

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN RECONVENED ITS RECESSED SESSION OF MAY 25, 2011 ON MAY 31, 2011 AT 8:15 A.M. IN THE COMMISSIONERS' ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO CONDUCT A BUDGET WORK SESSION.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Steve Tyson
Vice Chairman Lee Kyle Allen
Commissioner Scott C. Dacey
Commissioner Thomas F. Mark
Commissioner Theron L. McCabe
Commissioner Johnnie Sampson, Jr.
Commissioner Jefferey S. Taylor

STAFF PRESENT:

Harold Blizzard, County Manager
Jack B. Veit, III., Assistant County Manager
Richard F. Hemphill, County Finance Director
Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board

Sheriff

The Sheriff was present to discuss some of the issues raised by the Board, including the status of the Magistrate's limited presence at the Judicial Center and the Electronic Offender Monitoring Program (EOMP).

The Sheriff stated that the Magistrate's impact on the jail population is minimal to none. The limited presence, however, has been beneficial for the Highway Patrol and other law enforcement agencies.

He advised the Board that video has been in place for first appearances; however, there has been no inclination by the Magistrate and Chief District Court Judge to utilize it.

EOMP officers were delayed in maximizing the program due to personal circumstances; however, the Sheriff has committed to using all EOMP bracelets possible. He agreed to provide monthly reports to Commissioners on the status of the program.

In response to Commissioners' concerns about Sheriff's vehicles leaving the County, he stated that parking vehicles in public places at the County line could make them vulnerable to break-ins, with automatic weapons and other valuable equipment inside. He will try to collaborate with the City of Havelock for the Chief of Police to park vehicles in a secure area for three deputies who reside in Newport.

The department provides security for the airport and community college. The Sheriff agreed to a review of private entities hiring deputies; however, he stated that some are significant safety measures such as school ballgames, fairgrounds, etc.

Commissioner Tyson inquired as to the breakdown of the approximate 270 inmates. The Sheriff stated that 30% are violent, 15-20% are drug related and 50% are high bond.

There was mention of the potential economic impact of housing federal prisoners, with the Sheriff stating that 35-40 federal prisoners would generate \$1 million plus per year.

The Sheriff agreed to have a policy available for the Commissioners by July 1 so they will have something to share with constituents when questions arise.

The Sheriff stated that the Public Defender program would help the jail population issue as well as indigent representation costs.

Commissioner Mark commented that the issue with moonlighting is with the use of County equipment. The Sheriff stated that in his view, use of vehicles is justified because those people or companies being served are also taxpayers.

Commissioners inquired about the cost and necessity for tinted windows. Sheriff Monette stated that they are tinted because of electronics in the vehicles, to protect them from sunlight and heat. He will provide numbers as to the cost of tinting.

Commissioner Taylor inquired about the use of vehicles for personal use. The Sheriff responded that this is rare, but he will address the issue.

The Board continued with review of the proposed budget. County Finance Director, Rick Hemphill, explained the recommended rates for the volunteer fire districts.

Rhems Volunteer Fire District – Rhems assessed valuation was in error for the current year. It is recommended that there be a 1 cent increase (which likely would have been done in the current year with correct assessed valuation). The previous rate was 0.0475, and went down in the current year to 0.0314. The recommended 0.04140 is less than the previous rate.

Vanceoboro – The district's request can be accommodated at the same rate by using \$13,000 of Fund Balance.

Tri-Community – The district's request would require an increase in rate. Staff recommended keeping the rate at the current level and partially funding the request.

Little Swift Creek – The district's request would require a 1.3 cent rate increase. It was recommended to raise the rate ½ cent and appropriate ½ of Fund Balance to partially fund the request.

Twp 3 – It was recommended maintaining the rate and partially funding the request. Full funding would require a rate increase. Matching grants are not included in the numbers. It was the consensus of the Board to send letters to the districts explaining the Board's position, which is to authorize the applications for no-match grants and provide technical assistance with applications. The consensus was to give half of what was given last year as a match (1/2 match or 25% of total) and not to fund grant matches in future years, allowing districts to adjust the fees, if needed. A Memorandum of Understanding will be prepared for Fire Departments. If they choose to raise their rates, the County should be notified so that the Finance Director can prepare a spreadsheet, to Twp. 3 specifically, demonstrating what would be needed to accommodate the required match.

Twp. 5 – It was recommended that the rate be maintained, partially funding the request, and using ½ of Fund Balance.

Twp. 6 – The district's request can be funded without changing the rate.

Twp. 7 – It was recommended to fund the request and maintain the rate.

West of New Bern – The district's request would require a slight rate increase. It was recommended to maintain the rate and partially fund the request.

Twp. 9 – The district's request would require a rate increase. Recommended to maintain the rate and partially fund the request.

Sandy Point – The district's request was recommended without rate change.

Commissioner Dacey recommended that the Board develop a philosophy for moving the County forward over the next 5-10 years.

Commissioner Taylor recommended that the County develop strategies for working with municipalities more effectively.

Special Appropriations

Commissioner Dacey recommended that the Highway 70 Corridor, Highway 17 Association, and NC 20 be placed in the membership budget line item rather than special appropriations.

Promise Place – Commissioner Dacey asked to find out if East Carolina Behavioral Health helps to fund Promise Place.

Neuse River Community Development – Commissioner Dacey has consulted about the possibility to incorporate some of the operations of this agency into the CDBG program.

Commissioner Dacey recommended imposing a tax on internet sweepstakes machines. Assistant County Manager, Jack Veit, stated that the City has a privilege license, whereas the County does not. According to the County Attorney, the County would need to institute a privilege tax.

Commissioner McCabe expressed a special request for a fire hydrant installation at the Harlowe Fire Station. It was the consensus of the Board to check with the Water Department on the cost and let the Water Department pay for it.

Commissioner Taylor suggested that revenue could be generated by unloading unneeded County surplus properties.

Chairman Tyson stated that the Sheriff requested a raise. His current salary is \$88,000, which is at the lower end of the scale for comparable size counties.

At 1:35 p.m. the Board moved to recess until 4:00 p.m. on Monday, June 6.

Chairman Steve Tyson
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan
Clerk to the Board