

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

JUNE 11, 2021
OTHERS PRESENT

David J. Owen, Chairman
Jeremiah Jefferies, Vice Chairman
William E. Carter
John D. Dickerson
Nathaniel Hall
Rick McVey
Steve Oestreicher

Bryan Miller, County Manager
Carla R. Smith, Clerk to the Board
Jennifer Hammock, Finance Director
Melissa Miller, Deputy Finance Officer
Ashley Powell, Administration

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met for a Budget Work Session on Friday, June 11, 2021 at 9:00am in the Gunn Memorial Library.

Chairman Owen called the recessed budget meeting to order. This meeting was to review the budget request to decide if they will fund them and what funding source they will use.

County Manager Miller gave each of the Commissioners a handout of the request. He was asking that the Board approve, deny or put off the request for more information. The Capital Outlay request were reviewed first. The Register of Deeds wanted to cover the cost of digitizing records, but this item is put on hold until County Manager Miller finds out if American Rescue Plan Act will pay for this. The Health Department and Department of Social Services also have records to be digitized. As we get clarity from the American Rescue Plan Act, we will bring it back to the Board, but we are working toward the Budget Ordinance. The Budget Ordinance is what we operate from each year, and it is the legal document that you approve in your vote on the budget. Commissioner Hall said this will give us a bird's eye view of how many taxpayer dollars we are spending. The county Manager recommended more for Information Technology in case there are other needs for the new director. In the Maintenance request, the County Manager recommended that we approve funding for items that were included in the budget but paving the CATS and 911 parking lots were not included in the budget. Commissioner Carter asked if the County Manager was still going to check on contract mowing, and the County Manager said he would. The County Manager felt it would be better to pave the parking lots when the entire parking lot is resurfaced. Commissioner Carter asked what we took out of fund balance last year. County Manager Miller said the Commissioners appropriated about \$1.8 million last year and all of which will be returned to the general fund. About \$200,000 will be added to the general fund. County Manager Miller said they will email the fund balance percentage out by the end of the day. Chairman Owen asked that it be assigned and unassigned percentages. The unassigned percentage is what they have to work with. Commissioner Hall asked if they could discuss personnel issues while they were looking at Maintenance. Maintenance is requesting 2 full-time positions, which includes one grounds and one cleaning. Commissioner Hall asked how many people are currently in Maintenance. They have 6 employees and 2 of the grounds crew are out currently. Then County Manager Miller asked the Commissioners to look at the cleaning request for the Health Department, CoSquare, Gunn Memorial Library, Senior Center, and Department of Social Services. This item can be

covered under the American Rescue Plan Act. Chairman Owen asked if we could cover this under the American Rescue Plan Act, why not hire and train employees to clean. County Manager Miller said that would make it a recurring expense that is more expensive than the cost of a cleaning contract to clean the public spaces in these buildings. This cost will include cleaning for the Health Department 5 days a week and 3 days a week for the other buildings. This would reduce the need for cleaning staff, but we would need to hire 4 people to clean to the level of the contract. This cost could not be included in the American Rescue Plan Act. Mr. Hall was asking about the pay and insurance and the County Manager said he wasn't sure if there were any restrictions on wages and benefits associated with the American Rescue Plan Act. The Maintenance line item was approved to cover additional cost of HVAC units and repairs. Then Commissioner Dickerson asked how many armored vest the Sheriff's office request covered. The number of vests were not told, but they would get that number from the Sheriff. Then they moved on to Emergency Medical Services and Commissioner Dickerson asked what a Lucas device was. County Manager Miller said the Lucas device does chest compressions during CPR. Commissioner Dickerson suggested that we look at the optimal performance and cost to make the money go as far as we can. After much discussion, Chairman Owen asked that we put all the vehicle requests on hold until after June 23rd when the Board will meet with Fleet Management. Before the meeting on June 23rd, Chairman Owen asked that we find out how often the departments will use the vehicles and what it is used for. The request from Parks and Recreations was placed on hold, and Farmer Lake, Transportation, Public Health and 911 Communications capital outlay requests were approved except the vehicle request. The buses for transportation were approved because they are usually paid for from State funds. This is so that the Commissioners are aware that they were purchased. The Public Health department is requesting an AWD vehicle so that they can make home visits. Some roads in Caswell County are not the best, but they must make visits even when the weather is inclement. The County is expecting a cost settlement check for the Health Department in the amount of \$187,000, which will further reduce the county appropriations for the Health Department. The Sheriff came in to explain that the armored vests are grant funded and the funds will be reimbursed to the county. Each vest cost around \$600, are fitted to the person wearing it, and have a 5-year warranty. The Sheriff also explained the finger printing machine.

RECESS

The Board recessed for 10 minutes and reconvened at 10:20 am.

The Board moved on to the Personnel Section. The Commissioners approved the managers recommendations and approved the personnel request for 911 Communications. The Maintenance request was placed on hold until they received some clarity from the American Rescue Plan Act on funding a cleaning contract.

Then Chairman Owen discussed an Assistant County Manager position to alleviate some of the load on the County Manager. This position would be at no cost to the County for 3 years since American Rescue Plan Act funds could be used. Commissioner Hall suggested that we get the job description together and advertise the position after the motion is made in a regular session meeting.

The Commissioners discussed the Salary Study and waited until the County Manager returned. The Cleaning request is moving to the American Rescue Plan Act funding. Commissioner Hall asked will the cleaning requirements for the Health Department sanitize all areas that are needed. County Manager Miller said the cleaning crew walked through the facilities and are fully aware of their needs. Commissioner Hall said he will get with the Health Board Director at the next meeting to be certain. Then Commissioner Dickerson asked if the Salary Study would help save money for departments. County Manager Miller said initially it was spoken about as a salary study. Subsequently when it was discussed and the price was brought back to the Board, the Board wanted to know if it would save them money. This would be more of a time and motion study, which would be substantially more costly than \$20,000. The State looks at the Health Department and Social Services and makes recommendations to them on their staffing levels. Commissioner Dickerson feels we need to explore what would make each department the most efficient. Commissioner Hall said a salary study was done several years ago, and it cost over \$200,000. This process could be tremendously expensive. Things change. Training and professional development has been made available to our employees. A salary study would refresh job descriptions and a lot of good would come out of this. It may cost a lot to implement, but we can do this over a series of years. This is the first step in the process. The State usually looks at the positions under the State Human Resources Act, but the other County employees are not reviewed. The study will remain in the budget to start the process. County Manager Miller then took a moment to mention the purchasing card program that the Finance Department is looking into. Currently the County has one credit card. This program would make the County more efficient, and we would get 1% cash back from the program.

Then the Commissioners reviewed the request that could be covered under the American Rescue Plan Act funding. All these requests were approved except for the Wi-Fi request from the Town of Yanceyville. The Board approved the 800 radios, and the Fire Department will be able to leverage their funds with a 50/50 match for their radios. The Tourism Development Authority (TDA) has some funds available that could cover some of the tourism cost as well. The County wants to develop a program to allow non-profits and small businesses to request reimbursements for profits lost. We put funds there, but we may not spend that much. This is one of the approved uses of the American Rescue Plan Act funds. Commissioner Oestreicher asked if we had procedures established for businesses to make those request. The County Manager said no, but the Economic Developer is working on an application. The County does not have any other CARES act funds remaining. On June 23rd, the Finance Department will give an overview of the document from the National Association of Counties or NACO. The Town of Yanceyville is seeking to expand their Wi-Fi project. The hope is to make the Wi-Fi more robust and assist school aged children that live in the apartment complexes in town. The Commissioners wanted to get a map of the area that the Wi-Fi will cover. The County Manager will get this information for the June 23rd meeting. Commissioner Dickerson wants to be sure these funds will be used for this purpose.

Then they moved on to the Public Schools' request. The State requires the County to earmark certain funds for mental health. County Manager Miller wanted to give some funds to the school system that in the past they have given to Cardinal Health. Commissioner Dickerson

asked about the Elementary SRO position. That position is grant funded so it will remain. Commissioners Carter wanted to reduce the amount of the Capital Outlay request from the public school. County Manager Miller said this money is from Article 40 and 42, which is restricted for school capital use. That is all we can use that money for. Chairman Owen said the public schools have requested more Capital Outlay, but we have not fully granted their request. Then Chairman Owen called the commissioners attention back to the personnel request and the board agreed to leave the personnel request in. They unanimously agreed to leave teacher supplements out. Chairman Owen explained that our COVID funds have restrictions and the funds allocated to the school system are also restricted to COVID related transactions. Commissioner McVey asked if we take out the activity bus and landscaping & paving out of the request will that bring the request down enough. The County Manager's recommendation is less than the request the school made. Commissioner Oestreicher said the manager's request is a bucket of money. The County Manager said thank you to Commissioner Oestreicher because that was the point he wanted to make. Once the public schools receive the funds, the school will determine what they spend the funds on. Commissioner Hall suggested that we give them \$300,000 and let them request the remaining balance if it is needed. The Board agreed to this amount. Commissioner Hall said he wanted to look at the ADM (average daily membership) for the school system and fund them based on their attendance. This will lower the local contribution request. The attendance has decreased over 300 over the past 5 years, which is 14%. Commissioner Hall said their fund balance continues to grow because they have not used all the funds allocated in years past.

RECESS

The Board recessed for 5 minutes and reconvened at 12:15 pm.

County Manager Miller understands that the Board has many concerns about the public schools' request, and he feels that he needs to get some answers for them. The County Manager would like to bring this section back at the next budget work session. The Board agreed to come back to the public schools' request.

Then Chairman Owen moved on to the Organizational request. Commissioner Hall said they may could approve another amount for some of the organizations if they could use American Rescue Plan Act funds. County Manager Miller agreed and said maybe some TDA funds could be used as Chairman Owen had suggested. The Commissioners agreed to give the organizations what the County Manager suggested. They recommended that the Thomas Day House use TDA funds. The Commissioners needed more information on the camera security system requested from the Horticulture Club, so we will bring this request back at the next work session. The Commissioners agreed to allot the Horticulture Club \$6,000 for Landscaping, and County Manager Miller will see if they can add the security cameras to the County's account.

County Manager Miller said right now the Commissioner stand at \$1,645,095 from Fund Balance. This does include the vehicles, but we will address that at our next work session.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Owen convene the Budget Work Session until June 23rd, 2021, at 9 am at CoSquare when we will hear from the Fleet Management company and the Finance Department on the American Rescue Plan Act funds.

June 11, 2021