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Bulletin #11-02

Feb. 4, 2011

IF YOU THOUGHT LAST YEAR'S BUDGET WAS FAST ...

Last year, we referred to the General Assembly's work on the state budget as the State Budget Express for the rapid pace with which legislators moved the budget through both chambers and then conferees. The General Assembly eventually approved its budget June 30 – the final day of the fiscal year but still a formidable accomplishment given the difficulties caused by the lingering recession and uncertainty over any additional stimulus funding. Given the schedule that the new budget writers provided to Appropriations Committee members this week, however, last year's pace seems glacial by comparison.

Speaker of the House Thom Tillis (Mecklenburg) and Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger (Rockingham) have pledged that there will be more cooperation between the chambers this year before the House, which begins the process this biennium, adopts its version. Recent practice has been that the two chambers developed their spending plans completely independent of one another, and then worked out what were often considerable differences during the conferees process. Tillis and Berger hope that by working jointly on the budget, there will be fewer differences to work out after both chambers have passed their spending plans.

The House is scheduled to pass its budget by Friday, April 22. The Senate would then take three weeks to work out its plan, with adoption set for Friday, May 13. Conferees would begin work the next day, with the conference committee report published Friday, May 27. First reading would be Monday, May 30 (Memorial Day), with second reading the next day and adoption set for Wednesday, June 1.

According to guidance handed out to the House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees this week, "the House and Senate are committed to using a balanced and fiscally responsible approach to balancing the State's budget while preserving core public services and functions of our State government." The guidance "empowers" the subcommittees to do the "hard work of developing cuts and proposals to downsize government" because the subcommittees are "better able to evaluate" the state government programs and services in their areas.

Subcommittees are asked to "consider eliminating vacant and temporary positions, especially those vacant for 6 months or more as of January 1, 2011" and to look at increasing or implementing fees "to fully offset the cost of providing services." Subcommittee chairs are asked to consult with Appropriations chairs before studying the possibility of increased or new fees. The guidance also directed subcommittees to avoid expansion funding, negative reserves or "management flexibility" reductions, and said that no special provisions or amendments were to be included that were not "directly related to the budget."

BILL DEADLINES SET – MAY 12 ESTABLISHED AS CROSSOVER DEADLINE

The House and Senate have set their deadlines for all bills. For the House, bills recommended by study commissions must be to bill drafting by Tuesday, March 1, and filed in the House by Wednesday, March 9. State agency requests must be in to bill drafting by Tuesday, March 8, and filed in the House by Wednesday, March 16. The deadlines for public bills (not appropriations or finance) are Thursday, March 24 (bill drafting), and Wednesday, April 6 (filed in the House). Appropriations and Finance bills must

be to bill drafting by Wednesday, April 20, and filed in the House by Wednesday, May 4.

The Senate deadlines for public bills and resolutions are Friday, March 11 (for bill drafting), and Wednesday, March 23 (filed in the Senate).

Both chambers established Thursday, May 12 as the crossover deadline, meaning that bills (with certain exclusions) must have passed the originating chamber by that day or they will not be considered for the remainder of the session. Local bills emanating from the House must be submitted to the bill drafting division by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 16. The bill must be filed in the House by 3 p.m. on Wednesday, March 30. For the Senate, local bills must be in bill drafting by 3 p.m. on Tuesday, March 1, and must be filed in the Senate by 3 p.m. on Wednesday, March 9.

House bill introduction deadlines for 2011		
	To Bill Drafting by 4 p.m.	Filed in House by 3 p.m. Wednesdays
Bills recommended by study commissions	Tuesday, March 1	March 9
Bills requested by state agencies	Tuesday, March 8	March 16
Local bills	Wednesday, March 16	March 30
Public bills (not Appropriations or Finance)	Thursday, March 24	April 6
Appropriations and Finance	Wednesday, April 20	May 4
Senate bill introduction deadlines for 2011		
	To Bill Drafting by 4 p.m.	Filed in Senate by 3 p.m. Wednesdays
Local	Tuesday, March 1	March 9
Public and resolutions	Friday, March 11	March 23

CHECK US OUT ON YOUTUBE

The Association is creating weekly legislative video reports for the NCACC's YouTube Channel (www.youtube.com/ncacc1908). "This Week at the General Assembly" will be posted each Friday afternoon and will feature interviews with legislators and NCACC staff, reports on legislation impacting counties and updates on county legislative priorities.

BILLS OF INTEREST

The Association maintains a section on its Web site to track bills of interest to county officials. Visit www.ncacc.org/legislation/about.html for updates on these and the rest of the bills we are tracking. Bills added this week:

Bill	Short title	Subject matter area
H21	County Administration of Municipal Elections	Intergovernmental Relations
H28	DHHS to Provide Law Enforcement Information	Health And Human Services
H30	Allow Wage Garnishment to Satisfy Judgments	Health And Human Services
H32	Electoral Freedom Act of 2011	Intergovernmental Relations
H33	State Law to Provide for Acceptable ID's	Justice And Public Safety
S13	Balanced Budget Act of 2011	Tax And Finance
S17	Joint Regulatory Reform Committee	Environment
S22	APA Rules: Increasing Costs Prohibition	Intergovernmental Relations
S27	Involuntary Annexation Moratorium	Intergovernmental Relations
S32	Hospital Medicaid Assessment/Payment Program	Health And Human Services
S33	Medical Liability Reforms	Health And Human Services

Bill: [S8](#)

Sponsor: Stevens, R. (R17)

Title: NO CAP ON NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

Progress: 1st Chamber: Referred to Committee

Status: 01/31/2011 – Senate Committee On Education/Higher Education

Comments: This bill eliminates the cap on charter schools by repealing G.S. 115C-238.29D(b), which limits the number of charter schools to 100 and to no more than 5 in any one administrative unit. A substitute version of the bill that was debated in the

Senate Committee on Education/Higher Education on Wednesday includes giving counties the option to fund capital needs for charter schools.

Bill: [S13](#)

Sponsors: Stevens, R. (R17); Hunt (R15); Brunstetter (R31)

Title: BALANCED BUDGET ACT OF 2011

Progress: 1st Chamber: Referred to Committee

Status: 02/03/2011 – Senate Committee On Appropriations/Base Budget

Comments: Authorizes the Governor to take actions necessary to reduce the General Fund for 2010-11 fiscal year with the goal of reducing recurring expenditures by at least \$400 million. PCS adopted by Senate adds specific line items transferred to the General Fund, including money from: One NC Fund, JDIG, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and the Golden Leaf Fund.

