

# Budget Fiscal 2007

SUSSEX COUNTY

The Next  
Generation

May 23, 2006

10:00 am

Presented By:  
Robert L. Stickels  
County Administrator

ROBERT L. STICKELS  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR



## Sussex County

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
2 THE CIRCLE  
P.O. BOX 589  
GEORGETOWN, DELAWARE 19947  
TEL: 302-855-7742  
FAX: 302-855-7749  
E-MAIL: rls@sussexcountyde.gov

May 23, 2006

Sussex County Council  
County Administrative Office Building  
2 The Circle  
P. O. Box 589  
Georgetown, DE 19947

Dear President and Members of Council:

As required by Delaware Code, Title 9, Chapter 70, § 7003, paragraph (d), subparagraph (5), I respectfully submit the proposed annual operating budget for Sussex County for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007. The FY 2007 proposed budget was developed by the Budget Committee consisting of the County Administrator, the Finance Director, and the Director of Accounting. The information necessary to develop the budget was provided by each department and the County's Finance Coordinator.

The theme for the proposed 2007 budget is entitled "***The Next Generation.***" This is the nineteenth County budget that I have participated in. With my retirement taking place in the second quarter of FY 2007, so will the retirement of the Director of Utility Billing and the Chief Constable. The Director of Utility Billing has 26 years of service with the County, and the Chief Constable has 35 years of service.

Three areas that I hope to focus on with the FY 2007 budget will be energy inflation, the aging management employees of the County, and additional administrative office space. According to an article that was published in The News Journal on January 19, 2006, the main culprit in last year's jump in inflation was a 17.1 percent surge in energy prices, the biggest advance since 1990, as gasoline prices topped \$3.00 per gallon for a time. The rise in energy accounted for a 40 percent overall rise in prices last year. I will focus more on these issues further on in the budget letter.

Part of the second issue that I would like to talk about at this time is the need to plan for replacing senior management members in the County. Currently, the County has 20 key employees, counting the County Administrator and the Director of Utility Billing. Of those 20, 15 are eligible to retire this year. The replacement of senior management positions cannot be done, in most cases, in 30 days. I would recommend to the Council that during FY 2007 they form a personnel search committee to come up with a comprehensive replacement plan. Most departments have employees in place; however, training is still necessary for six to nine months in most instances.

**KEY COUNTY EMPLOYEES**

<u>Position</u>	<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Eligible for Retirement</u>
Director of Treasury	37 Years	Currently Eligible
Director of Data Processing	36 Years	Currently Eligible
Director of Planning and Zoning	36 Years	Currently Eligible
Administrative Secretary	33 Years	Currently Eligible
Clerk IV-Supervisor - Assessment Division	33 Years	Currently Eligible
Assistant Director of Personnel	32 Years	Currently Eligible
Director of Utility Construction	32 Years	Currently Eligible
Director of Public Works	31 Years	Currently Eligible
Administrative Secretary	31 Years	Currently Eligible
Development Planner	30 Years	November 2006
Director of Wastewater Operations	30 Years	December 2006
Director of Economic Development and Industrial Airpark	29 Years	October 2006

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<u>Position</u>	<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Eligible for Retirement</u>
Director of Personnel	28 Years	July 2007
Facilities Manager	28 Years	August 2007
Finance Director	28 Years	April 2008
Director of Community Development and Housing	27 Years	May 2009
Director of Utility Billing	26 Years	Currently Eligible
Director of County Libraries	20 Years	Currently Eligible
County Administrator	18 Years	November 2006
Director of EMS	5 Years	January 2009

It is important that during FY 2007 the new County Administrator, the County Council, and the Personnel Department develop a time schedule to implement phasing-in the replacement of key personnel.

The following goals were used to establish the FY 2007 budget:

- **Balanced budget**
- **Maintain an operating reserve of a minimum of 25 percent**
- **Increase pension funding**
- **Operate without tax-supported debt**
- **Maintain 'AA' bond rating**
- **Expand public safety**

- **Increase funding for local libraries**
- **Upgrade existing wastewater services and expand user base**
- **Provide subsidies to allow for the capping of front footage costs at 100 feet in the sanitary sewer districts**
- **Continue tax credit and sewer assistance programs**
- **Continue open space and farmland preservation programs**
- **Continue Revenue Sharing for Local Law Enforcement**

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the proposed budget that begins July 1, 2006.

1. **TAX RATES**

The tax rate for the proposed FY 2007 budget is 44.5¢ per \$100.00 of assessment. This will be the eighteenth consecutive year that this rate has been set at 44.5¢ per \$100.00 of assessment. The Budget Committee is recommending a general operations rate of 40.17¢ per \$100.00 of assessment. The estimated rate for the libraries will remain at 4.33¢ per \$100.00 of assessment. The assessment is based on 50 percent of the 1974 assessed value of property.

It is estimated that the proposed FY 2007 budget will collect \$9,979,053 in County property tax. Property taxes make up 17.47 percent of the County's General Fund income. The proposed FY 2007 budget does not call for any increase in rates for the General Fund portion of the County budget. The Budget Committee is recommending increases in the system connection charge and the service charge of the operations and maintenance of the sewer districts, which will be further discussed later in this letter.

The Budget Committee believes it has been beneficial that over the years we have developed a variety of incomes that have been productive in

diversifying the County's financial position. This diversity has been looked upon favorably by lenders and bond rating agencies in that we are not overly dependent on one source of income. The Budget Committee believes that the County Council should take pride in the fact that for the fifth consecutive year there will not be any tax dollars spent on outstanding General Fund tax indebtedness.

The proposed Non-Sewer and Water Capital Improvements Fund for the FY 2007 budget totals \$19,686,337. The primary expenditure for this program is an additional 40,000-square-foot County Administrative Annex building being proposed to be constructed on the property adjacent to the law offices of Tunnell & Raysor. Currently, this property is being occupied as a parking lot. It is projected that this building will cost \$15,000,000 and will have a multitude of uses. It would include a much-needed Records Retention Center. Three years ago the County Council rejected a stand-alone facility. This facility is similar to the current Administrative Building; however, it would not have the County Council Chambers or administrative offices. It would have a sub-floor similar to the Recorder of Deeds and then three levels. The sub-floor would house the Records Retention Center, the first floor would house Engineering – Planning and Permits, the second floor would house Engineering – Administration, and the third floor would house Building Code. The proximity to the main County Administrative Building would make everything very accessible. This is the third issue that should be focused on with the FY 2007 budget. The additional office space and Records Retention Center will be needed to allow the next generation management of the County government and to deal with the County records in the future.

During the last five years, the County government has been obtaining properties in the downtown Georgetown area. Property has been obtained to the south of this site that would provide approximately 50 parking spaces. Property has been purchased on Pine Street adjacent to the County's parking lot that will provide 35 to 40 parking places. Additionally, the County and the State of Delaware have swapped properties, with the County taking ownership of the former First State Chevy-Olds property on the north side of Market Street that will provide between 75 and 100 parking spaces.

The Budget Committee is recommending that the County Council secure architectural services in the second quarter of FY 2007 for design of the new facility. Design services should also look at the feasibility of doing a multi-level parking study.

Other activities during FY 2007 include runway expansion (\$3.66 Million) and land acquisition for clear zone activities.

Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) has been allocated to allow for the replacement of carpet for the entire Administrative Building, as well as cleaning and replacement of drapes, painting of the Administrative Building, and the installation of electronic energy-saving light fixtures. This December will mark the tenth anniversary of the opening of the current County Administrative Building.

Income for the Capital Improvements Fund for FY 2007 is as follows:

<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Amount Year Ending June 30, 2007</u>
Realty Transfer Tax	\$13,402,000
Appropriated Reserve	4,046,337
Federal Airport Grant	1,957,000
State of Delaware – Airport Grant	68,000
Road Project Special Assessments	13,000
Investment Income	<u>200,000</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b><u>\$19,686,337</u></b>

2. **PUBLIC SAFETY**

The Budget Committee is pleased that over the years public safety spending percentage increases have well exceeded the percent of population increases. The Budget Committee believes that in no place is the challenge of growth more evident than with the financing of public services. Public safety costs

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as recently as FY 1999 were only \$6,000,000. In FY 2007, the County will be spending \$20,957,367. These costs will include eight paramedic units, funding for 32 additional state police, ambulance service, and emergency reporting.

The proposed FY 2007 budget calls for the County government to provide a contribution in the amount of \$1,413,000 to the Delaware State Police toward salaries and the purchase of additional state police vehicles. This will mark the twelfth year of the agreement between the County and the Delaware State Police. The 32 officers caps the number that the County and the Delaware State Police have agreed upon. Should the next administration wish to increase the number of officers, a new agreement will have to be negotiated in FY 2008.

The FY 2007 budget allows for the continuation of the program that started in FY 2006 for the County to provide \$500,000 in Revenue Sharing for Local Law Enforcement. Each local police department will be eligible for up to \$25,000 for a capital expenditure for their police department. This program was very popular in FY 2006 and is a way of helping to offset the costs of local departments that have to go outside of their jurisdiction in assisting the state police. This program should be looked at annually and can only be considered if funding is available from the Appropriated Reserve.

The Sussex County Volunteer Firemen's Association will receive \$3,701,350 in funding assistance for FY 2007. In FY 1988, I do not think anyone would have ever thought that we would be able to increase our funding at the rate that we have to the volunteer firemen. It is hard to believe that in FY 1988 the fire service received less than \$300,000 from the County, and in FY 2007 they will receive an average of \$71,180 a week.

The Fire Service Enhancement Fund is projected to receive a contribution in the proposed FY 2007 budget of \$1.4 Million. This is the ninth anniversary of this program. The County Council adopted an ordinance that requires the payment of one-quarter of one percent of the cost of the value of new construction in the County to this fund. This is a very economy-sensitive



income. For the last time, I would caution the fire service to set up a Rainy Day Fund. Each year the projections for the program have exceeded what has been estimated. There is going to come a day when those projections may not be met. Continuing to spend every dollar that comes in from this program may not make the best economic sense.

The equipment grant portion for the fire service will increase five percent in FY 2007. This increase is based on the growth of property assessments during the previous year. This year's funding will total \$739,349 for this category.

Basic Life Support (BLS) funding will increase 42.4 percent for FY 2007. The proposed budget will allow for an additional \$446,375 to be distributed to the volunteer fire and ambulance companies to help pay for ambulance attendants to fill in during hours when volunteers are not available. FY 2007 funding for ambulance attendants will total \$1.5 Million. As funding requests continue to increase for the volunteers and fire service, the County Council and State of Delaware should seriously investigate the possibility of looking at professional ambulance service in Sussex County. If we continue to fragment service, it may be best long-term to go to a professional third party billing program.

### 3. **EMPLOYEES**

The Budget Committee is recommending that all employees receive an across-the-board \$500.00 increase, plus a three-and-a-half percent cost of living increase effective July 1. An article that appeared in The News Journal on January 19, 2006, stated, "The average American worker got squeezed in 2005 between the biggest jump in energy prices in 15 years and wages that failed to keep with inflation. As a result, hourly earnings after adjusting for inflation fell by 0.5 percent . . ." The article went on to say that "Workers did see their wages rise last year. It was just that prices rose at a faster pace—3.4 percent for 12 months ending in December. The 0.5 percent drop in inflation-adjusted hourly earnings last year followed a 0.7 percent fall in 2004 for 80 percent of the U.S. workforce. The main culprit in last year's jump in inflation was a 17.1 percent surge in energy

prices, the biggest advance since 1990, as gasoline prices topped \$3 per gallon for a time. The rise in energy accounted for 40 percent of the overall rise in prices last year.” Most of the County’s employees are being faced with a 59 percent increase being proposed by Delmarva Power.

The three-and-a-half percent is slightly higher than what is being offered by Kent and New Castle counties. However, we must take into consideration that most base salaries the County pays are lower than both of these counties. For example:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Sussex Salary</u>	<u>Kent Salary (35 hrs.)</u>
Accountant I	\$24,708	\$31,468
Engineering Technician	\$22,410	\$26,481
Account Clerk II	\$21,343	\$24,295
Wastewater Operator I	\$20,327	\$22,295
* Dispatcher I	\$24,708	\$26,481
Zoning Inspector II	\$25,943	\$31,467
Cashier	\$20,000	\$24,297

\* State of Delaware 9-1-1 dispatchers start at \$29,500 and are working right across the board from Sussex County dispatchers performing the same services.

The Budget Committee is recommending that elected officials receive a three-and-a-half percent cost of living increase and retirees a one-and-a-half percent cost of living increase. The County will make a contribution of 15 percent based on our payroll to the retirees’ health coverage as required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. This Board requires all public employers to have a program in place by FY 2009.

The group hospital insurance rate will increase ten percent in the proposed FY 2007 budget.

The County government will once again self-insure each employee for the first \$200,000. Group hospitalization is projected to cost \$7.2 Million for FY 2007. This is a \$1.1 Million increase over FY 2006. A contribution of \$13,370 will be calculated for each employee for vision, dental, and group hospitalization. Employees should keep in mind that this is equal to \$7.35 per hour for a 35-hour workweek. The Budget Committee is pleased that there are no increases in employee contributions in the FY 2007 health benefits to the employees this year.

The pension contribution rate for FY 2007 will be 24 percent. This is broken down into two categories—nine percent for pension income benefits and 15 percent for post-employee retirement benefits. This contribution is made to the gross recommended salary for each employee. During FY 2007, County benefits for employees will cost 67 percent for every dollar the employee is paid.

Long-term disability benefits that are paid by the County government to the employee will cost \$68,000 for FY 2007. Long-term insurance is beneficial to employees who have exhausted all of their sick and vacation time.

The prescription and drug benefit will remain at its current level. The program that was established five years ago allowing for employees to transfer sick and vacation time to assist other full-time employees who have exhausted all of their time will also be allowed in FY 2007.

4. **COUNTY COUNCIL**

<u>Actual</u> <u>FY '03</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>FY '04</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>FY '05</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>FY '06</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>FY '07</u>
\$357,574	\$399,138	\$509,168	\$533,334	\$610,933

**Council President – Lynn J. Rogers**  
**Council Vice President – Dale R. Dukes**  
**Clerk of the Council – Robin A. Griffith**  
**Telephone: (302) 855-7743 Fax: (302) 855-7749**

**Agenda Line: (302) 855-7888**

**Website: [www.sussexcountyde.gov](http://www.sussexcountyde.gov)**

**E-mail: [gcole@sussexcountyde.gov](mailto:gcole@sussexcountyde.gov); [ddukes@sussexcountyde.gov](mailto:ddukes@sussexcountyde.gov);  
[fjones@sussexcountyde.gov](mailto:fjones@sussexcountyde.gov); [vphillips@sussexcountyde.gov](mailto:vphillips@sussexcountyde.gov);  
[lrogers@sussexcountyde.gov](mailto:lrogers@sussexcountyde.gov)**

The County Council is the legislative branch of County government. The County Council consists of five elected members. Each Councilman is elected from his own district. The County Council President is elected by the members of the Council at their organizational meeting in January. The five Councilmen will each receive an annual salary of \$24,587 effective July 1, 2006. The County Council President, which rotates each year at their organizational meeting, will receive an additional \$1,000.

The proposed FY 2007 budget allows for the County Council to belong to the following organizations:

- Delaware Association of Counties**
- Delaware League of Local Governments**
- Delaware Rural Water Association**
- Delaware Safety Council**
- Delmarva Water Transport Committee**
- First State RC&D Council**
- National Association of Counties**
- Sussex County Association of Towns**

Funding in the amount of \$10,000 will be allocated for each Councilman for distribution from the Councilmanic Grant Program. Councilmanic grants are made available through requests from nonprofit agencies. In order for an organization to receive this funding, they should provide the Finance Department with their 501(c)(3) number at the time of their application.

The Recreation Assistance Program will remain at the same level of funding of \$6,000 per Councilman. Funding from both Councilmanic Grants and the

Recreation Assistance Program is encumbered each year if not spent during the current budget year. This funding will be allowed to be carried over for FY 2007.

The County Council will contribute to the following activities throughout the County during FY 2007:

**Basketball Tournament**

**Caroling on The Circle**

**Delaware District III Little League World Series**

**Delaware Technical & Community College Annual Women's Conference**

**Delaware Women's Annual Health Conference**

**Hispanic Festival**

**Mildred King Memorial Luncheon**

**Punkin Chunkin**

**Return Day**

**Senior Citizens' Beach Day**

**South Bethany Tide Gages**

**Sussex County Science Fair**

Regularly scheduled County government meetings are as follows:

<b>Sussex County Council</b>	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>First, third, and fourth Tuesday of each month</b>
	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Second Tuesday of each month</b>
<b>Planning and Zoning Commission</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Second and fourth Thursday of each month</b>
<b>Board of Adjustment</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Second and fourth Monday of each month</b>

Special meetings and additional meetings are posted on the bulletin board of the Sussex County Council, as well as the Planning and Zoning Office. Those wishing to monitor Council meetings may do so by linking to the County's home page of [www.sussexcountypa.gov](http://www.sussexcountypa.gov). In addition to the County Council meetings, Board of Adjustment meetings and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings are also available on the Internet.

It is anticipated that during the first quarter of FY 2007 the County Council will replace the current retiring County Administrator who will be leaving the second quarter of FY 2007.

*The Sussex County Council will accomplish the following objectives during budget year 2007:*

- ✓ *Maintain public availability to all citizens of the County*
- ✓ *Promote a pleasant work environment for the employees*
- ✓ *Encourage citizen participation to assist in making informed decisions*
- ✓ *Maintain financial stability*
- ✓ *Guide development to existing infrastructure areas*
- ✓ *Promote Open Space Program*

5. **LEGAL**

The proposed FY 2007 budget will allow for the County to have an expenditure of \$324,100 for all legal services. This is a 21.8 percent increase over FY 2006. The expenditure allows for the County Council to continue to contract with the private sector for legal services. Because of the diversity, complexity, and increased workload, the Budget Committee believes that contracting with the private sector gives us the best representation. If we were to hire four full-time attorneys and support staff, it would be four times what we are projecting to pay in FY 2007.

The County Council will receive legal representation in FY 2007 from the law firm of Griffin & Hackett. Mr. James D. Griffin will represent the County Council and Mr. Vincent G. Robertson will represent the Planning and Zoning Commission. Additionally, the County will receive legal representation from Assistant County Attorney Ms. Rebecca L. Trifillis. Mr. Richard E. Berl, Jr., will continue with his representation of the Board of Adjustment. The legal staff will be responsible for representing the County Council in all legal matters and perform the duties as described in 9 Delaware Code, § 7005.

The Budget Committee is recommending in FY 2007 that we retain the services of Young, Conaway, Stargatt & Taylor in issues regarding personnel and labor matters. Potter Anderson & Corroon will be requested to assist in all financial matters, including bonding.

*The Legal Department will accomplish the following objectives during budget year 2007:*

- ✓ *Attend all public hearings and meetings as required*
- ✓ *Advise and assist in drafting ordinances as required by the County Council*
- ✓ *Provide legal interpretations in a timely manner for State and Federal legislation*
- ✓ *Assist in the collection of delinquent property taxes and utility fees*
- ✓ *Provide productive legal services to County Council and staff*

6. **GRANT-IN-AID PROGRAM**

The Budget Committee is recommending a grant-in-aid contribution for FY 2007 in the amount of \$11,669,798. Contributions will include the following:

<b>Delaware State Police</b>	<b>\$1,413,000</b>
<b>Sussex County Volunteer Fire and Ambulance Companies</b>	<b>\$3,701,350</b>
<b>CHEER's Meal Program</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>
<b>Small Business Development Center</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>
<b>First State Community Action</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>
<b>University of Delaware Extension Service</b>	<b>\$ 118,098</b>
<b>Sussex Conservation District</b>	<b>\$ 127,544</b>
<b>Human Service Grants</b>	<b>\$ 110,000</b>
<b>Realty Transfer Tax Revenue Sharing</b>	<b>\$ 45,000</b>
<b>Open Space Land Program</b>	<b>\$1,480,371</b>

Funding contributions for FY 2007 will be made to local governments in the following areas:

<b>Town of Georgetown</b>	<b>Payment in lieu of taxes</b>	<b>\$ 6,661</b>
	<b>Treatment of waste from Sussex County Industrial Airpark</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>
	<b>Treatment of waste from Ellendale Sanitary Sewer District</b>	<b>\$ 50,000</b>
<b>City of Rehoboth Beach</b>	<b>Acquisition of water for Dewey Beach and treatment of sanitary sewer for Henlopen Acres and Dewey Beach</b>	<b>\$1,001,000</b>
	<b>Revenue Sharing for 9-1-1 fee for telephone bill</b>	<b>\$ 53,000</b>
<b>City of Seaford</b>	<b>Treatment of sanitary sewer for the Town of Blades</b>	<b>\$ 100,000</b>



<b>City of Seaford (continued)</b>	<b>Revenue Sharing for 9-1-1 fee for telephone bill</b>	<b>\$ 41,000</b>
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The proposed FY 2007 budget will once again allow for a grant subsidy program to those who need assistance in paying their Sussex County sanitary sewer or water bills. In order to qualify for assistance, an applicant must be a homeowner and a full-time resident of the home. The home must be served by a Sussex County sanitary sewer or water system. The applicant's liquid assets (cash, stocks, bonds, savings, etc.) and real estate, other than the owner-occupied home, must be less than \$15,000. As of April 4, 2006, 409 homeowners have taken advantage of the assistance programs.

Programs that are available for FY 2007 are:

- **County Sewer and Water Low-Income Assistance Program**
- **State of Delaware West Rehoboth Sewer Low-Income Assistance Program**
- **County Sewer and Water Low-Income Loan Program**
- **Federal Rural Development Hookup Cost/Loan Grant Program**
- **Community Development Block Grant Assistance**
- **Septic System/Connection Fee Grant Program**

Individuals wishing to obtain more information on these programs should contact the Sussex County Utility Billing Division at 302-855-7871.

The proposed FY 2007 budget calls for four programs to assist taxpayers in meeting their property tax obligation. The FY 2007 budget allows for continuation of the County's property tax subsidy for the County portion of the property tax bill. This program was established in FY 2002 and allows any individual whose annual income does not exceed \$15,800 to be eligible for the program. Households having more than one adult cannot have an income exceeding \$20,000. This subsidy is in the form of a grant that can be applied to the County portion of the property tax bill only. Funding cannot be applied to school or ditch taxes. This program does not restrict anyone from applying for the senior citizen or disability programs that give exemption from all property taxes.

Property tax assistance programs are:

- **Exemption for Disabled (Filing dates - January 1 through April 30, 2006)**
- **Exemption for Residents Over 65 (Filing dates - January 1 through April 30, 2006)**
- **State Senior Citizen School Property Tax Credit (Filing deadline - September 1, 2006)**
- **Sussex County Property Tax Subsidy**

For additional information, applicants should contact the Sussex County Treasury Division at 302-855-7760. It should be noted that exemptions are not transferable if a property is sold. New property owners are required to reapply for these benefits.

The proposed FY 2007 budget allows for funding in the amount of \$1,180,371 to be made available for the Sussex County Land Trust. The County Council entered into a partnership with the Sussex County Land Trust in FY 2003. The Sussex County Land Trust is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to protecting natural, cultural, agricultural, and recreational resources through land preservation, stewardship, and education for today and tomorrow.

The County Council has provided the following contributions to the Land Trust:

<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>\$ 625,499</b>
<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>\$1,253,166</b>
<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>\$1,142,209</b>
<b>FY 2007</b>	<b>\$1,180,371</b>

All Council funding pledged to the Land Trust shall only be used for land acquisition, the purchasing of development rights, or the stewardship of land purchased with County funds. Funds are not permitted to be used for general administration of the Trust. County funding contributions to the

Land Trust may only be expended for specific purposes that are approved by four affirmative votes of the County Council members at an open meeting. The \$1,180,371 contribution for FY 2007 is ten percent of the surplus that was generated from budget year 2005. Each year's contribution will be limited to excess revenue in the amount of ten percent from the previous audited budget.

The Budget Committee believes that the partnership with the Land Trust has been very successful when you take into consideration that the program is only in its fourth year of existence. To date, the following activities have taken place:

□ **December 2002 to February 2003**

State of Delaware Department of Agriculture Foundation Matching Grant Program – \$300,000 raised by Sussex County Land Trust, matched by Sussex County Council, matched by State and Federal programs, leveraging \$1.8 Million, preserving 933 acres in Sussex County.

□ **Oyster Rocks Road**

Partnership with The Nature Conservancy – Sussex County Land Trust holds fee simple title to 43 acres along the Great Marsh. The Nature Conservancy holds a conservation easement on the property. We purchased the property for \$600,000 in March 2003.

□ **Bayside Conservation Easement**

June 2003 approved by U.S. Army Corps to hold the conservation easement on approximately 280 acres of wetlands along Drum Creek in the Assawoman Bay area of the Inland Bays. This is a donated easement, with a \$50,000 endowment and use of their Nature Center.

□ **February 10, 2004**

The Sussex County Council authorized the sale of 37.6 acres, more or less, of land purchased by the County Council's part of a 187.8-acre tract known as the Jay Cannon Tract. The County Council authorized the

purchase of this land to help with expansion of the Dagsboro-Frankford Sanitary Sewer District. The 37.6 acres is separate from the main tract by a road and is adjacent to Vine's Creek. Because of the road setback requirement, the 37.6 acres were not suitable for spray, especially considering the value of \$35,000 per acre.

□ **March 19, 2004**

Announcement by Secretary of Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control John Hughes of partnership between State of Delaware and Sussex County Land Trust to renovate the Wolfe House, a historic home situated at the beginning of Junction and Breakwater Trail connecting Rehoboth Beach and Lewes.

□ **March 2005**

The Sussex County Council gave approval of \$750,000 to The Nature Conservancy for the Ponder Tract located northwest of Milton. The property gave an opportunity to protect 908 acres of one of the largest forested areas remaining on the Delmarva Peninsula.

The primary reason for establishing a cooperative agreement between the Sussex County Council and the Sussex County Land Trust is to purchase open space. However, there is nothing prohibiting the use of a portion of these funds to leverage with the State of Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation. On May 2, 2006, the Sussex County Council authorized \$650,000 to be leveraged with \$350,000 from the Sussex County Land Trust, to be matched with \$1,000,000 from the State of Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation and \$1,000,000 from the Federal Agricultural Lands Program, to preserve 499 acres primarily in western Sussex County.

7. **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

<u>Actual</u> <u>FY '03</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>FY '04</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>FY '05</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>FY '06</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>FY '07</u>
\$150,550	\$185,805	\$209,782	\$241,725	\$487,925



































































































































































































