

**THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY RECONVENED ITS RECESSED SESSION OF MAY 15, 2023 ON TUESDAY, MAY 16<sup>TH</sup> AT 8:30 AM 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 Jason R. Jones  
 Vice-Chairman Denny Bucher  
 Commissioner Chadwick Howard  
 Commissioner Sherry Hunt  
 Commissioner Thomas F. Mark – remote via Webex  
 Commissioner E. T. Mitchell – remote via Webex  
 Commissioner Beatrice R. Smith

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Jack B. Veit, III, County Manager  
 Gene Hodges, Assistant County Manager  
 Craig Warren, Finance Director  
 Sarah Williams, Budget Analyst  
 Amber Parker, Human Resources Director  
 Lauren Wargo, Assistant to the County Manager  
 Nan Holton, Clerk to the Board

**SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS**

County Manager Jack Veit informed the Board that Special Appropriations are not budgeted, as they are purely the Commissioners' decision to make. He indicated the four that are already included are:

➤ Forest Resources	\$204,689
➤ The Wall that Heals	\$ 5,000
➤ Beaver Management	\$ 6,000
➤ City of Havelock	\$157,518

Forest Resources is a grant match. The Wall that Heals was a decision approved at an earlier BOC meeting. Beaver Management support enables Craven citizens to participate. The City of Havelock appropriation is based on Board policy to provide an annual allotment for their recreation services.

Commissioner Mark remarked he only supported giving money to organizations that help the County provide a service.

Mr. Veit stated each non-profit organization seeking special appropriations from the County is required to submit a package with information regarding their mission, Board of Directors, and budget to be considered. In presenting each request, he provided the Board with supporting documentation and the amount of the request.

The following organizations submitted packets and were discussed:

1. Greater Duffyfield Residence Council requested \$2,000 for an annual event which has already taken place. No appropriation was made.
2. New Bern Preservation Foundation requested \$3,000 to do renovations to King Solomon Lodge. Commissioner Smith motioned to give \$3,000 to the New Bern Preservation Foundation; her motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and passed in a 4-3 roll call vote. (Hunt, Mark, Bucher voted nay)
3. Boys and Girls Club requested \$25,000 to assist with general operating costs, program services and supplies. Commissioner Mitchell motioned to appropriate \$15,000; her motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and approved in a 5-2 roll call vote. (Howard and Mark voted nay)
4. RCS requested \$40,000 to assist with their emergency crisis shelter, case management services, respite care and meals.

Commissioner Mark motioned to appropriate \$40,000 to RCS; his motion was seconded by Commissioner Bucher and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

5. Coastal Community Action/Senior Companion requested \$2,300 to support in-home care. Mr. Veit stated the County's match is actually \$2,078. Commissioner Mitchell motioned to appropriate \$2,078, seconded by Commissioner Mark and approved in a 6-1 roll call vote. (Howard voted nay)
6. Baptist on Mission requested \$30,000 to assist homeowners with their renovations. Commissioner Bucher motioned to appropriate \$30,000 to Baptist on Mission; seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved in a 7-0 roll call vote.
7. Vanceboro Christian Help Center requested \$9,000 to purchase more food for clients, a laptop, and building repairs. Commissioner Jones motioned to appropriate \$9,000; seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

A break was taken from 9:23 – 9:33 am.

8. Coastal Women's Shelter requested \$25,000 to support salaries, maintain certifications, and utilities. Commissioner Mitchell motioned to fund at \$25,000; her motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and carried in a 7-0 roll call vote.

At 9:43 am Commissioner Jones was excused from the meeting.

Budget discussions continued covering County Departments.

#### **ELECTIONS**

Information was presented on election cycles, early voting, part-time staffing, and run offs. Ms. Parker provided a description of the new position requested for an Elections Specialist to facilitate the increasing number of public information requests.

#### **TAX ASSESSOR**

#### **TAX APPRAISAL**

#### **REGISTER OF DEEDS**

#### **PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

Assistant County Manager, Gene Hodges, provided information regarding parking, various library work to be done, maintenance location, and unanticipated maintenance needs.

#### **COURT FACILITIES**

A break was taken from 10:55 – 11:04 am. Commissioner Mark exited the meeting.

#### **MAINTENANCE**

Ms. Parker provided a description for the Facility Systems Operation Specialist position requested. Mr. Hodges explained with the countywide controls for door locks, camera systems and the HVAC control system, a dedicated person is needed who understands the intricacies of these systems.

At this time there was discussion about the process of approving budget items as presented, growth of government, and managing the assets given.

Commissioner Jones returned to the meeting at 11:19 am.

Mr. Hodges outlined Other Improvements included in the \$425,000.

#### **COUNTY GARAGE**

It was reported the new fuel system is located within this budget.

**NON- DEPARTMENTAL**

It was explained that cash is accrued here to provide coverage for when there is a 27<sup>th</sup> pay period.

There was a discussion about comp time and concerns expressed about it not being abused. Commissioner Mitchell motioned to budget \$300,000 for comp time payout at the sole discretion of the County Manager. Her motion was seconded by Commissioner Bucher and approved 6-0 in a roll call vote.

Commissioner Mark rejoined the meeting at 12:04 pm.

**SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS continued**

9. Craven County Disaster Recovery Alliance requested \$20,000 to support their repair program and purchase building supplies. Commissioner Bucher motioned to appropriate \$10,000; his motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved in 6-1 roll call vote. (Howard voted nay)
10. \*Tried by Fire requested \$7,200 to use for utilities. Commissioner Smith motioned to fund at \$7,200. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

Chairman Jones highlighted the boards that needed recusal include U252, Hwy. 70, and ACT.

Commissioner Mark dropped off at 12:16 pm.

Hwy 70 membership for Craven County is established at \$25,000. Commissioner Mitchell motioned to fund Hwy 70 Membership at \$25,000. Her motion was seconded by Commissioner Howard and carried in a 6-0 roll call vote.

Commissioner Mark returned to the meeting at 12:21 pm.

Commissioner Bucher motioned to recuse Commissioner Howard from discussing funding for U252. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and carried unanimously. Commissioner Howard exited the meeting at 12:22 pm.

11. U252 requested \$12,000 to serve as a scholarship funding for Craven County citizens. Commissioner Smith commented on the similarity of this organization to Tried By Fire's My Sister's House, as those women were imprisoned and seeking rehabilitation into the community. Commissioner Bucher motioned to fund \$12,000 to U252. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and carried 5-1 in a roll call vote. (Smith voted nay)

Commissioner Howard returned to the meeting.

\*Commissioner Jones requested to revisit Tried by Fire, My Sister's House, based on Commissioner Smith's point. Commissioner Jones motioned to appropriate \$5,000 to Tried by Fire; his motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved in a 7-0 roll call vote.

Commissioner Jones motioned to recuse Commissioner Mitchell from the meeting for the purpose of discussing ACT membership funding. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and carried unanimously.

ACT membership for Craven County is established at \$25,000. Commissioner Hunt motioned to appropriate \$25,000 for the ACT membership. Her motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved 6-0 in a roll call vote.

A lunch break was taken from 12:35 – 1:00 pm.

Commissioner Mitchell and Mark continued the meeting via Webex.

Mr. Veit reported that \$451,078 has been added to the FY24 budget thus far.

Commissioner Jones revisited the conversation about appropriating \$450,000 to initiate the Sudan Temple remediation and demolition process. Mr. Hodges outlined the permitting steps and the timeline that it would require. There was discussion about the process to define the project's scope, with support for being forthright in the County's plan to demolish and build a new Administrative Building.

Commissioner Howard motioned to include \$450,000 in the FY24 Budget with funding coming from Capital Improvement Projects to apply to demolition and architectural schematics. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved in a 7-0 roll call vote.

The meeting recessed at 1:27 pm to attend a ribbon cutting; and reconvened at 3:00 pm.

### **SHERIFF**

There are two new positions in this budget: one Road Deputy and a Deputy Sheriff Narcotics Investigator. It was noted this department has the most vehicles and fuel usage in the County.

Commissioner Jones inquired about increased funding in traveling/training and it was determined there was a mis key, to be corrected from \$113,850 to \$50,000.

Capital Outlay revealed fifteen Chargers and two Tahoes, and a transit van, as well as a robotic piece of equipment.

There is the addition of one new School Resource Officer (SRO) and taking on three others, not being funded by New Bern and Havelock. There was discussion regarding the donation of laptops by the Board of Education.

It was reported the Jail is at max capacity and unable to lease out bed space. This initiated in-depth discussion about the Jail Navigator position created last year, as a result of the Opioid Task Force for a specific purpose, their duties and responsibilities.

Commissioners requested to receive monthly reports from the Sheriff on the DOC monitoring program, the number of beds being utilized at Hope Mission Center, and the child support program.

### **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

A new full-time Telecommunicator position has been added due to the increased number of 911 calls and stressful workloads.

### **RESCUE SQUADS**

Mr. Veit explained the two tiers of funding, based on the size of the rescue squads and their capacity for volume. The tiers recognize collections versus rural, private insurance versus Medicaid.

The Rescue Squads were funded as follows:

- New Bern Craven Rescue in Jasper - \$500,000
- Havelock Rescue - \$500,000
- Ft. Barnwell Rescue - \$500,000
- Bridgeton EMS - \$375,000
- Vanceboro EMS - \$400,000
- Cove City EMS - \$500,000
- Township 7 EMS - \$375,000

### **ANIMAL SERVICES**

Mr. Veit reported on recent discussions with the Pamlico County Manager and Finance officer about their funding capacity and the need to increase it next year.

Mr. Hodges outlined the \$482,500 transfer from the Capital Reserve Fund to renovate the sally port and create a new intake area which will affect the procedure for how agencies enter the facility in off-hours.

Commissioner Howard requested a shareable graphic be created to illustrate the funding and improvements to the animal shelter.

Mr. Veit announced that Dr. Ostler is going to start coming to the BOC meetings to give reports. Plans are to host an Open House to invite the media and citizens to showcase the animal shelter operations.

At 4:52 pm Chairman Jones recessed the meeting to reconvene on Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am.

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Chairman Jason R. Jones  
Craven County Board of Commissioners

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Nan Holton, Clerk to the Board