

**THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY RECONVENED ITS RECESSED SESSION OF MAY 16, 2023 ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 17<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 E. T. Mitchell – remote via Webex  
Commissioner Beatrice R. Smith

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

Commissioner Thomas F. Mark

**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

Chairman Jones invited the Commissioners to share any concerns with the budget material that has already been covered. The Board expressed satisfaction at this point in discussions.

Mr. Jones informed the Board of the need to go into Closed Session at their June 5<sup>th</sup> reconvened work session to discuss salaries. He indicated that is when unanswered questions on the be back list would be provided as well.

County Manager, Jack Veit, reviewed the increase of \$437,228 includes special appropriations, two memberships and the comp payouts.

Presentation of revenues and expenditures of the Departmental budgets continued.

**INSPECTIONS**

Discussion centered on the schedule of fees and the difficulty of maintaining a full staff. Assistant County Manager, Gene Hodges, reported the capital outlay is for a new GMC Terrain.

**MEDICAL EXAMINER**

**CARTS**

Updated information on how the 2020 Census affected the urban/rural funding sources with CARTS was explained. Financial adjustments will need to be made the following year in order to keep the new Omnibus routes in the urban areas; with mention of encouraging support from the City of New Bern.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

Mr. Hodges reported the capital outlay was for a Toyota Camry.

**SOLID WASTE**

Mr. Veit cautioned the Board that for many years the landfill has held the tipping rate, which is the cost to dispose of trash, but sees the need for an increase the following year. The tipping rate impacts the cost of trash stickers, which will require discussions on this topic next year as well.

Mr. Veit also reported that all of the solid waste contracts come due at the same time next year: curbside, recycling, and hauling. Bids will be put out in the fall and there is an expectation of increases due to inflation, the inefficiency of recycling in general, and the cost of fuel operating trucks all across the County. Mr. Veit indicated the lack of businesses providing these services limits the number of bids that will be received. Mr. Veit prepared the Board to expect an increase in trash sticker pricing as well as recycling next year.

Mr. Hodges reported a backhoe purchase for one of the Convenience Sites, adding concrete pads at the Ft. Barnhill site, and security cameras to Sanders Lane. Ms. Parker reported a new Convenience Site Attendant position for the Monette center, which will serve as a floater.

## **CONSERVATION**

At 9:30 am Commissioner Mitchell left the meeting.

## **COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

Mr. Hodges reported on the need for ADA improvements at their facility, cleaning and sealing of the roof, and new lighting.

Commissioner Mitchell returned to the meeting at 9:40 am.

Commissioner Jones initiated a discussion about litter and a citizen's push to replicate Pitt County. Signage was mentioned for promoting the County's efforts and interest was expressed in placing billboards at the various entrances to the County.

A break was taken from 9:55 – 10:08 am.

Ms. Parker reported on the cost of the billboards associated with the opioid campaign as a reference for budgeting for littering billboards.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to allocate \$10,000 towards litter campaign billboards. Her motion was seconded by Commissioner Howard and approved in a 6-0 roll call vote.

## **PLANNING**

Ms. Parker reported on a part-time Engineer Technician position; and having Don Baumgardner return on a consultant basis. Mr. Hodges reported the capital outlay is for GPS Surveying equipment.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Ms. Parker reviewed the reclassification of several positions. Mr. Hodges reported they would be replacing a 2005 Crown Vic with a new Toyota Camry. Throughout the Health Department Divisions, discussion about Medicaid transformation immersed.

### **LAB AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

### **MOBILE DENTAL UNIT**

### **MATERNITY**

### **CHILD HEALTH**

### **WOMEN AND INFANT CHILDREN (WIC)**

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

### **FAMILY PLANNING**

### **HOME HEALTH HOSPICE**

## **ADULT HEALTH SERVICES**

### **RISK REDUCTION**

### **MENTAL HEALTH**

### **PHARMACY 340B**

### **RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES**

Mr. Veit stated this is where the County budgets anything outside the opioid settlement funds. He also explained that the DIX Crisis funds are in Mental Health.

A lunch break was taken from 12:05 until 12:40 pm.

### **SOCIAL SERVICES**

Mr. Veit informed the Board he meets with DSS Director, Geoffrey Marett, once a month. He expounded on the challenges they are facing with foster care, guardianships, and increased volume, while Medicaid expansion is going to add more complications. Mr. Veit stated that DSS makes a big difference in the peoples' lives they serve.

Ms. Parker highlighted six new positions for DSS and some reclassifications. Mr. Hodges indicated the capital outlay is for two new Toyota Camrys and the normal cycle of having ¼ of their computers replaced.

Mr. Veit emphasized how vital the Budget Supplement is related to DSS and referred the Board to that section. Focusing on Employment Assistance, he highlighted that division alone handles Medicaid qualifications, food stamp qualifications, refugee programs and special assistance needs.

At 1:07 pm Commissioner Mark joined the meeting via WebEx.

There were discussions about child support enforcement and receiving monthly reports.

Regarding the DSS Meals Program, Mr. Hodges provided information about the 5-year plan to address foundation settling, worn out carpets, upgrade to bathrooms, and wall repairs at the George Street Senior Center.

Commissioner Jones expressed concern over the lack of meal delivery in the rural areas of the County, initiating discussion over options available to address the deficit. Mr. Veit recommended having Geoffrey Marett and the Senior Center Director, Alissa Andrewsbrown, come before the Board to discuss.

Mr. Veit stated the County funds DSS at \$9,354,520.

### **VETERAN SERVICES**

A break was taken at 1:50 pm.

### **RECREATION**

Mr. Hodges outlined the Capital Projects covered by \$509,760, inclusive of:

- Replacement of playground at West Craven Park
- Replacement of surfacing at middle playground at Creekside
- Modernize and increase size of diesel tank at Creekside and put in a 500 gallon tank at West Craven Park
- Improvement to parking lot at Rocky Run Park
- Install a beach volleyball system at West Craven Park via an International Paper Grant
- New signage and trails at Latham Whitehurst Park
- Safety lighting at Creekside and West Craven

Discussion focused on needing gym space and the option of utilizing the schools' gyms to expand basketball leagues.

Commissioner Hunt expressed a desire for basketball courts, among other recreation needs in her western part of the County.

Commissioner Hunt made a request for \$5,000 to repair an outdoor bathroom facility at the Godette Community Center in District 5. She emphasized she would be seeking more community support to maintain the Center.

Commissioner Howard motioned to appropriate \$5,000 to repair the outdoor bathroom at Godette Community Center. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and carried in a 7-0 roll call vote.

Comments were made about needing to find suitable property in District 5 to establish a small-scale park.

### **CONVENTION CENTER**

Mr. Veit read a complimentary email he received from a recent rental at the Convention Center, applauding the level of customer service. He referred the Board to the fee schedule and indicated the need to revisit it next year.

Mr. Hodges outlined the Capital Projects, including a new sidewalk with a handicap ramp closer to the building entrance.

### **LIBRARIES**

The topic of relocating the main branch of the New Bern Library to a more central location, possibly out along the Hwy 17 corridor engaged the Commissioners and Staff.

### **CRAVEN COUNTY SCHOOLS**

Chairman Jones reported he learned the Board of Education had voted to give Staff direction to begin a county-wide redistricting plan. There was input given on how the redistricting process works, using population shifts, demographics, and boundaries. A review of the timeline related to asking for a referendum was also provided.

### **COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **TRANSFERS**

Mr. Veit stated the budget proposes putting \$206,250 into the Capital Reserve, but it could be used to offset the \$452,228 in budget increases.

After reviewing the Capital Improvement Plans, Mr. Warren indicated there is ability to make a contribution to Capital Reserve later this year.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to apply the \$206,250 towards the \$452,228; with the difference being taken out of the Fund Balance. Her motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and carried in a 7-0 roll call vote.

Mr. Veit reported this kept Craven County at the revenue neutral rate of 44.48%. The "be back list" was reviewed.

Chairman Jones reminded the Board of the need for a Closed Session to set the salaries of the County Manager, the Register of Deeds, and the Sheriff. He recessed the meeting to reconvene at the Convention Center on Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm.

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Chairman Jason R. Jones  
Craven County Board of Commissioners

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Nan Holton  
Clerk to the Board