

Special Meeting  
Thursday, April 26, 2012  
9:00 am  
Chowan County Public Safety Center  
305 West Freemason Street

MINUTES

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners held special meeting on Thursday, April 26, 2012 at 9:00 am in the Chowan County Public Safety Center, 305 West Freemason Street, Edenton NC. Present: Chairman Eddy Goodwin, Commissioners Keith Nixon, Jeff Smith, Emmett Winborne, Ralph Cole and John Mitchener. Staff Present: County Manager Zee Lamb, Finance Officer Kim Woodley and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings.

Commissioner Lawrence was absent.

Chairman Goodwin called the meeting to order.

**Review of Proposed FY 2012-13 Budget**

Mr. Lamb thanked Finance Officer Kim Woodley for her work on the proposed budget. He stated that he will need direction from the Board on three main requests. He stated he has performed one round of cuts with his review of the budget with department heads. He stated some changes to the format of the budget include debt being shown in one budget. He stated he is also interested in setting up a special fund just for DSS. He stated he wanted to discuss the COA budget, School current expense and capital outlay. He stated that the budget assumes the county continues to run the jail however revenues from Gates County will no longer be included. He stated that discussions with ADJ is still ongoing. He stated that the Tax budget should also be reviewed by the Board. He stated that debt setoff has not been updated since 2008. He stated that the Tax Department has requested the funding of the position that was eliminated in 2009. He provided the Board with a list of the top delinquent tax accounts. He stated that the Revaluation RFP will be reviewed by the board. He recommended the county seek the services of a financial advisor regarding restructuring county debt.

Commissioner Nixon asked if the County will see any additional revenue.

Mr. Lamb stated that he felt if the Tax position is reinstated, that there will additional revenues in collections of current and delinquent accounts. He also stated that Sales Tax revenues have been understated, and those estimates will increase.

The Board then reviewed personnel requests.

## **Tax Office & Finance Software**

Mr. Lamb asked Tax Administrator Kep Kepley to give the Board justification for the request.

Mr. Kepley stated that the additional staff is needed. He stated that the position was removed in 2008 and currently collection efforts are minimal due to staffing. He stated the current staff is not able to assist with collection of delinquent accounts. He stated the staff has been able to set up payment plans with delinquent tax accounts but for the persons, who have not come into the Tax office, they have not been contacted and the County is missing the additional revenue.

Commissioner Nixon asked if this position could be contracted and pays a percentage of the collected revenues. He stated that Perquimans County uses someone in house to assist with the delinquent accounts.

Chairman Goodwin asked if the two listing clerks are able to assist with delinquent accounts.

Mr. Kepley stated these employees help out when they are able with collections but are busy with listings and assessments.

Mr. Lamb suggested that this position be a joint position with IT and primary focus tax collections including managing data bases for debt setoff, garnishments, and bank attachments.

Mr. Kepley also discussed a request in capital for new software in the Tax office and Finance Office. He stated the current is deficient in his opinion. He stated that staff is unable to be efficient and the database is unreliable. He said that many reports cannot be run. Total costs estimated for Tax software is \$132,400 and Finance Software is \$91,357.

The County Manager requested that the IT Director be called to the meeting.

## **IT**

Joe Sliva, IT Director stated that he recommended that the Board consider staying with the current software provider. He stated that the costs for updating the software and training the employees could be great. He added that reports can be run but do to high turnover in staffing running the reports is difficult for new users.

Commissioner Winborne expressed his concern with increased expenses with no additional revenues.

The Board reviewed a request for an off-site disaster service for finance and tax.

## **Senior Center**

Mr. Lamb provided a request from the Senior Center to increase the nutrition site manager's hours.

The Board discussed that this request has been denied previously and took no further action.

### **Sheriff**

The Board considered the request to reinstate a career ladder plan which would be based on performance and not career longevity.

Carrie Byrum, Human Resources Director stated that other departments have career ladders in place such as EMS, DSS, Inspections but all raises have been suspended since 2008.

Commissioner Nixon expressed his concern with not giving increases to all county employees.

The Board reviewed the capital requests.

Sheriff Goodwin stated he is withdrawing a request for a new tower and radio equipment move. He stated his has concerns for public safety and the need for replacing vehicles.

Chief Deputy Bunch discussed replacement of an RMS server.

### **Planning**

The Board reviewed a request and encouraged the County Manager to meet with and discuss the possibility of combining the Town and County Planning Departments, and hire a joint Planner.

### **DSS**

The manager shared a personnel increase in DSS to direct pay 5 child support workers to save \$38,956 in county dollars. Additionally the county would pay rent on the office space for child support and claim reimbursement.

Commissioner Nixon discussed the county's decision to privatize child support collections.

### **Water**

The Board decided to review the personnel increase for water later in the meeting.

### **Recreation**

The Board discussed a proposal to share one half of the costs of the tennis court repairs at John A. Holmes High School. The board requested that the ownership of the tennis courts be investigated.

### **Center Hill Crossroads Fire Department**

Information was shared that the fire department wished to replace 3 SCBA's.

The Board recessed for a 30 minute lunch. Commissioner Cole left during lunch.

Chairman Goodwin called the meeting to order.

## **EMS**

The Board discussed a request from EMS to replace a 12 year old ambulance and upgrade a monitor purchased with grant funds. The Board discussed transports.

Mr. Ryan stated that this ambulance needed to be replaced. He stated that future ambulance upgrades could be done with remounts in the future.

## **School Budget Request**

Dr. Alan Smith discussed the school budget request. He state that this budget is the first year of the Board of Education requesting monies be used from the Land Transfer Tax.

Mr. Lamb asked for clarification on use of lottery monies before the land transfer tax.

Mr. Lamb explained his reasoning for putting the Land Transfer Tax monies into the general fund rather than a school capital reserve.

The Board discussed the set up of the land transfer tax for school capital projects with the County Manager.

The board discussed the ownership of Hicks Field and the utility responsibility. Mr. Lamb agreed to discuss with the Town Manager the ownership of Hicks Field and the tennis courts. The Board asked the superintendent to look into mowing at the Northern Chowan Community Center as the school uses the space and the mowing equipment is on site at the Middle School.

## **Water**

The Board discussed the request to hire one part-time person to enforce the County Backflow Prevention policy as required by the state.

Chairman Goodwin expressed his concern with enforcement of the policy.

Chairman Goodwin requested that he be excused from the meeting. Commissioner Mitchener moved that the Chairman be excused; the motion was unanimous (6-0).

## **Directives**

The Board discussed the various requests and provided the following consensus for directives for budget planning to the manager and finance officer:

### **School Current Expense**

Keep flat \$3.4 million

### **Edenton Chowan Partnership (ECP)**

Support the request of \$40,000 funding, find within budget, no tax increase

ABC

Chairman and Vice Chairman will meet with the Board to discuss the revenue distribution to the county to determine why there has not been an increase in revenue.

Hwy 17 Association

No appropriation to this non-profit

Hopeline

No appropriation to this non-profit

Beaver Management Program

No appropriation to this non-profit

Belvidere Chappell-Hill Fire Department

No objection to the request for annual funding

NCACC

No objection to the annual dues request.

Hicks Field

Commissioner Smith recommended that the request for this funding for utilities be sent to the Tourism Board (TDA) for their consideration.

Albemarle Commission

Discuss this request with Senior Center Director in more detail.

Library

Commissioner Nixon stated his concern with Chowan County's increased per capita expense as compared to other counties in the region. He stated that the request should be considered once revenues are determined.

COA

Commissioner Nixon recommended that COA assume the responsibility for mowing.

Mr. Lamb discussed setting up a capital reserve for COA. He added that COA will be included in the Golden Leaf discussions.

East Carolina Behavioral Health

Mr. Lamb stated that no official request has been received.

Tax Software

Mr. Lamb stated that he will look into the software for tax and finance and get the figures and data.

Code Enforcement

Commissioner Smith stated that if revenues would allow it, he would like to see code enforcement put back into the budget.

COLA for Employees

Mr. Lamb stated he would look into the cost of a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for employees the next fiscal year.

Being no further business, Commissioner Winborne moved that the meeting be adjourned, the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

---

Chairman  
Edward C. Goodwin

---

Clerk