "One of the biggest gifts that I have offered to our teachers here in my first year has been a new classroom that was an indirect benefit of our field house and it was amazing when those teachers saw us talking about that new classroom and how we were going to use it. That one classroom was a

huge benefit to us. When I got to East I think I felt a little bit like a new homeowner when I walked around that building and kind of did that walk though that new homeowners do and I've got to say I was started by what I saw. You would be started too if you were to see what we have at East High. Let me just give you a couple of examples. When we had this last rainstorm there were at least a dozen leaks in our buildings at East High. Instead of working with that homeless student I was working with my custodian to find enough trashcans to hold the water that was coming through our roofs onto classrooms that were full of children. If you were to pull up in the front of our school, you would see windows that are fogged because of the broken seals. It's the most public part of our school and yet it contains some of the most egregious conditions of our school. The chimney that's so often referred to is not as controversial as one might think. The high price tag is related to the fact that it's an existing and operating chimney. It vents an existing boiler in the basement of that building. My job though as a principal is to keep my eyes on the prize and that prize is student learning. And when I have a student tell me that she's having a hard time concentrating because she doesn't feel safe at my school because of the open nature of our campus and the fact that we have gates that have been repeatedly unfunded that's hard for me to think about." He also spoke about the efficiency of his teachers, stating that almost half of the teachers at East High have no working office space. He saw a math teacher today storing graded papers on top of a refrigerator in a workroom. He asked the Board to think very carefully about the budget and to remember the conditions of things at East High because the eye's on the prize of student learning and that happens better in a facility where it is clear that the community values education as much as we're trying to motivate our students to value it.

7. Tommy Manning – Mr. Manning is a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel who retired here about 2.5 years ago. He is an individual investor here in Henderson County and President of the Hendersonville High School Catbackers, a Sports Boosters Club. He addressed the differences between the Sheriff's Department budget and the Education budget. The Education Department is supposedly getting a 5% increase in budget and the Sheriff's Department will get a 2.7% increase in budget. However, the Sheriff's Department no longer includes insurance costs in his budget. Capital costs such as patrol cars are not in the budget at all. The range of the Sheriff's costs such as the utility bills in the Sheriff's budget are shared with other county departments so therefore they are not actually reflected in the Sheriff's budget. They are reflected on other department's budgets. He stated that the 5% increase that the School Board is getting – a lot of that was from previously committed indentures from previous fiscal years. Mr. Manning stated that the schools are in deplorable condition. He said that he would rate our schools as third rate schools, stating it is disgusting to see what the teachers, the students, and the administrators have to put up with as far as the infrastructure in our school system. One example he gave was that at Hendersonville High School they cannot even use the track, it's unsafe. They cannot have trackmeets at the High School because it is unsafe and there is nothing in the budget and nothing that is being done to correct the situation. "Anything you can do to help out the School Board's budget and do the right thing is much appreciated. Thank you for your time."

Late arrival

Selena Coffey arrived at this time in the meeting, 7:35 p.m.

8. Steve Kirkland – Mr. Kirkland is the Executive Director of United Way of Henderson County and a proud resident and taxpayer. He was present to speak on behalf of United Agenda for Children. United Way is a funder of United Agenda for Children. He stated that the mission of United Way is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities. They achieve that mission by strategically engaging and building relationships with diverse community stakeholders, contributors, and partners. Through that they identify goals, choose a limited number of critical issues, develop impact strategies, implement the strategies, and then measure and communicate results. He asked “Now what has United Agenda for Children Done? It has begun with gathering a coalition of community leaders and educating and getting them on board from the very beginning. They had the wonderful Speak Out for Kids event that was a memorable day where community goals were identified by the folks that live here and know the issues. The list of critical issues was scribed: school nurses, mental health and on down. There is an amazing collaboration of the private and public sector that are cued up and already working on these issues. We just need some help with the resources to keep going. The measurement and results – there has been a phenomenal amount of communication coming from the staff and volunteers that are in charge of this effort. United Way has been a funder and is on the implementation team for United Agenda for Children. We applaud not only the methodology but the heart that United Agenda for Children is and ask that the Commissioners keep them alive and kicking for another year.
9. David White – Mr. White was present to discuss the match for the 5311 Program which serves Human Services and medical transportation in Henderson County. \$22,999 is the local match on the admin. and \$15,256 is the local match on the capital. Each one of these dollars will be met with \$5.00 of Federal and State funds. The purpose of the 5311 Program is to transport elderly disabled and other folks like Sheltered Workshop and others to where they need to go and most of them certainly have mobility challenges. They don’t have other ways to get around if we don’t provide the service. You get a savings by having one vehicle for instance picking up twelve people to go to the Sammy Williams Center or some other activity like that or the Sheltered Workshop rather than twelve vehicles on the road every morning and every afternoon by providing that service. On the administrative side – as many programs as we serve with the 5311 vehicles and the 5311 dollars you have to have someone to organize it, providing driver training, who’s making sure the routes are reviewed and where possible the services are combined. So some of the programs that are coordinated under the 5311 program where vehicles are shared and costs are shared are Henderson County Schools Balfour and Second Start Programs, certainly the ROAP (Rural Operating Assistance Program for elderly and disabled) Program, the Henderson County medical trips and Medicaid, Vocational Solutions (they run three routes for them every day). On the capital match – this match would allow them to get four new vehicles (local match), you’re paying \$15,000 to get in \$152,555 worth of capital equipment. There are a couple of computer included but most of it is vehicles. They have not received new vehicles in four years from the State of NC due to their budget problems at the NCDOT so these four vehicles are sorely needed. The four vehicles to be replaced all have over 100,000 miles, some have over 120,000 miles. The type of driving that is done on those vehicles is rough on vehicles, a lot of stop and go. He asked the Commissioners to please support the local match for Apple Country

Transportation's 5311 Administrative and Capital Projects.

10. Stan Kumor – Mr. Kumor addressed school funding. “School funding is comprised of three components – local, state and federal money. Totaling the three components results in the amount spent per student According to DPI’s 06-07 data, which is the latest available public data on their website (excluding nutrition programs), Henderson County spends around \$1,500/student and ranks 48th in the state out of 115 school districts. The state gives us around \$5,150 which ranks 92 out of 115 school districts and the feds contribute around \$575 which ranks 68th. Our total per pupil expenditure in 2006-2007 was \$7,231.78 which ranked us 91st out of 115 school districts in the state. By far the largest chunk of money comes from the state. It varies widely among school districts from \$11,284 (Hyde County) to \$4,679 (Cabarrus County). In doing this research I found an interesting table among all the statistical financial data on schools. A table giving the rank of the counties by average income. I found this curious that this data should be included on this website. Henderson County ranked 19th. By correlating rank of average income versus state support rank I found a significant correlation. The poorest counties in general get more money and the richest counties the least. In conclusion, if we are waiting for the state or federal government to help us with our schools; it’s not going to happen. The state views us as a wealthy county and in their eyes we have the where-with-all to take care of our own schools. If we want better schools, we are going to have to step up to the plate ourselves period. A one cent increase in the property tax would give us approximately 1 million in additional revenue – enough to give the teachers a supplemental pay increase and fund additional school nurses, that would amount of \$25 per household, since the average house in Henderson County is valued at \$250,000. I for one am willing to pay an extra \$25 a year for school nurses and a very modest increase in the teacher’s supplemental pay. Since our tax rate is the 85th lowest in the state, I don’t view this as a crushing burden. Haven’t we learned from recent history on construction costs that procrastination in the present costs us more in the future. If we do nothing today, it is likely that we will have to have a large property tax increase in the next two years.”
11. Karen Mathiesen – Ms. Mathiesen is a Home Economics teacher at Hendersonville High School and is Vice-President of Henderson County Association of Educators. She is a County native and an alumna of HHS and has taught in Henderson County for more than 17 years. She said that no one falls under more scrutiny than the school system. “No one hears more criticism than we do. We are always a political football and I see no end to that but we believe in accountability. We teach accountability at all levels and we accept that responsibility. If you look at the facts you will find that Henderson County Public Schools have made its constituency proud in every conceivable area: academics, athletics, fine arts, career and technical education, community outreach, volunteer service. We serve students from the profoundly disabled to the brilliant, from the culturally deprived to the culturally advantaged, from the poorest among us to the wealthiest. We take whoever walks in the door and we do the very best we can to see that that student reaches his potential. The School Board represents us and has brought you a fair budget. I’m sure you would agree that there are no frills in this budget. We are so far behind now because of the years and years of neglect by this very body. You have an opportunity to do the right thing for this school system and fund this budget. When

you dismiss the budget you dismiss us, the students, the parents, the teachers, the staff, the administrators and even the taxpayers. No one likes to pay taxes but we would certainly rather build schools than jails. We would certainly rather hire teachers than policemen. When did anyone in public office ever regret spending money on children, whether it was for their health or their education? When students come to us we're very generous with our time, our wisdom, our training, our energy, and our money. We expect you to do the same for us. We deserve your support. We expect your support. We cannot tolerate your continuing to be stingy with the funding on such a critical issue as public education. You must fund this budget. Show us you believe in us and in what we are doing. Man up and do the right thing. Find the funding and fund this budget and thank you so much for your hard work."

12. Fran Shelton – Ms. Shelton is the Band Director at Hendersonville High School. She explained that the band had the opportunity in the past six years to go out and represent Henderson County with some marvelous students. She said she was present to sing the Commissioners' praises. "I want to tell you we have gone against 25 of the finest High Schools in the United States. We performed at Carnegie Hall. We performed at Boston Symphony Hall and 2 weeks ago the Kennedy Center. We play against the most expensive High Schools, the largest High Schools from the largest cities in the United States and when it all comes out in the end and they say 'and the award winning band goes to Hendersonville High School' from Henderson County. People look around and they are in disbelief. So I'm here to applaud you for what you have done for the children of Henderson County and you probably haven't heard that a lot and I'm here to let you know that when we took our group of students out the response that we got is unbelievable about Henderson County and what going on in education in Henderson County. People cannot believe what's going on in a small mountain community. Another thing I want to bring to your attention is that does not happen by the band director. I am not the reason for the success for our program, it starts in the elementary school, it goes on through the middle school and eventually to the high school. We have amazing teachers. We have an amazing school board, a wonderful superintendent and I get to work for a wonderful principal. I have wonderful community support and I have wonderful band parents but I'm here to tell you what Henderson County has that's going on that is great! And I'm here to tell you out of all of these venues that we've had the opportunity to perform at how strong Henderson County is and how people are in disbelief across this country that we can bring a product from a small mountain community as our high school band and come back and represent this community and represent you the way that we've been able to. So I'm here to applaud everybody in this audience because they're the reason for the success of the children in Henderson County. I would ask you to continue the support. I'm here to let you know what you were doing up to this point has been great and you can compare that to all these schools throughout the United States and what we've been able to do and you've given us that opportunity and to let you know how much we appreciate your support. But we need your continued support and our school board has asked you to continue to support our children of Henderson County and that's what we're all about. I think our first consideration has to be our children of Henderson County but thank you so much. Thank everybody in this audience for giving us and the group of children that I teach the opportunities that we've had and I just came to honor you in the successes that we have had and let you know

you're an intricate part of what we are doing at Hendersonville High School in our bandroom. So thank you very much."

13. Wendell Capes – Mr. Capes is the grandfather of seven students in the Henderson County Schools. He said they have had 12 at one time. His three daughters were students in the Henderson County School system also. He stated that they all appreciate what the County Commissioners have done for the schools but they think the Board can do better. The school nurses is something that we really need, we don't have enough. He said we also need better maintenance for the schools and to not fund the operating budget for the schools costs a lot more in the long run. The mental health programs also need funding. "We have a granddaughter that needs mental health care. We also have a granddaughter that needs help for her speech in elementary school and she's not getting it because the funding is not there for the special help and that really should be there. So I just encourage you to fund the school budget. Another penny or two on the tax rate is not that bad for a county that has the resources that we do and we should take better care of our kids and I ask you to please do that."
14. Ann Matteson – Ms. Matteson is a teacher at Hendersonville Elementary School. She stated that she is also a taxpayer in Henderson County and she realizes that in most instances you get what you pay for. "How many of us have bought that less expensive item only to learn later that it was of poor quality and had to be replaced much sooner. With that in mind, I would again like to address the needs of our schools. I have watched with great interest every year that local school administration and school board have gone begging for sufficient funds to ensure that our schools are top notch, not that poor quality. For years capital improvements were put off in this county as unnecessary or impossible to financially support. Consequently we continue to play catch-up with capital needs as our county grows beyond a population of 100,000. To use debt service on these capital needs to demonstrate a higher level of county support for the schools is morally wrong. These are things that should have been addressed years ago. It appears that the county budget preparers are engaged in a shell game, moving money around to serve their own agenda. I applaud Chairman Moyer for his comments about this practice. The children of this county are our future. While there may be many in this county who do not have children or grandchildren in the schools they too are vested in a well educated population. They need firefighters, police officers, auto service technicians, bankers, landscapers, hair stylists, accountants, carpet installers, shop keepers, journalists, librarians, and the list goes on and on. Many of these workers have families and are attracted to a community because of the quality of the schools. We need to make sure we have that quality, that we attract these people to Henderson County. In a few years some of you, and I, may need the assistance of well trained healthcare workers right here in Henderson County. I think we will all want someone who had a highly qualified teacher who pushed that worker when they were a student to excel, to be above average. I don't think any of us will want someone who is below average taking care of our health needs. Yet we continue to fund our education below average, substantially below. I fear that because of the lack of funding for educational needs in Henderson County I may be in a situation where I have to depend on someone who is not capable of meeting my needs, whatever they may be, dental, legal, or just checking out at the grocery store. We can do better in this county. We must do better and I am counting on you. The kids are counting on you

and whether the rest of the people in this county know it or not, they are counting on you. Thank you for your time and attention and your diligence in making a tough decision.”

15. Diane Dotson – Ms. Dotson is a third grade teacher at Marlowe Elementary School. She is also a member of the Henderson County Association of Educators which represents the majority of teachers in Henderson County Public Schools, the county’s largest employer. “We educators have been urging the Board of Commissioners to increase the supplemental pay amount for two years. Besides all the many reasons educators deserve a pay raise, there is the fact that we are in competition with neighboring counties to hire and retain teachers. These neighboring counties already pay more and two are increasing their supplemental pay higher. As a teacher I can tell you it is hard to keep up when you are coming from behind. As other counties, who no doubt also are looking at tight financial constraints, increase the amount spent on education Henderson County falls to a lower rate. The time will never be convenient for you to raise educators pay. If we must wait until a time when you just happen to have a lot of extra money on hand to spend on education, we are in for a long wait indeed. I wonder if in the future you will be looking back wondering why Henderson County got left so far behind in the maintaining of quality schools and teachers. I hope I’ll be around to remind you. I urge you to amend this budget to include a supplemental pay increase for educators, support education. Thank you.”
16. Linda Soble – Ms. Soble is a teacher at West Henderson High School and president of the Henderson County Association of Educators. “Tonight I challenge you to do the right and fair thing for the educators of Henderson County. For too long our local supplement has been inadequate when compared to what our peers receive in surrounding counties. In Buncombe County I would receive twice my local supplement as it is here. Does Buncombe County value their educators twice as much as Henderson County? Next year the Buncombe supplement is expected to be raised to 8% and to a maximum of 15% . For the most experienced teacher that’s triple our local supplement. A Transylvania County Commissioner reported to me their teachers would receive 7.4% next year. There is nothing right or fair in keeping our supplement at 5%. It’s not fair to say the money is given to the school board to disperse as it sees fit. Given your proposed budget, increasing our supplement would eliminate jobs. Would you ask a peer to give up his or her job just so that you could receive an increase? Would you ask children to learn in classrooms where they receive less individual instruction due to decreasing teaching positions. I doubt you would answer yes to either question but you would ask educators to continue at the same level of supplement. The excellent results from our efforts in the classroom are not in line with our local compensation. Henderson County ranks 6th in the State in SAT scores. All 21 schools achieved either high or expected growth in the NC ABC results. These efforts should be applauded and rewarded. Gone are the days where a pat on the back and a thank you are sufficient. They will not put gas in our car so that we can drive to work in order to spend endless hours outside of the school day grading papers, planning lessons, and in staff development so that we can do what we love – educate children. Yes, you have tough decisions to make. These decisions may not be popular but we ask that you do what’s right for Henderson County Public Schools. Make schools a high priority and let’s move forward with a fully funded budget. Thank you.”

17. Ken Butcher – “I really came here because I had a rare moment of clarity one time and it was at a concert that Fran and her band was putting on, just a month or so ago, before they went to Washington. And I was just inspired by it and it just made me realize that all the years I was on the Board (of Education) we never even had the right kind of meetings with the Commissioners. I could tell because if they – if you were inspired, if you really got what was going on we would have meetings where you (the Board of Commissioners) would sit there saying ‘What else can we be doing for the school system’ instead of prove to me beyond any shadow of a doubt that there’s no possible way you can get by without it. So I’m really just here as a civilian tonight, as a taxpayer. We haven’t talked much about tax tonight but you need to raise the tax OK. I read in the newspaper that some of you went into this process already making up your mind that you would not raise taxes and I know that that can’t be true because how could you possibly know what the tax rate should be before you go through the budget process. Mr. Kumor gave you the numbers to fully fund this budget and even go on do things we really should be doing is a couple bucks a month. I can easily afford that and so can everyone else. Thanks. Do the right thing.”
18. Walt Cottingham – Mr. Cottingham is a teacher at Hendersonville High School. “I appreciate your coming to this meeting tonight. I appreciate the job you have to do. I understand it is a difficult task but you asked for it. You even went out and ran for it. I don’t know why you did that but knowing a couple of you personally I understand your civic duty and your civic conscience and how you would want to fulfill it. I also would like to say I’m tremendously impressed by this whole process. I teach things about world geography and world history and it’s so great to see a democratic process with such a polite audience, with people who are so well spoken and kind and genteel. We have not had a single bullet fired at all in this meeting and I think there is something to be said for that so I respect you and I respect the audience and thank you for listening to us. I also understand that a lot of the points that have been addressed you have heard over and over and as we would say in Latin probably adnauseam and so I won’t say all of those. I want to give you a little bit of my own perspective. I’ve been teaching school for 33 years. I’m not leaving. If you don’t raise my supplement it won’t matter as far as my job security goes. So if you want to use me as an argument for that you can say ‘we’re gonna keep some of these old teachers because they’re not gonna leave anyway. Well that’s kinda the way it goes but that’s not the real problem I think. The real problem has to do with fully funding the school board’s budget for all the reasons that you’ve heard. I’m concerned for those reasons. I’m concerned for the failure to completely fund it and I’m concerned because I have the fear that we’re going backwards a little bit. What I find particularly disturbing in Henderson County is the lack of vision regarding education. This is a wealthy county based on all the demographic data we have heard. We have an excellent school system in many many ways and you’ve heard some of those tonight but I think we’re going to struggle to continue to do that. I think that there are a lot of signs that I see in the schools that are discouraging. You’ve heard the statements about nurses and teaching salaries and maintenance needs. My particular contention here is that none of those should be issues. In this county with it’s prosperity we should have a model school system. We should be graduating students who have had 13 years of foreign language instruction. We should have first rate technical capabilities. We should have model clean healthy facilities. We should have students in large numbers graduating with the skills

and knowledge to participate actively in the finest Universities in America. We have some of all of these things but we don't have enough of them. I'm saying that what we're asking for is not what we should be asking for. These things: nurse, supplements, facilities should be givens. We spend so much time trying to catch up that we have no chance at vision for the future. We spend so much time and effort trying to patch together what we can for education we don't have a chance to get ahead. I hate that, it goes against all that I believe when I talk about helping my students reach their full potential. It's like going down Green River with a leaking innertube when you could be going down in a kayak. So in brief, I'm saying pay attention to the school board, there is vision there. There are voices of wisdom there. I'm saying something a little more radical too – raise my taxes! I never thought I'd say that but I care enough to put my money where my mouth is. Don't fail to help us. Raise my taxes.”

19. Alan Broadhurst – Mr. Broadhurst is a teacher at Hendersonville High School. He is a relative new-comer to this area. He has two children in the public school system here. He has been teaching for 18 years. He's a national board certified teacher. He did that because the state gave him a raise for what he did. My name is Alan Broadhurst. You can call me thorn, you can call me squeaky, cause I'll be a thorn in your side as long as I'm here until the schools get what they deserve. Call me squeaky because a squeaky wheel eventually gets what? The grease. I believe in participatory democracy. What I teach at the High School in Hendersonville – I teach advanced placement, government and politics and U.S. History. It's disappointing to me that there aren't more people here. There should be a lot of people here tonight but they're not. Sometimes I wonder if our elected leaders appreciate the fact that we don't participate enough. Well I do participate. Look at this facility. It's just amazing, it's beautiful, I love it. I'm not gonna harp on taking a tour of all the schools cause I know you've been asked to do that. I don't know if you have or not but you should. Let Dr. Page take you around and show you. We don't have this. We don't have chairs like you all have. We don't have microphones. I'm not saying you don't deserve them. We deserve them. The kids deserve them. It's not about me. I won't teach better with more money but I'll stay here with more money. And it's not about the supplement either. It's about fully funding the budget. What Jerry Smith said earlier about trust, you must trust the Board (of Education). I am from the coast of North Carolina but I do not believe in coasting and I believe that is what this county is doing, sitting back and letting things coast along until it's gonna be out of control and we don't know what's going on, just watching it go by. I don't think that's the way to run government with my tax dollars. This is about needs versus wants. It's not what we want in this system. It's not what we want for our students, for our children. It's what we need. John Kennedy once said 'We don't need to do the Republican thing or the Republican solution or the Democratic solution, we need the American solution.' To national problems, to state problems, to local problems and we need solutions from you guys. That is what you're elected to do and sometimes the solutions aren't popular solutions so I'll echo Walt, I'll echo a lot of people, raise my taxes. I supported the land transfer tax. I have no problem being taxed a little bit extra in a county that is this wealthy. I don't want to have to spend money on things that I have to spend money for. I have a 15 year old son eating me out of house and home, you know what I'm talking about. This summer we have to buy him braces, \$2,000 - \$3,000. I do not want to spend that money to put braces on my son's teeth but I have to do it. Where am I gonna find the money?

I've got to find the money somewhere so what will I do? I'll teach summer school, I'll run a summer camp. I have worked every single summer of my life to get what I need for my family as well as devoting my entire career to the students of this state. You have to do what is needed to be done. Find it. Do the work. I do it. I also believe in transparency. If you don't vote to fund this budget and I'm not threatening, well maybe I am in a democratic way, small d. We want to know why you don't support the budget. Very very very clearly why you don't support the budget. I teach my students all the time and I said it to them today that this is not about us versus you or you versus us, anything in politics. I teach them all the time that you guys work for us and I've had politicians from the national, state, and local level tell me that you guys, women all across the state and the country that work in the government work for us. It's democracy, it's the people's house, it's the peoples' courthouse. Prove it. If you work for us, then work for us. And if we're really your boss like politicians say then listen to your employers, which is us. Please fund the budget. I demand you fund the budget. I'm a taxpayer and the students of this county deserve it. Alan Broadhurst, 104 Harmony Lane, call me. Thank you."

20. Jennifer Henderson – Ms. Henderson is the new CEO of Blue Ridge Community Health Services. She spoke in support of United Agenda for Children and the top priority of school nurses. "Blue Ridge is the community health center that provides family medicine, pediatric medicine, mental health, dentistry services, and community outreach and health education. Blue Ridge has also been operating a school based health center at Apple Valley Middle School since 1994 which includes primary and mental health services. Last year fourteen thousand members of this community visited Blue Ridge for services equaling 40,000 encounters. At Apple Valley in particular almost 800 students accounted for 6,000 visits to that health center. Many of our students would have been denied access to health care by other providers because of health insurance. Our patients, both adults and children are typically the most disadvantaged, the least insured, have the greatest barriers to accessing health care and are the most vulnerable to chronic illness. Blue Ridge Community Health Services is proud to be a member of the United Agenda for Children Coalition. Shortly after I joined Blue Ridge the United Agenda for children sponsored 'Speak Out for Kids'. This event exemplified for me the community spirit in Henderson County. They brought together the community, the faith community, the education community, the health and human services community, business community, minority community, there were civic leaders, students, professionals, teachers, parents, all there to give a voice to the most valuable asset we have for our future – our children. As a coalition member I was invited to attend an action meeting regarding one of the top priorities for Speak Out for Kids – school nurses. Honestly I was quite shocked that the children in Henderson County do not have access to some sort of health care professional during the day. It's a far different situation that I was used to where I used to live. During the meeting I shared with coalition member's information about the benefits of school based health centers. After the meeting I really felt called to action by this nursing crisis. Since that time and I would say literally an hour after that meeting, I began working in strong collaboration with the schools and the health department to develop a plan that expands school based health centers in many schools to allow full physical and mental health care access to children who might not otherwise be able to access care. The thing that I want to make very clear, while this is an exciting endeavor that we're

approaching here, this does not replace the need for school nurses. Having a school based health center in one school has the potential to significantly improve the health status of students at that school but will do nothing for students across town at another school who do not have access to a school based health center. All students must continue to have access to school nurses. This combined commitment to expanding school based health, the schools and the health department was a direct result of the United Agenda for Children, its coalition and the community that gave voice to our children. I very strongly urge you to continue your support of United Agenda for Children and it's important work, the importance of funding school nurses. Thank you."

21. Danette Wesson – Ms. Wesson is a teacher at Etowah Elementary School. She lives in Etowah and she is a member of the Henderson County Association of Educators. She spoke to the Board about fully funding the school budget. "First, I know some of you may still have children in school and some don't. Whether it's your children in school, your neighbor's children in school, or your grandchildren Mr. Messer as they get a little bit older, who do you want to take care of their medical needs? Would you want a teacher with a BS in Education or a registered nurse? Hopefully we won't have that issue for you or your children or your grandchildren but we need to think about that. Surely it's not gonna take a tragedy for the county to decide to step up to the plate. Thank you Mr. McGrady for stepping up to the plate. And while you're looking at this beautifully restored courthouse, I've enjoyed the air conditioning 'cause there's not any on my hall so it's nice to be here tonight. I recently completed several months worth of work in an effort to become nationally certified in teaching. I attend numerous workshops, professional developments, and the United Agenda for Children Speak Out in an effort to be more informed and more educated to engage students in learning. I recently had a night-time end of the year party for my students along with my assistant. Anything that we purchased was paid for out of pocket. We didn't mind to do it. We enjoyed it. The children had a wonderful time! The parents and the grandparents had a wonderful time! Many week-ends and events are spent working on things for my students or for those future kindergarten students. Parents have my e-mail address, my school phone number, my home phone number so that they can reach me anytime they have any questions or concerns. There are many afternoons spent late into the day or that begin before the required time of 7:45. These times are often teacher meetings, grade level meetings, parent conferences, or if I'm lucky to work in the classroom. All of these things are said in an effort to give you a glimpse in the day of a teacher. While I enjoy my profession and I reap many rewards when seeing the progress of my students, it does not pay my bills. I met and got to know a teacher recently from Buncombe County. Fellow Henderson County teachers and I talked to her about coming to Etowah to teach. While working at our school was a great idea to her and intrigued her, she said 'I can't even consider doing it with the Buncombe County supplement being 10% and your's only 5%.' This is something that affects us and will continue to have an adverse affect on retention and recruitment of quality teachers in Henderson County. Please consider the teachers. Please consider how you will answer the children, the grandchildren, and neighbors when they ask you 'why do the county scores keep dropping, why do teachers keep leaving, why are parents pulling children from public school, and more importantly what could you have done to prevent this from happening?' Thank you Mr. McGrady for stepping up and recognizing this need. The County has the ability to pay but it has lacked

the desire. Please let teachers know you appreciate them so they don't move to other counties to teach. Yes, planning is important so plan to keep and retain the quality educators that you are fortunate enough to have in Henderson County. Thank you."

22. Richard Waters – "Folks, I guess I'm going to be the only one to fire a bullet here. I brought some statistics also. They almost agree with Mr. Kumor's. And also, I'd like to tip my hat to Fran Shelton. I wrote the history of the Hendersonville High School Band and she carried on a wonderful tradition set forth by Jim Stokes who founded the Community Band, the Hendersonville Symphony, of Earl Martin, of a lady by the name of Josephine Osborne who saw Julian Helms taken out of the High School before he could finish the band semester that year and she was the music teacher at Rosa Edwards and suddenly we had a music teacher/piano teacher teaching a whole bunch of kids and took 'em out to Greensboro and won a lot of honors. And so that tradition has been here for a long long time. I'm a product of the Henderson County School System. I spent eight years at Dana. I spent three years at Hendersonville High School. Now that doesn't seem to add up to 12 years but by the same token I also spent my primary education years in Washington, DC. I've got some statistics here because right now I'd like to thank Mr. Steve Wyatt for balancing the budget. I wish I'd have brought my checkbook and let him balance it because all my life I've been trying to live within my means. And somebody said this is a wealthy county, this is also a wealthy school system. According to information that I got off of Google. If we'd a had Google I'd probably have graduated as the Valedictorian of Hendersonville High School. According to Google, last year (from the Department of public instruction) Henderson County Schools had 100.8 million dollars to spend. We've got a wealthy school system. Can't you folks do a little bit better with managing your funds, a little bit better than this? It says that you've got or are expecting \$32 million. I think last time you got about \$29 million. Thirty-two million you are asking for the County Commissioners this time. Fifty-nine point two million dollars was the state revenue that you got last year and you got nine point four million, almost nine and a half million dollars in Federal funds that would come to a total of \$1.8 million. This comes to about \$7,700 dollars per student. I had a friend that sent her daughter to a school in Washington, DC, a private school, and her tuition was \$5,000 and so I'm wondering here. Also, you're teaching the bulk of the students here in this county but we've got four or five other private schools plus a charter school plus we also have 642 youngsters that are home-schooled and they all seem to be doing fairly well. Anyway so basically what I'm talking about here right now is that we've got a lot of money. You folks are allocating a whole lot. Balance the budget. We need oversight. I want you to take a good close look at these figures right here. It says right here that instruction – the total salaries are \$59,198,000. That's a whole lotta money. You're almost equal to what Pardee Hospital pays in their salaries. But you have about 1,800 employees I was told, 806 are teachers and all I can say is folks stretch those dollars. I don't have a fixed income, I have a broken income. Thank you."

Close the Public Hearing

Commissioner McGrady made the motion for the Board to close the public hearing. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Many people got up and left the meeting (it was noisy) so Chairman Moyer called a brief recess.

Chairman Moyer called the meeting back to order.

Board Discussion

Chairman Moyer informed the Board that the tentative schedule is to discuss the budget again and possibly approve it at the meeting on Monday night, June 2. He felt the Board should try to get as close as they could tonight to give staff some direction as to what they need to do (if there will be changes to what the County Manager has recommended). Once staff has reworked any figures he asked that the Commissioners be given copies even before Monday or sometime Monday with information or a revised budget that reflects the direction from the Board.

Chairman Moyer felt that one of the things that came out of the hearing tonight was that the Board did not lack in information, except for detailed fuel information. He said the Board certainly has the necessary information from the School Board. The Commissioners have heard the School Board's position with respect to school nurses and other issues. He couldn't think of any other additional information he needs but feels the Board should now talk through some of the issues and give direction to the County Manager and staff.

Fuel

Chairman Moyer stated the suggestion from the County Manager is to consider a \$500,000 fuel reserve because of what's happening with the cost of fuel. At one of the earlier meetings the Board asked that detailed information be put together with respect to fuel usage in gallons, usage by departments and what that would mean if the cost goes to various levels. Chairman Moyer's preference would be that if we're going to raise the fuel amount we ought to do it as part of the budget where it is now and if we want to we could identify a portion of that increase as not available for spending unless the County Manager so authorizes it. The County Manager's goal is a 10% reduction in usage for each department.

2009 Target Fuel Usage

Steve Wyatt reviewed with the Board a chart showing the county departments with per gallon usage and lists a 10% reduction. The most recent average fuel price was \$3.5135. Projected fuel usage comes to \$620,000. \$405,000 is in the current year budget for fuel. Staff had taken different projected fuel prices and prepared a chart, \$4, \$5, \$6, \$7, etc. Currently there is \$525,000 in the budget for fuel and \$500,000 set aside (emergency fuel fund) that is not part of the budget. He asked the Board to evaluate that. Mr. Wyatt stated that when fuel prices go beyond about \$5.50 that's about when the money that is available, both already budgeted and set aside, evens out. When you go to \$6.00 gallon you're slightly over.

Chairman Moyer proposed raising the current \$525,000 to \$900,000 and authorize the County manager to continue his 10% reduction plan and to freeze whatever portion of the \$900,000 he feels appropriate so it cannot be accessed without coming to him. If fuel goes to \$10 gallon we'll be back looking at how to deal with that.

Following discussion, it was the tentative direction to the County Manager to change the amount to \$850,000 for fuel. The Board would like to be notified as to how the County Manager with be controlling this.

Revenue item

Chairman Moyer stated there was one revenue item to clean up. He stated that with the volatility of the sales tax it is hard to project figures. Assessor Stan Duncan had supplied a figure that we might end up with a little more than \$100,000 sales tax. Chairman Moyer felt we should just keep with the current numbers for the time being. If this pans out we may end up with a little cushion. The Board was comfortable with that.

DSS/Medicaid

Chairman Moyer stated that at the meeting on Tuesday there was quite a discussion about the Medicaid situation along with the implications and problems association with it. Chairman Moyer stated at a minimum DSS needs one additional Medicaid supervisor and four social workers. The total cost (county share) is \$120,000. The Chairman recommended funding that and adding it into the tentative budget. Following some discussion, it was the consensus of the Board to go along with the Chairman's recommendation.

WCCA/Transportation funds

Chairman Moyer stated that when you look at the money coming from the government and look at how much this helps a group of people who simply would not be able to get this transportation any other way, you see the need to continue. If you see the old red vans you know that we need to transfer those vans out. The administrative cost was \$22,000 and the cost for vans was \$13,000 and is already in the recommended budget. Chairman Moyer felt it should not be an issue, and that it should stay in the budget as is. Consensus of the Board was for it to stay.

Amy Brantley clarified that the administrative cost of \$22,999 was in the proposed budget but the capital part of it is not. An additional \$16,000 would need to be added to the budget, if the Board so chooses for the capital cost. Chairman Moyer authorized the County Manager to add that cost to the budget.

Public Schools

Chairman Moyer recommended action in three areas:

1. Cover the Bruce Drysdale nurse position (one position) plus one more -\$132,000. Much discussion followed regarding this issue. This would give us the net gain of one school nurse and one replacement.
2. Shortfall in uncontrollable expenses - \$90,000, add back in.
3. Maintenance issues – add \$100,000 and earmark for maintenance.

At this time Chairman Moyer is not proposing any teacher supplement.

There was much discussion about school nurses and school based clinics, etc. and the difference in their duties.

Following discussion it was the consensus of the Board to go along with the Chairman's recommendations.

United Agenda for Children

Chairman Moyer did not recommend funding the \$25,000 for this. They are part of the Children

& Family Resource Center.

Commissioner McGrady disagreed strongly. He stated that the United Agenda for Children is just the fiscal agent for a large group of non-profits. He further stated that it is not at all true that the Board only funds non-profits through the Alliance piece, that's just one set of non-profits. Commissioner McGrady stated that the Board made a one-year commitment to this. It is a three-year process. They've asked for two years of funding. He supports the County Manager's recommendation. This is already included in the recommended budget.

Commissioner Messer stated that there were problems with this last year, timing wise.

Commissioner Williams agreed with Chairman Moyer, stating that he didn't think \$25,000 would make or break the organization. He stated that the Board of Commissioners is still serving the children but have moved the moneys around some; taking money from this but putting money back for school nurses, adding folks at DSS who will be caring for the children and adding money into the school from what the original proposal was which will also be for children.

Commissioner McGrady stated that he applauded last year when the Commissioners funding this and was gratified to see it as a recommendation in the Manager's budget this year. He hopes that the Board can find \$25,000 to continue to support this.

7th Ave. District

Chairman Moyer stated that the Budget had kept all the other contributions the same except for the 7th Ave. District. He recommended keeping this amount the same (\$500), not approving the increase to \$700. The Board seemed to agree.

Revenues

Chairman Moyer supports taking the remainder money needed for the discussed changes out of fund balance - \$257,750 although this will take us below 12% in fund balance currently. He thinks that the available fund balance at June 30 will be higher than projected so far, with the directive that at the end of the year any additional fund balance would be earmarked to stay in fund balance because we would be taking monies out prematurely. Chairman Moyer rounded it up to \$300,000. He felt it was well justified with the good that would be done with that money. The consensus of the Board was in agreement with the Chairman.

Commissioner McGrady stated that he expects to vote against this budget (as he said on the radio this morning). He thinks more money should be put towards schools.

No vote was taken, only the above directions to staff so they can bring figures back to the Board as soon as possible so the Board can review those prior to the meeting on Monday evening.

Adjourn

Commissioner Messer made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

May 29, 2008

19

Attest:

Elizabeth W. Corn, Clerk to the Board

William L. Moyer, Chairman