

Special Meeting  
Thursday, May 14, 2015  
**Chowan County Public Safety Center**  
**305 West Freemason St.**  
**Edenton, NC**  
**9:00am**

Present Chairman Jeff Smith, Commissioners Keith Nixon, Alex Kehayes, John Mitchener, Emmett Winborne, Ellis Lawrence and Greg Bonner.

Staff present County Manager Kevin Howard, Finance Office Willie Carawan and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings.

**Special Meeting**

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order

**Register of Deeds-Land Records Heating and Air Unit replacement**

County Manager Kevin Howard provided the Board with two proposals to replace the HVAC unit at the Register of Deeds Office/Land Records. He stated that the air unit is broken and with warmer temperatures approaching it is necessary to replace the unit as soon as possible. He stated that there are two options for replacing the unit. The first option is to replace the unit that is located in the ceiling over the doorway to the office. He stated this option would require office closure because of the risk of materials falling from the ceiling as the public and staff enters the office. He stated the contractor has indicated that the office may be closed potentially 8 to 10 days for the replacement of the unit. (Cost \$22,900.00). He stated that there is a cost to remove the ceiling grid and tiles at a cost of \$750. He stated the second proposal is to install split units in each office. He stated that cost would be (\$18,900) He noted that this proposal would require the installation of a breaker panel and that cost ranges from \$6,000-\$8,000. Additionally because the building is located within the historic district staff has been told they would have to get permits from the Preservation Commission to screen the units and a brick wall would cost an additional \$4,764.80.

Commissioner Nixon asked if the work could be done at night or on the weekends.

Maintenance Director Terry Rose stated he did not request an after-hours quote.

Commissioner Winborne asked where the funds for the project would come from.

Mr. Howard stated the funds would come from fund balance.

The Board discussed the process that is required for obtaining permits from the Preservation Commission and getting on their agenda.

Mr. Rose stated he would call the contractor and find out about afterhours or weekend work and report back to the Board. (The discussion is continued below later in the meeting).

## **FY 2015-16 Budget Planning**

### **Schools**

School Superintendent Rob Jackson stated that at a previous meeting the Board requested that he prioritize the Tier I projects. For current expense and capital.

Chairman Smith noted that the schools are currently receiving \$3.4 million in current expense annually and this budget requests an additional \$1.03 million.

Mr. Jackson noted that he has also provided ranking information to the Board for Chowan County Schools as discussed at the last meeting. He noted that some of the ranking numbers include the amount of money appropriated by the Board of Education from Fund Balance.

Commissioner Nixon asked for the balance of the school lottery fund as well as the School Capital Fund Balance.

Finance Officer Willie Carawan stated that there are unspent monies in the lottery fund. He stated that there is approximately \$176,000 unspent in the current fiscal year. He stated he would need to meet with the school finance officer, to verify that all invoices have been submitted to the County. He noted that it appears that there is as much as \$215,000 available for school capital. He left the meeting to verify the amounts.

The Board decided to return to the HVAC conversation while Mr. Carawan worked on the amounts.

### **Register of Deeds-Land Records Heating and Air Unit replacement**

Mr. Rose stated that Eastern Heating and Cooling will work nights and weekends to reduce the closure to 2-3 days. He stated the quote would increase approximately \$2,000 in overtime.

Commissioner Nixon moved to approve the bid from Eastern Heating and Cooling to replace the existing unit and to allow the Register of Deeds/Land Records Office to close not more than 3 days if necessary for the work to be completed and to protect the staff and public from any potential materials falling from the ceiling over the office doorway.

Chairman Smith called for any discussion on the motion.

Commissioner Nixon asked if the contractor has indicated that they have the resources to complete the work.

Mr. Rose said yes.

Chairman Smith asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

## **FY 2015-16 Budget Planning**

### Schools - Capital

Mr. Carawan stated that there is approximately \$391,703 in capital monies (lottery and School Capital Fund Balance).

Commissioner Nixon discussed that there may be additional monies in land transfer that could also be utilized.

Mr. Jackson stated that the Schools would appreciate any additional funds and would only use the funds as they are designated by the Board of Commissioners.

The Board by consensus agreed to appropriate \$600,000 to school capital utilizing current year monies that remain.

Board members expressed their concern with using capital monies for bleacher replacement.

Mr. Jackson stated this was a priority because it was a safety concern.

Mr. Jackson also stated he would report back to the Board on the spending of the capital monies.

### Break

Chairman Smith called for a 5 minute recess. After 5 minutes Chairman Smith called the meeting back to order.

### Schools – Current Expense

Commissioner Nixon stated his concern with the request for current expense increase as that would result in a tax increase or require cuts. He discussed the School's working relationship with COA for joint classes and programs. He also discussed the SRO position at the elementary schools. He asked if an assistant principal is more important than a SRO.

Mr. Jackson stated each position was important and praised the work done by the SRO at the elementary schools.

Commissioner Bonner stated his support of the SRO at the elementary schools.

Commissioner Nixon requested a breakdown on the number of certified and classified staff that are being impacted by the Tier I current expense funding.

### Lunch

Chairman Smith called for a one hour recess for lunch. After an hour he called the meeting back to order.

### Schools – Current Expense contd...

Mr. Jackson reported that \$149,729 is the total for the salary increase in the Tier I current expense request. He stated that of that amount \$111,542 is for certified staff and \$38,184 is for classified staff.

Commissioner Mitchener stated he felt the needs in the current expense request are all legitimate. He stated he felt the Board should give strong consideration to Items 1, 2 and 3 of the prioritized request.

Commissioner Bonner stated he felt the Commissioner needed to reach a solution with the Board of Education. He stated he did not want to ignore the current expense request and felt a minimal tax increase would address some of the needs. He stated he felt salaries and teaching positions are the most important.

Chairman Smith stated he felt the first three priority items are the most important. He noted this is a 5% increase.

Commissioner Winborne stated he felt the driver's education program was also important. He asked if the school board has considered a fee for the driver's ed program.

Commissioner Nixon stated that the school utilized fund balance to maintain teaching positions. He stated the request would call for a tax increase and cuts to the county budget. He stated he hoped the County would be able to address some of the current expense request but did not feel it could do the entire \$1 million requested.

Commissioner Winborne stated that the public appears to be most concerned that the Commissioners address the capital needs.

Commissioner Bonner stated he felt the Commissioners should look at a 2-3 cent increase for schools.

Commissioner Lawrence stated he felt education was the most important part of the budget.

There was no recommendation made for current expense.

### Recreation

Interim Co-Director Brian Chappell stated that based on his research the fees for recreation are in line with neighboring counties.

Interim Co-Director Shannon Ray discussed membership fees for the Northern Chowan Community Center.

It was recommended that the directors review the fee schedule and provide the Board with a proposal to assist with the purchase of new equipment for the center.

### Break

Chairman Smith called for a 5 minute recess. After 5 minutes Chairman Smith called the meeting back to order.

#### Elections

Elections Director Rebecca Lowe provided the Board with an explanation on the upcoming elections that Chowan County will have in 2015-16.

#### Water Fund

Director Mickey Watson and Engineer Bill Diehl provided the Board with information on the water rates and proposal to increase the rates. He noted the current rate is \$4.50 per 1,000 gallons. He stated that the cost recovery index is below the recommended 1% and an increase to \$6 per 5,000 would bring that more in line to address future capital needs. He discussed the capital outlay requests.

Commissioner Nixon asked about using hybrid vehicles for meter reading.

Commissioner Smith stated that he would like to see the water fund be a revenue producer.

Commissioner Nixon asked that the manager look into the rent for the house at the water plant.

#### Senior Center

Center Director Connie Parker discussed the increase in the meals program. She stated she felt the \$26,000 was more than the County should pay and stated her recommendation is to stay around \$14,800. She stated that the Center could do some fundraising and use donation monies.

#### DSS

Commissioner Nixon moved to ask the Director to keep the budget at \$950,000, find savings within his budget and come back if monies are needed for foster care. Chairman Smith asked for all in favor, the motion passed (6-1 Kehayes).

#### EMS

EMS Director Colin Ryan noted that the budget includes a salary increase for additional staff for the Paramedic and Intermediate plan. He stated some of the monies are for the additional night of coverage at Center Hill Crossroads Fire Department and to repair ceiling tiles in the ambulance bay.

Commissioner Nixon stated he would like to pull the capital and ambulance purchase monies. He stated that he hoped some of these items could be addressed with monies left from the current FY.

Mr. Howard asked if the generator monies (\$6,000) could remain.

Commissioner Nixon stated yes.

Commissioner Nixon then moved to reduce the EMS proposed budget \$220,000.

The Board recommended that Mr. Ryan explore all options for the ambulance purchase.

Chairman Smith asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Board members noted that the salary increases are not included in the current proposed budget.

#### Misc

Mr. Howard noted that there is a savings of \$70,000-75,000 in the proposed cost for employee health insurance (general fund employees only).

He stated he would bring more information to the next Board meeting.

#### Fire Fund

Mr. Howard noted that a 1 cent increase is proposed for the fire tax. He stated he is still waiting for a proposed budget from the Town of Edenton.

#### Recreation

Commissioner Nixon recommended that the monies for the equipment purchase be removed from the budget request.

#### Adjourn

Being no further business Commissioner Kehayes moved that the meeting be adjourned. Chairman Smith asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

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Jeffery Smith, Chairman

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Susanne Stallings, Clerk