

1 **THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY RECONVENED ITS**
2 **RECESSED SESSION OF MAY 22, 2020 ON MAY 28, 2020 AT 8:30 A.M. IN THE**
3 **COMMISSIONERS' ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION**
4 **BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA. THE**
5 **PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO CONDUCT A BUDGET WORK SESSION.**
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7 **MEMBERS PRESENT:**
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9 Commissioner Thomas F. Mark
10 Commissioner Jason R. Jones
11 Commissioner George S. Liner
12 Commissioner Denny Bucher
13 Commissioner Johnnie Sampson, Jr.
14 Commissioner Theron L. McCabe
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16 **MEMBERS EXCUSED**
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18 Commissioner E. T. Mitchell
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20 **STAFF PRESENT:**
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22 Jack B. Veit, III., County Manager
23 Craig Warren, Finance Director
24 Nan Holton, Clerk to the Board
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26 **REMOTE STAFF:**
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28 Gene Hodges, Assistant County Manager
29 Amber Parker, Human Resources Director
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31 Mr. Veit reviewed that this is an Open Meeting that is being recorded. He stated the purpose
32 today was to revisit the various topics that had been identified in the previous budget work
33 sessions requiring more information.

34 Item #1: Mr. Veit reported that there are 2,635 water customers that are on auto pay. As a result
35 of the Governor's executive order, no ones' water meter could be disconnected for non-payment
36 and with people being unemployed, being able to pay on a timely basis creates a need to
37 establish a payment plan. Mr. Veit indicated that Finance Director, Craig Warren, would be
38 meeting with Water Superintendent, Al Gerard, regarding this matter.
39

40 Item #2: He reminded the Board that West New Bern Fire Department had requested funds to
41 repair an elevator and replace a truck, which would have required raising their tax by
42 approximately one cent. Mr. Veit indicated they do not want a tax rate increase, so he
43 recommended taking \$15,000 from the county fund balance and the fire department take \$15,000
44 from their fund balance to repair the elevator and let the truck replacement wait one more year.
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46 Commissioner Jones motioned to give West New Bern Fire Department \$15,000 from the FY21
47 County's Fund Balance towards the repair of their elevator. Commissioner Sampson seconded
48 his motion and it was approved unanimously.

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50 Item #3: In Special Appropriations, Mr. Warren reported that \$2,556 is consistent with what the
51 Board has given the Senior Companion HCCBG in the past.

52

53 Commissioner Liner motioned to give the Senior Companion HCCBG Special Appropriation
54 \$2,556.00. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Sampson and approved unanimously.

55

56 Mr. Warren reported that the City of Havelock item includes recreation and their match for the
57 meals.

58

59 Commissioner Liner motioned to set the City of Havelock Special Appropriation at \$83,871.00.
60 His motion was seconded by Commissioner Sampson and approved unanimously.

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62 Item #4: There had been an inquiry about the number of retirees; therefore, retiree health
63 insurance was discussed. Mr. Veit reviewed a graph showing the number of retirees per year
64 over the past six years and indicated he believes we have reached the peak of retirees, with 57 in
65 2020.

66

67 Commissioner McCabe requested information regarding the number of minorities that are on
68 patrol for the Sheriff Office. Mr. Veit stated he would get that information and email it out to the
69 Board.

70

71 Item #5: Mr. Veit reviewed that back in April the Sheriff's Office received two large donations:
72 one allowed them to buy things in this fiscal year, but the second was budgeted in the Sheriff's
73 FY21 budget, specifically to purchase a fifth K9 dog. He reported the County would need to
74 modify their K9 policy. He also reported on the other necessary expenses associated with
75 another K9. Mr. Veit informed the Board he had had discussions with County Attorney, Arey
76 Grady, and with Sheriff Chip Hughes and both were in agreement that this K9 dog would be
77 owned by the County, not the handler. He said there would be an agreement, in theory, between
78 the County and the handler/employee that the dog is the property of the County. The Sheriff
79 made a stipulation that if the dog reaches an age of 8-10 years old and the employee wants to
80 purchase the dog, that it would be an option.

81

82 There was much discussion on the success of the current K9 program, the liability associated
83 with it, and changing the policy to reflect the program being capped at 5 dogs.

84

85 Commissioner Jones made the motion to proceed with the \$29,000 donation to purchase a 5th
86 dog and modify the policy. Commissioner McCabe seconded the motion, which carried
87 unanimously.

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89 Item #6: Mr. Veit revisited the Sheriff's request to add four deputies, which was not included in
90 the FY21 budget. He revealed that it would cost \$236,995.83 for four deputy salaries and
91 \$211,564 to outfit four deputies, for a total of \$112,139.96 per officer to add to the budget.

92
93 Commissioner Jones stated that the last time any new road deputies were added was in 1996 and
94 that citizens comment on the lack of deputies on patrol and slow response times. Several other
95 Commissioners concurred that this is a real concern. Discussion focused on the low tax rate and
96 the ability to meet the needs and balance the budget by a small increase.

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98 Commissioner Liner motioned for a one cent tax increase. His motion was seconded by
99 Commissioner Bucher. The motion was defeated in a roll call vote 4 Nays (McCabe, Sampson,
100 Jones, Mark) to 2 Ayes (Liner, Bucher).

101
102 Commissioner Jones motioned to add \$112,139.96 to fund one additional road deputy.
103 Commissioner McCabe seconded the motion. It was carried in a roll call vote of 5 Ayes (Jones,
104 McCabe, Sampson, Mark, Bucher) to 1 Nay (Liner).

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106 A break was taken from 9:35 – 9:50 am.

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108 Item #7: Mr. Veit informed the Board that he learned that deputies are paid \$5/hour for the use
109 of their vehicles at construction sites around the County. The reason it had not been realized was
110 due to an administrative mistake that was being made when keying it into the system. He said
111 there is no formal agreement.

112
113 Commissioners discussed this being poor compensation of a public vehicle and the lack of a
114 contract. Mr. Veit indicated he would pursue this topic further with the County Attorney.

115
116 Item #8: Mr. Veit reviewed all the current SRO revenue sources and their school placements.
117 He reported that the four included in the budget will be placed at Bridgeton, Creekside, Trent
118 Park and Ben D Quinn Elementary Schools. The placements were determined based on the
119 number of incidents and the populations of the schools. There are still six schools, including
120 early college, without SROs.

121
122 Discussion revolved on the total number of SRO's that could currently fall under the County's
123 charge, lack of grant money, and the potential need to create a division to manage all of these
124 officers; all of which would require a 1-1.5 cent tax increase. The Commissioners deliberated
125 over the use of an increase in sales tax to cover the costs of the SROs and having a referendum to
126 do so. The Board was in consensus to move forward with putting a referendum to increase the
127 sales tax for SROs on the 2021 election ballot.

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129 Item #9: In response to an inquiry about the DSS Child Support Incentive, Social Services
130 Director, Geoffrey Marett, had provided a narrative stating that each quarter the federal Office of
131 Child Support Enforcement advances to states estimated incentive dollars based on the estimated
132 performance of the states. This amount is subject to adjustment based on performance data
133 submitted annually.

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135 Item #10: A request had been made to know how much money is in the Craven County Schools
136 Fund Balance. Mr. Warren pulled reports from their audits which showed they have \$6.7 million
137 in their fund balance.

138
139 Item #11: Upon a previous request, Mr. Veit provided the Board with a breakdown by fiscal
140 year, the private projects performed by the Beaver Management program. It was determined that
141 the program has value, but worth revisiting next year.

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143 Item #12: The Board had requested information regarding the membership dues to the Eastern
144 Carolina Council of Governments. Mr. Veit reported that 75% of the \$15,735 annual dues cover
145 the costs associated with the aging program. While the County may not utilize all the services
146 the ECC provides because of having their own resources, he relayed that he felt they are valuable
147 to the County.

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149 Item #13: Mr. Veit and Mr. Warren provided the Board with the Craven County Covid Relief
150 Funds (CRF) allocation plan, which they will need to submit. Mr. Veit reported that Craven
151 County's allocation is \$1,911,835.00. Of that, \$609,000 is designated for enhanced cleanings,
152 computers for teleworking related to COVID, additional protective sneeze guards, and other
153 building modifications for protection. In addition, \$900,000 is available to cover payroll
154 expenses for public safety and public health.

155
156 They indicated that the municipal share would be \$202,000, and each municipality would receive
157 a percentage based upon population, with a minimum of \$2,000 as follows:

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159	Bridgeton	\$2,000
160	Cove City	\$2,000
161	Dover	\$2,000
162	Vanceboro	\$3,400
163	River Bend	\$10,200
164	Trent Woods	\$13,200
165	Havelock	\$67,000
166	New Bern	\$102,200

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168 These funds would need to be used for public safety expenses, law enforcement, fire, PPE,
169 technology, all related to COVID 19. Mr. Veit and Mr. Warren indicated that the County would
170 make the purchases for the municipalities without managers, and those with managers would
171 receive reimbursements for receipts of proper purchases.

172
173 They reported that the twelve fire departments share would be \$90,000, to be used for PPE,
174 masks, gloves, shields, anything that can be tied to COVID 19.

175
176 The six rescue squads share would be \$75,000, also for PPE, medical supplies related to COVID
177 19.

178
179 Non-profit shares will be \$35,000, with RCS receiving \$25,000 and Merci Clinic receiving
180 \$10,000.

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182 Commissioner Liner motioned to adopt the CRF allocation plan, as presented. His motion was
183 seconded by Commissioner Sampson and approved unanimously.



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OTHER TOPICS

Commissioner Jones referenced Special Appropriations and remarked that he had talked to several people involved with the Realize U252 organization and stated he believes it should be funded. Chairman Mark indicated he had a change of heart also after gleaning more information. Commissioner Liner said he could get behind it with the stipulation that Commissioner Bucher could serve on their Board, and that they have a certified director and an approved policy in place.

Commissioner Bucher motioned to fund Realize U252 at \$25,000, while requiring a Craven County Commissioner serve on their Board, a certified director, a policy in place with the money being dispersed on a monthly basis not to exceed funding for four scholarships as requested. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Liner and approved 6-0 in a roll call vote.

CHANGES TO THE BUDGET

Mr. Veit and Mr. Warren reviewed the changes that have been made to the proposed FY21 budget to date and indicated a budget amendment in the amount of \$2,688,044 to reflect a transfer from the General Fund from the current fiscal year is needed.

Commissioner McCabe made the motion to approve the following budget amendment in the amount of \$2,688,044; seconded by Commissioner Jones and approved 6-0.

Transfers

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1010000-39901	\$2,688,044	1019800-49793	\$2,688,044
Fund Balance Current Year		Transfer to Projects	
TOTAL	\$2,688,044	TOTAL	\$2,688,044

Justification: Budget amendment is needed in order to make transfer from the General Fund into the Convention Center Recover Project Fund. This amount represents the restoration costs of the Convention Center from damages due to Hurricane Florence.

Commissioner Liner requested a full summary be provided for the Convention Center project.

At 11:22 a.m., Commissioner Jones motioned to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143.318.11(a)(6) to discuss personnel matters; seconded by Commissioner Liner and approved unanimously.

At 12:17 p.m., Commissioner Liner motioned to return to Open Session; seconded by Commissioner Jones and approved unanimously.

230 Chairman Mark indicated there was discussion regarding giving employees a COLA, or a bonus.
231 He motioned to table that decision until November 16, 2020. Commissioner Jones seconded the
232 motion and it was approved in a 6-0 roll call vote.

233

234 Chairman Mark gave a report on Senate Bill 796 titled “An Act to Clarify and Expand the
235 Authority of Craven County to Regulate and Enforce Laws in Certain Waters within and
236 Adjacent to Fairfield Harbour.” He indicated he had given remarks to the Sun Journal. The
237 Board discussed the implications of Bill 796.

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239 County Manager, Jack Veit, provided the Board with a COVID 19 update, reporting that the
240 County had their fifth death yesterday, an individual with several underlying health conditions.
241 Currently, of the 190 cases, 90 have recovered, 95 are active, and three of those are in the
242 hospital.

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244 Commissioner Jones gave a brief report on the airport and Delta Airlines suspending services at
245 Coastal Carolina Airport through September 30th.

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247 At 12:42 p.m., Commissioner Bucher motioned to adjourn. His motion was seconded by
248 Commissioner McCabe and approved unanimously.