

NHC Commissioners ObsCorps June 19, 2017

**County Commissioners approve budget 4-1 after public hearing before vote. Budget cuts county tax rate, but does not fund some non-profits previously funded by the county.**

The regular time of the meeting of the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners was changed this month to 4:00 p.m. at the Court House. All commissioners were present. The time was changed to accommodate a public hearing which had been scheduled for June 5 and then was cancelled. I was unable to attend the meeting but watched on government channel on TV.

Annual reports were given by ILM Airport, Dept. of Social Services, and Health and Human Services.

Commissioners voted unanimously to award a contract for the building of a new Health and Human Services Building.

In discussing the proposed budget, a motion was made by Comm. Zapple and Barfield to restore all or part of the funding to six non-profits agencies that were cut. The motion failed 3 to 2. Prior to the public hearing on the budget cuts to 10 social service agencies, Comm. White announced that the numbers had been adjusted. The four agencies that did receive funding were Good Shepherd Center, Continuum of Care for Homelessness, Recovery Resource Center, and Wilmington Residential Adolescent Achievement Place. Six non-profits did not get renewed funding.

Nearly everyone who spoke at the hearing either thanked the commissioners for their funding or criticized commissioners for cuts that remained. White noted that the overall contributions to nonprofits in the human services field will increase from \$461,754 in 2016-17 to nearly \$600,000 in 2017-18. Most of the increase, \$265,000, will go to a jail diversion program run by Leading Into New Communities Inc.

New Hanover County Schools will receive \$2,700 per pupil from the county. This is higher than was recommended by the county manager which was \$2,670.

The budget will see 10 new county positions created – six at the sheriff's office, two at the register of deeds, and 2 at the landfill. It also calls for 2.5 per cent cost of living raises for all county employees and up to an additional 1.5 per cent for merit increases.

Lorraine Buker, Observer

