

Special Meeting
Monday, June 12, 2023
9:00am
Chowan County Public Safety Center
305 West Freemason St.
Edenton, NC

Present: Chair Bob Kirby, Commissioners, Ron Cummings, Chris Evans, Larry McLaughlin, Alex Kehayes and Ellis Lawrence.

Commissioner Tray Taylor was absent.

Staff present County Manager Kevin Howard, Finance Officer Cathy Smith and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings.

This meeting was recorded. A copy of the meeting audio is in the meeting file labeled June 12, 2023.

Chair Kirby called the meeting to order.

The Board reviewed the following budgets, any further discussion or changes are noted under each budget:

Mr. Howard provided the Board with handouts and updated information regarding the following (a copy of all handouts noted are in the meeting file labeled June 12, 2023).

Budget Message, Tax Rate and General Fund Revenue

Ms. Smith provided the Board with a handout detailing the interest income that will be increased in the next fiscal year. She noted the County will have a CD for 90 days. She stated originally \$350,000 was budgeted for interest income but an additional \$285,213 has been added.

COA

This budget will be discussed later in the meeting when the President of the Community College presents his budget request.

Mowing

Mr. Howard noted there will be an increased expense to the mowing contract. He noted it had to be rebid this year and the cost has increased but so has the frequency of mowing.

Sheriff

Mr. Howard presented the Board with a request from the Sheriff to increase salaries in the Sheriff's Office. With the savings from removing capital requests from the proposed budget this

increase would result in a request to increase the budget \$35,41. Sheriff Basnight joined the meeting and reviewed his request with the Board.

DSS

Mr. Howard provided the Board with the estimate for increasing the DSS Budget for salary adjustments. This would increase the general fund contribution \$64,679. This was discussed later in the agenda.

Schools Current Expense

Commissioner McLaughlin stated he would like for the Board to consider an additional increase for the school current expense funding request to address teacher supplements.

Commissioner Cummings stated he has requested information from the schools regarding how the current expense funds are spent and he stated he has not received enough information.

Commissioner Lawrence stated his concerns with the test scores for the County. He stated that better teachers will not come without additional funding.

Commissioner Kehayes stated he would like information on what percentage supplement will result in retention or new recruitment.

Chair Kirby noted that the Schools requested \$231,555 specifically for teacher supplements.

Board members discussed disciplinary issues in the school system.

Board members asked if the monies for the supplement could be earmarked just for the supplement pay.

Mr. Howard stated he would look into this.

Board members indicated they would like to ask the school system to utilize their fund balance for the Priority #1 items and use the additional appropriation of \$231,555 for teacher supplements.

Commissioner Kehayes suggested the Board set a joint meeting with the school board in the future to discuss disciplinary issues in the school.

The Board agreed by consent to include teacher supplements in the 23/24 budget.

The Board took a five minute recess. After 5 minutes Chair Kirby called the meeting back to order.

DSS

Interim Director Cheri Blount reviewed the salary survey that was put together by her administrative assistant.

Ms. Smith stated she took the information provided and removed the high salary and low salary in the study. She noted that \$64,679 would be needed to bring DSS salaries in line with

neighboring counties. She noted that the total cost is \$129,000 and the County's portion of that is \$64,679. Ms. Smith noted that \$70,000 was included in the budget changes however the total change would be around \$80,000.

Ms. Blount requested that the Board look into considering longevity pay as a means for retention and recruitment.

EMS

EMS Director Colin Ryan stated he would like for the Board to look into salary increase for EMS Paramedics. No action was taken

Recreation

Commissioner McLaughlin discussed reducing the Recreation budget line item for trophies. Later in the meeting he made a motion which is detailed below.

Board members noted that participation trophies stop after a certain age and debated the benefits of providing participation trophies to youth.

Opioid Settlement

It was noted that these funds are set aside in a special capital fund and are not comingled in the general fund.

COA

COA President Dr. Jack Bagwell presented the Board with a request for additional funds in the amount of \$13,055. He noted these funds will cover a roof replacement on a building and renovation of the Culinary Arts building. He stated future plans include securing a local dean for the Edenton/Chowan campus. He stated that COA is committed to partnering with Edenton-Chowan Schools over the next year during the school construction.

Commissioner McLaughlin discussed an issue with a broken door on the Edenton-Chowan Campus and Dr. Bagwell assured the Board he would look into it.

Recreation

Commissioner McLaughlin moved to remove trophies from the Recreation Line Item budget.

Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion failed (1,5 Cummings, Evans, Kirby, Lawrence and Kehayes).

Elections

Elections Director Terrence Meyers presented the Board with the budget request from Elections. He stated he hoped to have hired an elections director by the end of July or early August. He stated the director would not take charge until January 2024 as they will be "Director in Training". He stated that after the Director is in charge, his position would become a deputy director and the current deputy director will go back to their administrative position.

The Board discussed the total early voting locations and Mr. Meyers stated that there will only be one early voting location.

Chair Kirby stated he wished to make it clear that another location is not funded in the budget.

Adjourn

Being no further business, Commissioner McLaughlin moved that the work session adjourned. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Bob Kirby, Chair

Board Clerk Susanne Stallings