

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN RECONVENED ITS RECESSED SESSION OF MAY 18, 2015 ON MAY 26, 2015 AT 8:14 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 Scott C. Dacey
Commissioner Jason R. Jones
Commissioner George S. Liner
Commissioner Thomas F. Mark
Commissioner Theron L. McCabe
Commissioner Johnnie Sampson, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Jack B. Veit III, County Manager
Gene Hodges, Assistant County Manager – Operations/Facilities
Rick Hemphill, Assistant County Manager – Finance/Administration
Amber Parker, Human Resources Director
Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board

County Manager, Jack Veit, began review of the recommended budget with Revenue Highlights, which were provided by Mr. Veit and Assistant County Manager for Finance/Administration, Rick Hemphill.

- Current year ad valorem taxes showed limited growth
- Vehicle tax collection experienced small increase
- Sales tax to date is 8.9% higher than last year
- No general fund money needs to be allowed for schools' debt service this year, as has been necessary in the last several years.

Commissioner Jones initiated discussion regarding the Carolina East agreement for ACT stating that he has concerns about the pass through funds from the hospital. Commissioner Dacey stated that the agreement evolved from the County's interest in having oversight of the funds. Chairman Tyson stated that the agreement ends on June 30, 2015 and the Board can revisit this matter.

Expense Review

Commissioners

Memberships

NC-20 – There has been no budget information received yet from NC-20. The information was requested, and the deadline was extended.

Highway 17 Association – Commissioner Mark reported that the state has cut transportation funding and any hopes for improvements to Highway 17 from Bridgeton to Beaufort County line have diminished for the near future. Onslow County has withdrawn from the Highway 17 Association. He stated that Highway 17 will likely be short \$45,000-\$50,000 for the upcoming year, making its survival questionable. He therefore recommended not funding it.

Commissioner Liner stated that Highway 17 is still a key issue for the military and he is concerned about what pulling out would signal. He proposed giving funding monthly until September to see if the organization can stay afloat.

Chairman Tyson stated that he has a meeting scheduled with Patrick Flanagan of the Down East Rural Planning Organization (RPO) on May 28 and suggested that the Board recess until that time for the entire Board to meet with him. Commissioner Sampson stated that he supports maintaining funding to Highway 17 Association.

Commissioner Dacey stated that if part of the Highway 17 year ahead work plan is lobbying to have Highway 17 included in the Governor's proposed bond package, then he could support it. He is also in favor of a lobbying priority for ACT.

Travel/Training

Commissioner McCabe recommended an allocation of \$2,000 per Commissioner for travel/training, totaling \$14,000. Commissioners Jones, McCabe, Sampson and Liner were in favor of increasing the line to \$14,000 for travel/training. Commissioners Dacey, Tyson and Mark were in favor of the budget remaining at \$12,323.

Consensus on NC20 and Highway 17 Associations memberships was deferred.

Contractual Services

Staff was asked to clarify the status of hosting the Commissioners' meetings on the C-TV10 website.

Special Appropriations

Commissioner Liner asked the Board to consider partnering with Havelock in the amount of \$15,000 for LaCrosse field lighting.

He stated that recreation participants who live outside the City of Havelock make up 44% of participants; therefore, he believes that County support is justified.

There was consensus among the majority of Commissioners on inclusion in the budget document the following appropriations:

- Day Reporting Center \$7,500
- Promise Place \$20,000
- Coastal Women's Shelter \$25,000
- Merci Clinic \$25,000

There was discussion of the potential impact of Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) on Merci Clinic. The County Manager was asked to invite Scott Harrelson to the June 1 work session to discuss FQHC.

- RCS \$10,000
- Red Cross \$6,000
- Havelock (LaCrosse) \$15,000

Commissioner Dacey favors seeing a plan that addresses the needs of the 44% of out-of-city participants holistically.

- Forest Resources \$143,962
- Trent Woods \$0 (Request was for \$250,000 for restroom, ballfield, walking track, playground equipment)

Commissioner Jones indicated that he would like to advocate for Dover's needs when and if presented.

Commissioner Sampson stated that Sampson Street Park was developed from donations, and recommended that as a solution to other localized recreation needs.

Administration

- Increases reflect a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for County employees and an increase in the cost of health insurance

Human Resources

- The cost of new on-line application software is reflected. Applications for employment will be received directly and will no longer come through Employment Security. This is intended to expedite the process.

Information Technology

- One new employee, an Information Technology Technician, is reflected along with other improvements, including connecting Cooperative Extension and the Senior Center into the fiber network.

Finance

- Inclusion of \$20,000 for capital improvements reflects new check processing equipment.

Audits - Fire Departments' audits check for internal controls/separation of duties, which are the areas most likely to be cited. An additional \$15,000 has been budgeted to cover the final remaining three departments: Township 6, Township 7 and Township 9.

Assessor/Appraiser

- Two additional staff members are being added. With the reduction in the revaluation cycle, revaluation will be almost continuous, with a new one starting as soon as one is completed. There was discussion concerning re-visiting the length of cycle after the current 6-year cycle ends.

Collections

- The lockbox system is being discontinued. Collections will be done in-house for tax but lockbox payments will continue for water payments

Register of Deeds

- Completion of the first phase of five phases for back scanning is included in the budget. The Register of Deeds wants documents scanned 30 years back.
- There was discussion regarding the feasibility of charging for on-line access

Sheriff

- No new positions were requested
- Twelve new vehicles were requested; the County Manager recommended eleven.
- The Electronic Offender Monitoring Program (EOMP) revenue has decreased, while staffing has remained at the same level. Staff was asked to check with Judge Mills regarding assignments of offenders to EOM Program.
- Staff was also asked to check with the U.S. Marshall regarding a reduction in housing of federal inmates.
- Catastrophic Insurance for inmate medical costs research is still pending.

Rescue Squads –Overview

- A two-tiered system is used for County funding: those who have the capability to bill, and those who do not.

Environmental Health

- Commissioner Liner expressed concern about how often food trucks are inspected.

Solid Waste

- A pending hauling agreement with the City of New Bern, which would exchange the County's vegetative debris for the City's brown goods, is not reflected in the budget and would have a \$170,000 negative impact on the City.

Soil and Water

- The Soil and Water Board has requested an opportunity to discuss drainage districts with the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Jones asked staff to make a note to publicize future annual updates with Cooperative Extension and Soil and Water.

Health

- The clinics are all supported by fees and state revenue.
- No funding is recommended for the Child Health – Community Care Plan. The County is unable to run the program.

- The County Manager is recommending that the Board consider either divesting the County of the Hospice Program or operating it in competition with the private sector, functioning like a private sector activity, which will necessitate more investment.

There was consensus to have Mr. Harrelson address hospice with the Board at the next work session when he speaks about the FQHC.

CARTS

- Beginning July 1, fees for any riders in urban areas will be paid from a different source (MPO). The rural/urban allocation split is 60/40. A decision needs to be made on fee structure.
- A new tablet system is being initiated to replace paper manifests. The tablets will be leased.

Veterans Services

- New efficiencies are being explored.

Social Services

- There was consensus that DSS Director, Kent Flowers, be invited to attend the June 1 work session regarding new positions that he requested.

Recreation

- Capital Outlay expenditures reflect playground additions and six tennis courts at Creekside Park. The cost for three courts is \$150,000. Commissioners Jones, Liner, Mark and McCabe were in agreement to fund three courts

Commissioner McCabe stated that lights at the old Godette School ballfield are not operational. The County Manager was asked to find out how much an electrical contract would cost to repair the lights.

Libraries

- The 2% salary increase has not been figured into the budget yet.

Commissioner Liner commented that 99.1% of New Bern's request is recommended; 98.1% of Cove City's and 100% of Vanceboro's, while only 93.5% of Havelock's request is being recommended.

He stated that he would like to see Havelock come up to the average of the other libraries' recommended amounts, which is 97%, for an additional \$6,478.

County Manager, Jack Veit, stated that other libraries have costs that Havelock does not have, mainly in utilities and maintenance.

Commissioners Jones, Liner, Sampson and McCabe proposed adding to Havelock \$6,000 more plus 2% COLA for a total of \$144,516.

Schools:

- The County Manager emphasized that next year the schools need to get their numbers in earlier. It was recommended starting the process with them in March. He was asked to check on the per student charge for Driver's Education reflected in schools' budget

Commissioner Jones stated that he would like to see the City of New Bern helping with the cost of transformers at H.J. McDonald and Bangert schools, since they are on the City of New Bern electric system.

Commissioner Liner inquired how much it would cost to pave the parking lot at West Craven High School.

At 3:40 p.m. Commissioner Mark moved to recess to reconvene at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 28, seconded by Commissioner Liner and unanimously carried.

Chairman Steve Tyson
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan
Clerk to the Board