

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN RECONVENED ITS RECESSED SESSION OF MAY 28, 2015 ON JUNE 1, 2015 AT 1:00 P.M. IN THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER TRAINING ROOM, 411 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
Craig Warren, Finance Department

Health Department

Craven County Health Director, Scott Harrelson, made a presentation to the Board concerning the County's hospice program.

He stated that the daily average patient census is the key to financial viability for hospice. He reported that Craven County's count so far this year for hospice care was 19.3 at the beginning of the year; 27 as of April and 30 as of May. The goal for the upcoming year is 35.

Mr. Harrelson requested to transition a contract LPN, who is currently part-time, to a full-time status, stating that contract cost and employee cost are approximately equal. As a result, the program could accommodate a census of 35 with this additional nurse.

The amount in the budget request was a projection, while the numbers now being presented reflect the current year actuals.

He stated that a Health Foundation grant of \$30,000 is projected to be used for television ads, website and billboards.

County Manager, Jack Veit, advised the Board that Mr. Harrelson's request would add approximately \$100,000 to the budget expense line. However, revenue in the recommended budget was predicated on a census of 20-25 average daily population.

Mr. Harrelson stated that he is confident of achieving a census of 35 and that the upcoming fiscal year could be utilized as a trial year.

Commissioner Liner asked if the County would be in competition with the private sector. Mr. Harrelson responded that it would, but the other two of three major players (United, Pruitt and Craven County) do not operate at a "gold" standard of care, as does the County's program.

Commissioner Jones stated that Craven County's program is solid, reflecting greater continuity of staffing, and may be more stable than the others in the private sector.

It was suggested that a possible solution would be to hire one nurse now (RN) and review staffing in six months. If the program is trending at 35-40 average daily census, another nurse can be added.

Mr. Veit stated that the position exists, but is currently unfunded and frozen.

FQHC (Federally Qualified Health Center)

Craven County was funded for thirteen months as a FQHC in the amount of \$704,000 for the initial period, with the residual of \$650,000 per year. Mr. Harrleson explained that not all new staff is needed, but only about two full staff positions, considering partial funding for several existing positions (.5 health educator 1, nurse and .6 contract provider). The grant is earmarked for salary. Approximately \$200,000-\$250,000 is needed for renovations. Mr. Harrleson recommended that the County move some salaries to the grant and use some of the budgeted salary funding for renovations.

Child Health and Adult Primary Care are the only areas covered by the program. The grant covers examining room equipment. Periodic re-submission of FQHC application will be required on an ongoing basis.

DSS

Assistant Social Services Director, Alfreda Stout, reported that the Income Maintenance backlog created by the introduction of "N.C. Fast" has been caught up.

The plan for the three (3) new positions requested will enable DSS to get supervisors and lead workers off of direct casework and back to quality control and training to increase accuracy rates. If mandates change and more staff is needed, DSS would like to be able to come back to the Board.

The department saw 17,000 individuals through August 2013, which was up from 10,000 in 2008.

The request originally included staff to begin more fraud work, as fraud investigation staff has also been diverted to Income Maintenance over the last two years, decreasing the amount of time that can be devoted to fraud investigations; however, it was necessary to prioritize the limited resources.

Social Services Director, Kent Flowers, reported that the caseload has been managed more quickly in child welfare and children are staying in foster care for shorter periods.

Fire Departments

The Commissioners reached general consensus, as follows, concerning fire department budget requests.

1. *Rhems* – It was the consensus that there be no change in the budget.
2. *Twp. #1* – It was the consensus that there be no change in the budget.
3. *Tri Community* – Commissioner Mark requested another 1/2¢ increase on the fire tax rate this year; they have been negotiating for a smaller building, but expect to pay more if the contract is not signed this year. Commissioner Mark will consult with the Department and bring the matter back to the Board.
4. *Little Swift Creek* - Commissioner Mark stated that the department does not want to raise tax at all, but would request \$20,000 for a Department of Insurance grant match.

Commissioner Jones recommended that the Board look at establishing a policy on funding grant matches. One suggestion was to set aside a portion of each district's fire tax to go into a pot for whatever they may need.

Staff was directed to contact SOG/NACo regarding other formulas being utilized for fire tax.

Commissioner Jones stated that he would like to see a \$3,000-\$4,000 contribution, particularly for Vanceboro and Twp. 3. The County Manager suggested establishing a tax rate threshold or Fund Balance ceiling to determine eligibility for a County grant match. Commissioners Liner and Sampson recommended putting grant matches into the budget that are already out there in current requests and charge staff to work on a formula for the future.

Commissioner Dacey suggested establishing a review board made up of representatives from all the districts.

5. Twp. 3 – Increase rate 1 1/2¢. Commissioner Jones stated that the Fire Tax Commissioners voted for this.
6. Twp. 5 - 1¢ rate increase
7. Twp. 6 – deferred
8. Twp. 7 – Increase rate .0013
9. New Bern – 1/4¢ rate increase
10. No. 9 – No increase
11. Sandy Point – up 1¢(same as Tri-Community; Commissioner Mark will confirm with Tri-Community)

Review of Deferred Items

CTV – 10 – Proposed budget was \$3,900; however, \$5,400 is needed to include hosting Commissioners' meetings on the station's website.

NC – 20 – No budget has been received yet from NC-20. It was the consensus not to put funding in the budget and to consider doing a budget amendment later if needed.

Register of Deeds – Commissioner Dacey shared the contact information for a private vendor to explore for scanning.

Electronic Offender Monitoring Program (EOMP) – Judge Mills advised staff that sentencing laws have changed since the outset of the program; therefore, there is less opportunity to use the program. It was requested to ask the Sheriff if staffing is being adjusted as a result.

Federal Inmates – Staff reported that the Pamlico County facility is being utilized more to house federal inmates. The issue in Craven is the ability of the housing County to transport inmates to court in Greenville. Staff was requested to check, after budget process, to analyze the cost benefit. The average daily jail population is 249. The capacity is 292.

Tennis Court Pricing – The cost to build three courts with no lights is \$118,000, and \$123,000 with lights. Consensus was to fund three courts and add lights later if there is a need.

Harlowe Community Center - Staff reported that the cost for replacing lights at the old Godette School field is \$550/fixture. There are six poles, with four lights on each pole, for a total of \$13,200. It was the consensus that the County commit to fund the lighting on a matching basis for any grants that are successfully pursued, and at the recommendation of Commissioners Jones and Mark, to appropriate \$1,000 to evaluate the condition of the lights.

The Town of Dover requested \$5,000 to help with a ball field. Commissioner Jones asked the Board to consider allocating \$2,500 to help with the ball field, and there was consensus to add this to the budget

Staff was asked to develop a budget for FQHC based on the earlier presentation for the Board's next meeting.

The consensus was to allow for hiring one nurse now and review hospice numbers in six months. The Medical Director/Doctor increase from \$55-\$65 would be accompanied by a review in four months to determine if the average daily numbers are being maintained at 30.

Consensus was to fund three requested DSS positions now, and have them come back later if additional staffing is needed.

Commissioner Liner inquired how the Board fits into the COLA. County Manager, Jack Veit, explained that the Board decides on setting a rate for its members, The County Manager has traditionally not made a recommendation. The impact on the budget of applying the COLA to Commissioners is \$1,560.

Commissioner McCabe recommended that Commissioners received the 2% COLA being provided to eligible employees. There was consensus among the majority, that the 2% COLA be applied to Commissioners and involved in the Manager's recommended budgets going forward, with Commissioners Dacey, Mark and Tyson dissenting.

There was discussion concerning the direct cost of advocacy by Highway 17 Association, with no overhead factored in. Commissioner Mark recommended allocating half of the appropriation, to be paid in monthly increments until September 30 (\$2,083 for the next six months). It was the consensus of the Board to re-visit the effectiveness of the Association in advancing the County's agenda at that time.

There was discussion of School Capital money being paid in actual cost by invoice rather than in one lump sum to the schools for major items.

At 5:50 p.m. Commissioner Sampson moved to go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried.

Chairman Steve Tyson
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan
Clerk to the Board