

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

March 18, 2024
OTHERS PRESENT

Jeremiah Jefferies, Chair
Finch Holt, Vice Chair
John Dickerson
Ethel Gwynn
Rick McVey
Frank Rose
Tim Yarbrough

Scott Meszaros, County Manager
Melissa Williamson, Deputy County Manager
Jennifer Hammock, Finance Director
Russell Johnston, County Attorney
Carla Smith, Clerk to the Board

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in a Regular Meeting on Monday, March 18, 2024 at 6:30 pm at the Gunn Memorial Library.

WELCOME:

Chairman Jefferies called the meeting to order, and welcomed everyone to the Caswell County Board of Commissioners meeting on March 18, 2024. Then all paused for a moment of Silent Prayer, and the Board of Commissioners and all the guest in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

John Claggett: Good Evening, my name is John Claggett. I reside at 108 Jaye Lane in Providence, North Carolina. I am a Caswell County resident I would like to bring your attention to the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act that was signed into law in 2017 and the Governor's Proclamation of March 29th as Vietnam Veterans Day two years ago. Here's a brief summary of who those veterans are:

They're the old guys that volunteer their time:

- to deliver your Meals on Wheels in conjunction with your Senior Center.
- to build ramps for the needy in conjunction with your Senior Center.
- to decorate your Square for Independence Day and Flag Day.
- to help fund raise and build a Veterans Memorial that you now claim as a tourist attraction without using a cent of public funds.
- to assist with the annual Christmas Parade and Hoe Down.
- to sponsor Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies.
- to work the polls for your elections.
- six never came home whose names are inscribed on your tourist attraction.

So why are these individuals, all inclusive, so repeatedly unrecognizable from the Caswell Board of County Commissioners as their merits and service are nowhere to be found on either of your March scheduled meeting agendas. I'm not speaking on behalf of veterans. I'm speaking on behalf of the public. I thank you for your time, and most assuredly I thank them for theirs, and would encourage you to do the same.

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RECOGNITIONS:

Commissioner Rose: I have a couple of recognitions. I'd like to recognize a few people and departments. As the Board was well aware back in March the night the vehicle ran into Co-Square building causing extensive damage prior to destruction. I'd like to thank the following: Yanceyville Fire Department, Providence Fire Department, Leasburg Fire Department, Anderson Fire Department, Yanceyville's Fire Chief, who was actually the scene Commander that night, as well as Assistant Fire Marshall Kenneth Everett. Their quick response prevented the possibility of us losing that building as well as several adjacent buildings that connected to it. I'd also like to thank our Maintenance Department personnel, especially our Director Mr. R.D. Hayes, Solid Waste for bringing up a container that night and assisting with the clean-up, Emergency Management, North Carolina State Highway Patrol, Caswell County Sheriff's Office, Caswell County EMS, Caswell County School Maintenance Director Alan Poteat, who was actually on scene that night as a fireman but he assisted, and Ace Home and Building Center owners Brian Lunsford and Cory Thompson. They opened their business up that night so the Maintenance staff could get lumber there to shore that structure back up. Last but not least our Deputy County Manager Melissa Williamson and HR Director Ashley Powell. They worked hard over the weekend contacting the insurance companies, seeing that protocol was followed, and to see that our staff was assisted with getting what they needed back in here. Great example of our employees and volunteers working together in such a situation. I'd like for them to know we thank them.

Chairman Jefferies: I'd just like to say I was there that night. I also want to thank Rick McVey. He was there also on the scene when I got there operating with the Fire Department. So I congratulate you for bringing that up. I was but thank you. Thank all of you.

AGENDA:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner McVey and seconded by Commissioner Rose and **carried unanimously** to approve the agenda. (Ayes: Commissioners Holt, Gwynn, Yarbrough, Rose, McVey, Dickerson, and Jefferies)

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. March 4, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

A **motion** was made by Commissioner McVey and seconded by Commissioner Gwynn and **carried unanimously** to approve the consent agenda. (Ayes: Commissioners Holt, Gwynn, Yarbrough, Rose, McVey, Dickerson, and Jefferies)

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

GUNN MEMORIAL LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD:

Library Director, Patrick Fitzgerald, said good evening Chairman, members of the Board. Tonight I'm going to request that we reinstate the library board as it was prior to August of 2023 when the board was dissolved. I'm happy to give more background information, if needed, or answer any questions.

Commissioner Yarbrough said Mr. Chairman, if I might. Can you tell us the difference between the Library Advisory Board and Friends of the Library? Mr. Fitzgerald said of course. Yes, so the Friends of the Library is actually a designated 501c3 nonprofit. So they appoint their own board and find their own board. They don't really have any official capacity as a county organization, as a board, or otherwise. They operate completely independently as a 501c3. So we wouldn't have any ability to appoint members to their board. Commissioner Yarbrough said but what does Friends of the Library do compare to the committee you won't reinstate is really what I'm asking. Mr. Fitzgerald said yes. I'm sorry. The Friends operate in a support capacity. A lot of that being fundraising and helping out with programs, which is an aspect that a Library Advisory Board really doesn't get into in any way, shape, or form as far as the fundraising. So there really is a separation of what the two do. It's common for libraries to have a Friend of the Library Board. It's also common for them to have an Advisory Board, but not all libraries have an Advisory Board. But in no case that I'm aware of are the two of the same thing. Commissioner Yarbrough said do you have volunteers that want to serve on his board? Mr. Fitzgerald said that's going to take some work. Commissioner Yarbrough said I didn't know if previous members had shown any interest in coming back. Mr. Fitzgerald said I am not even going to contact anybody until after the meeting. I haven't put it out there yet.

Chairman Jefferies said I'm thinking in some of this literature that you had out, I think the board will be appointed by the County Commissioners. Mr. Fitzgerald said yes. Commissioner Yarbrough said just like all the other county boards. Chairman Jefferies said right, and I think it was asking us to appoint a board. Commissioner Gwynn said we make recommendations for all of them? The entire board or certain slots? Commissioner Yarbrough said I believe it would be just like other boards that apply. The Clerk said yes, they would have to apply. We would put it on the website and in the newspaper that the board was being reinstated, and then they would send us applications. Then I would bring those names to the Board.

Vice Chairman Holt said the vote would be to reinstate the advisory board? Commissioner Yarbrough said yes that is what he is asking for. The Library Advisory Board, I think I'm reading this right, and Friends of the Library would be completely separate. Mr. Fitzgerald said correct. Absolutely. At this point as far as the state of North Carolina is concerned, we don't have a Library Advisory Board. They don't consider what was put in place at that time to be a legitimate representation of a library advisory board.

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A **motion** was made by Commissioner Yarbrough and seconded by Commissioner McVey and **carried unanimously** to reinstate the Library Advisory Board. (Ayes: Commissioners Yarbrough, Rose, Holt, Gwynn, Dickerson, McVey, and Jefferies)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION:

Wright Archer III said thank you Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. Tonight I'd like to start out by introducing Jeremy Delapp. He's our new District Engineer replacing Jason Julian. So Jeremy's got 22 years' experience in the district office in maintenance, and so I think we're very fortunate to have him coming in. I just wanted to really introduce you to him to have a face with the name. Secondly, thank you for passing the resolution at the last meeting for the Doll Branch Road. I know we discussed that several, I think, months ago. We were fortunate to find funding for that. So we're anxious to get that project started. So if there's any questions, we like to answer any of them that you have.

Vice Chairman Holt said I appreciate you finding funding for that.

Commissioner Rose said I got one question. Highway 86 North Bridge, looks like it's on schedule. Mr. Delapp said I heard before I left the office, within a month they're going to be switching over. So yes, I think it's progressing pretty good.

Chairman Jefferies said on 62 going North to Milton, that road got all these high spots in it that almost shake your car apart. Have we got any plans for that? Mr. Delapp said not at the moment. We need to figure out what happened there because it was resurfaced not too long ago, and yes, I know what you're talking about with bumps. I'll follow up with that.

Vice Chairman Holt asked are there any plans in the future in Caswell right now? Any projects coming up? Mr. Delapp said well we got some AST getting ready to start up next week. That's March 26th. That's left over from last year, and there's another few projects that's on out a good way. Vice Chairman Holt said AST is what? Mr. Delapp said it's like tar and gravel. I'm sorry, and what we can do is start providing a list just to add to the minutes of project updates and kind of schedules where we are on things. We have a sit rep that I get once a week for our projects, but I'll be glad to provide that. Then we will also have the upcoming projects, existing projects, and schedules or kind of timeline where we are, then the upcoming kind of near future projects, and then projects that we have scheduled out and any other spot safety projects like that. I know we have a couple that we're looking at right now. some locations on 86 where we got some offset. Instead of a signal, we're looking at doing something that is a safety project. So we'll be able to come back at any time to give you an update. We'll glad to.

Commissioner Yarbrough said you mentioned signal. I believe I mentioned to you last time you were here, 86 and 119 and 86 and 49. Have you done any checking? Mr. Archer said they've studied that, and it just doesn't warrant signals right now, but we won't give up on that. Commissioner Yarbrough said that's right.

Chairman Jefferies asked are there any more question? Hearing none he thanked Mr. Archer and Mr. Delapp.

ACTION ITEMS:

NAMI LIBRARY GRANT:

Library Director, Patrick Fitzgerald, said I'm up again. The National Alliance on Mental Illness and the Chamber of Commerce approached me about wanting to do a very small grant project that would involve the National Alliance providing us with about a couple dozen books and asking us put on a program geared towards children and mental illness. I'm recommending that we approve the grant as it was presented to us.

Chairman Jefferies said that grant was for \$750 with no match, if I'm right? Mr. Fitzgerald said no match. Chairman Jefferies asked if there were any question from the Board? What's the pleasure of the Board?

A **motion** was made by Commissioner McVey and seconded by Commissioner Gwynn and **carried unanimously** to accept the library grant. (Ayes: Commissioners Yarbrough, Rose, Holt, Gwynn, Dickerson, McVey, and Jefferies)

RADIO EQUIPMENT GRANT:

E-911 Director, Kenneth Everett, said thank you Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. Tonight I'm coming here to talk about a radio equipment grant that we so graciously got from the North Carolina 911 Board. We put in for three portable radios to sit on each of our consoles that we are approved for, and we were awarded that last month. The cost is \$24,992.67, which all of it 100% is fully refundable back from the 911 Board; we just have to put the funding up initially to make the purchase. We have from now until February of 2025 to get that completed. So it's a 15-month project all together. Once the radios arrive, we'll send all our paperwork in and that project will be refunded back to us. So I'm asking for approval for that and the contract to be signed. It's due April 1st, and then after that we're eligible to go ahead, make our order for our radios, and get that taken care of. Then we could allocate the funding in the next budget year if the Board choses.

Chairman Jefferies said I understand this. One thing I'm not clear on. Are you asking that the County pay the \$24,992 and get reimbursed later? Mr. Everett said yes sir. That's how it works. When we order the radios and they come in, we will make the initial payment. Then we submit the paperwork right after, and they will reimburse us for that full amount.

Vice Chairman Holt asked who was it you said would reimburse us? Mr. Everett said the North Carolina 911 Board.

Commissioner Dickerson said what do the radios do that the current radios do not do? Mr. Everett said so these are three, these type that we put in for are multiband so they cover a UHF and an 800 Viper frequency. So they set on each one of our designated consoles as a backup. So if our radio system goes down and another 911 Center takes our calls, they're able to communicate back to us without having to use the phone. Let's say the phone was to go down as

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well, that gives us a backup. It also gives us the State Operating Emergency Channels that you're able to talk to. So the first Thursday of the month, they do a Statewide radio check for all the PSAPs in the state, and those gives you another option. They call in and you have to actually pick up and announce that you have radio capability, which we do not have at the current time.

Chairman Jefferies said are there any more questions from the Board members. I understand this money can only be used for this grant. Mr. Everett said yes sir. That's correct. Only the initial payment up front. Chairman Jefferies asked if there were any more question from the Board?

Vice Chairman Holt said Jennifer, do we have the money to do this at this time? Finance Director, Jennifer Hammock said yes, we do.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Yarbrough and seconded by Commissioner McVey and **carried unanimously** to accept the grant. (Ayes: Commissioners Yarbrough, Rose, Holt, Gwynn, Dickerson, McVey, and Jefferies)

HEALTH INSURANCE RATES:

County Manager Meszaros said so at the last meeting, we had to notify them about competing with the health insurance premium change. Well come to find out, we actually have to have the breakout known before budget time because they have to program all the software in order for us to do the online virtual process that we've gone through after COVID. It saves a lot of time and expense in all of the staff having to come in to do that virtually and online. So we have Mr. Dave Costa with us tonight. I worked with Dave for a couple years, and he is kind of the numbers guru. So we are presenting that to you this evening, and he can kind of walk you through the scenarios in your packet. I think the simplest way to look at it is if you look at the initial sheets. At the very bottom on the left you can see what the current County contribution is per employee, and then there's a whole array of scenarios. You can break it out and you can kind of custom tailor it almost any way you wish. That gives you a general sense of what it's going to versus what it is currently and how that breakout is paid for. The total impact is around \$100,000 approximately. So how they do that, whether the county picks up that full \$100,000 or if there's a cost share of some percentage, we just need to get a determination on how you would like to do that proceeding. So we've invited Dave. Thank you, sir. So if you don't need any more explanation, he's here. He's an expert in all this, and I appreciate him being available.

Chairman Jefferies said are there any questions for Mr. Meszaros? County Manager Meszaros said or for Mr. Costa.

Commissioner Gwynn said is this the same insurance all County employees use in different departments? Ashley Powell said yes ma'am. Commissioner Gwynn said okay. Are we... how do we... I know you're requesting certain things that we pay for. How about other county employees, are we doing that with them as well or just you all? County Manager Meszaros said so this is all employees that are under the county umbrella. This is just health insurance. So the dental, the vision, and all the other options are not included in this increase. They do manage some of that as well, but that's the raises and increases. Some of those decrease this year because

of the caps and how the plan users were doing last year. This is only for medical. So Dave actually does all of the entities in the NCHIP program, and it's an array of how they provide benefits. Most of that's determined by your size and by the number of people in the plan. But being grouped with them, we went through that on the initial presentation. This is kind of how do you want to break out the payment part, and he's here to really get into the weeds, if you need to, about how to do that. Or they give us suggestions, and we bring that to you so it's easier to kind of take the middle person out.

Commissioner Yarbrough said question for Ashley or Jennifer, I'm not sure who needs to answer it. Are all your County employees that are on a base plan, let me rephrase that. Are all County Employees, regardless of what plan they're on, whether they're on the base plan or the high buy-up there is, are they receiving the same financial benefit? Ashley Powell said correct.

Commissioner Yarbrough said everybody's on the same? Ashley Powell said correct, and that's what we're aiming for this year too. That way everybody seems or gets the same equal amount of benefit across the board. Commissioner Yarbrough said regardless of what the Board decides as far as... Ashley Powell said numbers, we're going to keep it... Commissioner Yarbrough said but everybody will still be receiving an equal benefit. If they buy up, it just cost them more out of pocket. Ashley Powell shook her head. Commissioner Yarbrough said okay. Then I'm looking at these charts, Dave, I guess I need to talk to you maybe. These charts here that are showing the base plan and go on down there to the buy-up plan. I don't see the cost per employee. Am I missing something here? I see what the total is but not per employee. David Costa said so I think if you focus on page two that's numbered here, it shows the combined plans at the bottom. It shows the aggregate numbers, but right above it, it does break out the per employee cost. For example, page two is an example that assumes that the county takes on all the increase and thus leaves the employee contribution amounts the same. But you could see once again on page two, the middle section shows an employee today on employee only at \$42.45, and it remains \$42.45.

Commissioner Dickerson said is there any way you can put that on the board where we can have you point out on the PowerPoint what you're talking about. Mr. Costa said I sure can. Ashley said where it says employee. Commissioner Yarbrough said I was looking in the black for it.

Dave Costa said I look at these every day, so if I need to slow down, just stop me. But to my point, page two here shows the buy-up plan. This is an example where the county eats the whole increase and the employees do not. So that equates to a \$33 increase for the county, and you see that on the bottom rates right here. \$673 that flat amount goes up to \$708. So they're taking on the whole increase, and you'll see that the employee portions stay the same. So once you add the employee and the county portion together, it equals that total funding rate. So really it's just showing basically a flat \$33 increase on all of these tiers to fund the \$100,000 that needs to be funded to cover the expenses on the plan next year. So the other example to look at, I'm jumping to page four here, but this is an example that's more of a 50/50 type split between the increase. So once again the total increase being \$100,000, this basically puts \$55,000 of that on the county and \$45,000 of that on the employees through payroll deductions. You see that in this example

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where the county piece instead of going up \$33 it's only going up about \$21 or \$20 or so here. Right. Then the employee portion, it's a little bit mixed with the increases to get everything right. But for example, I could play around with these further, but it achieves the same outcome. So it's about a \$20 increase for employee only, about \$20 or a little bit less than \$20 for spouse coverage here, \$20 for a child, about \$18 for children, and about \$30 for family coverage. When you add all of those together and focus on these combined plans at the bottom, you'll see the cost total going up \$100,000. That's why \$2.25 million is a new total and \$2.15 million is the old total. Of that \$100,000 increase, you could see the employees going up by \$45,000 in total and the county going up by \$55,000 in total. So once again just an example where we're splitting the increase versus the county eating the full increase.

Commissioner Yarbrough said so going back to the numbers from the last meeting, and I don't have them in front of me but Mr. Rose does. I think I remember that if we went 50/50 that the employees cost would go from \$15 to \$25. Am I right? Ashley Powell said yes. Commissioner Yarbrough said for the base plan. Mr. Costa said yep. Right here. Yes, sir. Ashley Powell said that's on page three and four.

Commissioner Yarbrough said so question for you, Jennifer. If the Board chose to go 50/50, on the base plan employee only, employees are going to pay \$25 a month compared to \$15 they're paying now. Correct? The total cost to the county, if we go that route, is a million. Am I looking at that right? At the bottom? Mr. Costa said that's just on the base plan. I would focus on the total at the bottom of these plans. Because the combined plans together, the base and the buy up, I think that once again that shows the \$100,000 in total. \$45,000 on the employees and \$55,000 on the county.

Commissioner Rose said the buy up plan is optional. Ashley Powell said it's optional. Yes. Commissioner Rose said so if employees wanted to buy up, they can. If they don't want to buy up, they don't have to.

Commissioner Yarbrough said but regardless of which plan they choose, let me make sure I'm understanding. Regardless they all receive the same financial benefit; I guess you could call it. Ashley Powell said so if you look on the chart, the rate sheet, as Dave has it highlighted, you'll see the same amount that goes down that's the funding that Caswell County is funding to each individual employee. It originally was \$673 and some change and this scenario right here, we're looking at going to the \$692.50. Commissioner Yarbrough said okay.

Vice Chairman Holt said you all remember last year we absorbed the whole increase.

Chairman Jefferies said I have a question. It's just \$25 for an employee or \$45 I mean. That's all it will go up a month for each employee. Well I'm thinking about it, if I have a family, is my insurance going to be more. Ashley Powell said yes. So if you look down on the rate sheet you will see it goes down. There's employee only, employee plus spouse, child, children, and family. They're different tiers. So if you look at 25 and work your way down, the family cost \$1,150 with this 50/50 scenario a month.

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Commissioner Yarbrough said we currently only have one employee and spouse. Am I looking at that right? Ashley Powell said so that's on the base. If you flip it, you've got the buy up and the base here. Commissioner Yarbrough said okay. Dave Costa said each have one. Each have one yes. Ashley Powell said so we currently only have 243 active members on the plan.

Commissioner Yarbrough said but on the buy up plan, the employee and family, we have two. Am I looking at that right? Ashley Powell said correct. Commissioner Yarbrough said they are paying close to \$1,200 a month. Ashley Powell said correct.

Commissioner Dickerson said that's even worse than the private sector. I've had these kind of premiums for many, many years with smaller employers. It's nothing special as with what's going on here with the county. This is across the board.

Commissioner Yarbrough asked what was it last year. Do you recall? Ashley Powell said the increase? I think it was 2. Dave may can help. I think it was 2.2 or 2.6. Dave Costa said I am pulling it up. Give me one second here. Commissioner Yarbrough said but we agreed to take on all of that. Correct? Vice Chairman Holt said it was basically \$15. Dave Costa said that's correct. There was a very small increase last year. So let me just zoom in here to show you. The overall increase was 3.3%. It took our total funding from 2.14 up to 2.24. So that's an increase of 60... \$70,000. Of that the county took most of that increase. The employees took a very small increase, and you could see that up here with the buy up plan. So for example last year in 2022-23 plan year, they paid \$41.57. It went up about a dollar; it went up more on the spouse. So there were increases last year, but it was mostly bore by the county.

Commissioner Dickerson said how did that occur because I remember we had a long debate over this, and we were going to cover all of the employees increase last year. So how did they wind up with any of it because part of that was that we wouldn't be able to continue doing that every year in the future. So I'm kind of curious as to how we passed a resolution to take all the cost, and they wound up having to pay part of their own insurance increase. Maybe I'm remembering wrong. Was that what we did? Vice Chairman Holt said yes. Mr. Costa said I think it was the employee only rate you're talking about. So the folks that are covering just employee only, they stayed at \$15. There was no increase to them last year, but you will see there was increases to the other tiers. So the decision was made to keep the employee flat at \$15, but otherwise those other increases were bore by the employees. So for example family coverage, you can see the jump here, and spouse coverage you can see the jump here. Finance Director, Jennifer Hammock said and also Commissioners some departments that have state funding, the state is going to cover some of their insurance as well. So that will take some off of that \$100,000 that the county would be paying. I'm not exactly sure what percentage that is, but estimating that, it's probably at least around \$20,000 that the state would be covering for those employees.

Chairman Jefferies said so my understanding from you, if we, the county, took all of it, it would be about \$100,000. Finance Director Hammock said it would end up being a little less than \$100,000 once the state pays their portion. Chairman Jefferies said I just want to preach a little

bit, but not very much. I had to pay for my insurance, and I'm paying \$550 now at 89 years old. But we got to realize that we are not playing our employees a lot. Everybody paying more than we are. You know. Adding this to their payroll, it's going to hurt. We don't want our people just so they can't live. We all know what the cost living is. My suggestion would be to just let the county absorb this. It's just my opinion. I'm only one vote, but that's the way I see it because we want our employees to feel like we do care. It's the only thing I've got to say, and I'm through. the floor is open for someone else.

Commissioner Gwynn said what percent of employees does the State cover. Do you have any idea? Finance Director Hammock said I'm not sure the percentage, but I can tell you that the Health Department, DSS, and any of those departments that are partially funded by the state, they're going to be covering some of that health insurance cost. Commissioner Gwynn said that's pretty good for the Health Department. Finance Director Hammock said that's probably close to 90 people.

Commissioner Yarbrough said anything where the state pays a portion of the salary, they going pick up a portion of the increase. Finance Director Hammock said yes. Commissioner Gwynn said and you think it will be around \$20,000. Finance Director Hammock said estimated yes. Commissioner Yarbrough said is this something they've been doing previously? Mrs. Hammock said yes.

Commissioner Rose said irregardless of which ways we go, where would this money come from? Finance Director Hammock said it would be a budgeted item in the 2025 budget year. So that is basically wherever we decide to fund it. It would come from where we normally fund our health insurance, our dental, and expenses like that. It would just be a budgeted item.

Commissioner Dickerson said so it's an increase to the overall expenditures for the county. Mrs. Hammock said yes. Commissioner Dickerson said and thereby, just put it in layman's term, it's got to come out of the taxpayers' pocket. I don't go along with absorbing this whole increase because health insurance has been on an upward path for many years. And in the private sector, as I said, I was paying \$1,200 a month for family coverage. I am sympathetic to the County employees, but if we don't start passing along some of these cost increases, it just keeps morphing and morphing. You see the numbers on the board, it's just going to keep on going up. We said last year when we talked about this we covered the increase, but going forward we talked about there were no guarantees for continuing to do so. At some point in time, we got to draw a line in the sand. We got to start passing some of this cost on. That's my opinion on the topic.

Commissioner Yarbrough said what can you live with Mr. Dickerson? Percentage wise. Commissioner Dickerson said what you have in mind? The room was filled with laughter. Commissioner Yarbrough said I want to see if we're on the same mindset because I'm thinking that we're going have to ask the employees to pick up part of it.

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Commissioner Gwynn said what if we did it 50/50? What would that look like? I'm not looking at all these numbers right now? Commissioner rose said the employees, if I'm not mistaken, would pay an additional \$10 a month for employee only. Commissioner Gwynn said okay. What would that family, they talked about that one? Vice Chairman Holt said that wouldn't come to play. Commissioner Rose said it would. Dave Costa said family would be around \$25 in the example I've put together here. So this is the base plan we're speaking to. It's going from \$1,125 to \$1,150. So a \$25 increase to family. This is \$18 or so on children. So I made these numbers nice solid round numbers, but you can see it averages between \$10 and \$20 for the increase per month.

Commissioner Rose said I mean everything's typically going up. We got a letter the other day, and I near bout fell out of the chair.

Commissioner Dickerson said come on now fellows one of you all have to throw a line in the water and fish. We can't all be looking at water; we got to wade in there. Commissioner Yarbrough said you throw it out there, and we'll see what bites.

Vice Chairman Holt said I fought this hard last year and lost. I got nothing. So I mean if I can get half, that's better than what I got last year. Commissioner Yarbrough said I can support that.

Commissioner Dickerson said I can live with that.

Chairman Jefferies said I mean we got to look at it, and I understand what you all are saying. You want to pay some, but fellows, we know that they not making money. The county staff. We got to accept that we just train them and they go somewhere else to get more money and insurance rates that are much cheaper. So that's why I threw that out at you. The votes count.

Commissioner Dickerson said I appreciate your thoughts on it Mr. Jefferies, but I'm looking at the numbers going from \$15 to \$25. I don't think it's going to break anybody, and it kind of sets a precedent that we can't keep absorbing all the increases every year for the insurance. Chairman Jefferies said I understand where you coming from too, but the point is what I'm trying to say is at the end of that payroll, their check ain't like the rest of them. Everything is going up. We can't continue with put a lot more on the employee to pay and expect them stay here and do the job. That's what I'm saying. She said it wouldn't be \$100,000; it would probably be \$80,000. \$80,000 ain't going to kill the taxpayers. That's all I got to say. I'm finish. I'm going to call for the vote.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Dickerson and seconded by Commissioner Gwynn and **carried 6-1** to have the county absorb half the proposed increase and have the employees absorb the other half. (Ayes: Commissioners Yarbrough, Rose, Holt, Gwynn, Dickerson, and McVey. Nays: Commissioner Jefferies)

County Manager Meszaros said thank you, and thank you Dave for being with us and assisting us. Dave Costa said thank you guys.

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RESOLUTION ALLOWING FIREWORKS:

County Manager Meszaros said so last year Shannon Petri in our Inspections Department brought to your attention that under General statute, state law, you have to pass by County resolution in order to have fireworks displays. So this is the resolution; it's an open-ended resolution. So this allows for the Town of Yanceyville, as I see Mayor Foster here, allows them to do their own process, and it allows us to do that permitting should we decide to do that through the county. I do want to thank Shannon and Russell for helping put this together. We would recommend you approve it. I don't know what the fee is going to be for public fireworks. We probably don't charge a fee for the fire department, but you never know. If someone wants to do a private event, they can come and ask for a permit. So I would recommend that you approve this. For the Fire Marshals and the Fire Chiefs, it does play into effect with Statewide Fire Ban issues. So you'd have to have controlled launch, if you do have those conditions. Chairman Jefferies said I think we had this before for the Fourth of July.

Commissioner Dickerson said what is the permit process? I mean what do they have to do to get the permit? County Manager Meszaros said so we have to create that. So you'd have to come into the Inspections Department. They'll create a form and a minor fee. It's probably like \$25 or \$50 fee depending on what the Board sets at a later date. So they have to make sure that they have a million dollars of Insurance Liability coverage. They have to make sure that the fire departments are notified where they're going to have the event so that all the due diligence is appropriate to launch the event. A lot of times they do them near a lake, or they do them somewhere that's controllable so that the fire apparatus can suppress any kind of issues they might have. So they just want to make sure that are they insured? They have a special permit that the people that launch have to have in order to do that. So we just make sure that they did all the state and local requirements.

Vice Chairman Holt asked County Attorney Russel Johnston, did you prepare this? Attorney Johnston said actually Shannon, the Building Inspector, actually found a draft, and Scott and I were involved in modifying it in this current state.

Chairman Jefferies asked what's the pleasure of the Board?

A **motion** was made by Commissioner McVey and seconded by Commissioner Dickerson and **carried unanimously** to approve the Resolution allowing inspections to issue permits for fireworks. (Ayes: Commissioners Yarbrough, Rose, Holt, Gwynn, Dickerson, McVey, and Jefferies)

FY 2024 BUDGET AMENDMENT # 14:

Jennifer Hammock, Finance Director, said so budget amendment number 14, we have some background information there. So this is requested to cover the repairs to CoSquare following the car accident that we recently had. The preliminary estimates from the insurance adjuster placed the overall cost to repair CoSquare at \$500,000. The Maintenance Department has already received several estimates from vendors, and they are ready to begin repairs. However, funds must be allocated before any payments to vendors can begin. So we are recommending in order

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to expedite the repairs and get CoSquare back to operational status, their tenants back into their workspaces, and displaced employees back into their offices, approving this budget.

Vice Chairman Holt said okay. Who? This the insurance company saying it's \$500,000. Finance Director Hammock said yes. Vice Chairman Holt said did we find out if that company, if he had insurance? Ashley Powell said he did but we we're unsure at this moment. So NCACC, our third party vendor, Sedgwick will handle all that with their attorneys and the insurance carrier because they're unsure with it being criminal if it'll cover at all. But either way no matter what our insurance will cover it. Vice Chairman Holt then said R.D. Hayes is going to be heading this up. You're not hiring a contractor to do this. Ashley said we have a building consultant who's coming in and handing the insurance, and R.D.'s here. If you have questions with that. Vice Chairman Holt said yes, can you help me out R.D.? R.D. Hayes, Maintenance Director said right now as it stands, we worked about 111 hours in a week to get the building back up and get it safe. I had to bring in a contractor, a licensed contractor, because in the state of North Carolina it has to be a licensed contractor to ensure the safety of the building. I had to have all the old existing wire... It actually just crisp and burnt all the wiring up in the conduit in the front of the building from the fire. So I had to have it tied off from my licensed electrician on Sunday because we did not want the main power cut from that building. We wanted to keep power on it because that would have opened up a whole other workload for us. But right now as it stands, in the past five days, we have secured the building. We have cleaned the building; we have redone the wiring in the front, put in temporary lighting, inventoried and safe packaged all the salvageable furniture inside the building, and Bio-clean is there now. We're going to start soda blasting the ceiling to save the paint and integrity inside the building without trying to paint it. But the insurance adjuster come out, and the engineer was here Friday. They do have a person that takes charge and protects the insurance company and us. It's an outside guy. What he does is he comes in and draws a blueprint plan, and basically just sets everything up and goes in between me and the adjuster and back and forth until we can get it figured out.

Vice Chairman Holt asked who is the licensed contractor. The licensed contractor is Dale Simpson. He's a retired fireman from the City of Burlington. At that present time, he was the only one that I could get in touch with, and I actually got his number from the adjuster.

Commissioner McVey said are we still going to have to replace some of that roof? Maintenance Director Hayes said no sir. We peeled back 20 foot of the TPO, and I had two different roofing companies to come out. We just put that roof on a year and a half ago. So what I did is I contacted the man that put it on and got him to peel it back, and give me a letter of explanation stating that it wasn't nothing wrong with it to keep the manufacturer warranty. Then I contacted an outside roofing company to come and check in behind him so I'd have two letters from two different sources from two totally different Companies. We did have to put back the roofing drains. I had to have that emergency done just because of the rain they were calling for. I didn't want no further damage within the building. So right now as it stands, we do have outstanding bills with some contractors that are already vendors with the county that we need to try to take

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care of because we started Saturday night at 9:24 pm, and we stopped Monday afternoon at 8:00 pm at night. So them guys really worked hard for what they got.

Commissioner Rose said I have a question. I see a \$1,000 deductible. Mr. County Attorney will you be representing us at any point in time with these insurance companies? Attorney Johnston said well Commission Rose, and Ashley can correct me if I'm wrong. I think typically Sedgwick Insurance, who provides our policy have attorneys that will advocate our behalf. But I'd gladly be involved. Commissioner Rose said here's the problem I got. They claim that this gentleman was being criminally charged, and they may not pay. I don't understand it. If I drove a car, was intoxicated, and I had a wreck and kill somebody; it goes automatically to criminal. My insurance is going pay. If not pay more than the Insurance.

Vice Chairman Holt said I can understand them not wanting to pay for his car. Commissioner Rose said I can understand that. Ashley said they haven't officially said it yet. They just said that it could be a possibility, but they're in the process because we're still waiting on the Highway Patrol report. All we've got is the exchange form. So they're working on pulling that report and getting all that, and then they're working together.

Commissioner Rose said I totally understand what you're saying, but he intentionally...His actions intentionally caused that damage. So my thing was I just don't want them to say well it's a municipality, let their insurance pay. If we didn't get but \$300,000 from his insurance, it's \$300,000 more that our insurance doesn't have to pay. Ashley said well they're going to fight to pursue to get them to pay. Commissioner rose said that was the reason I was asking about the attorney because I think sometimes you got to push back a little bit, and say this building was fine until your client ran through this place.

Commissioner Dickerson said during in the rebuild, if I'm not mistaken, didn't a motorcycle go through there a while back? R.D. Hayes said that's what I've heard. That's prior for me being here, but the two the two gentlemen that you all met from the state, I contacted them earlier this week because I think it needs to be some type of protective barrier there. But it has to go through the state because everybody says from the center line up belongs to the state. So what I've done is contact to them because if we put a pillar or something on that concrete, it's like gentleman from the State told me, he said all you're going to be doing is making a catapult. When the car hits it, it's going to launch it instead of that. So I figured I'd go with the state and let them come up with an idea or a solution for us to try to get it resolved, or at least slow down a vehicle that comes towards the building.

County Manager Meszaros said I just want to recognize R.D. publicly because he got in there and took charge. He kept us from tagging out or locking out. If they had tagged out that building and cut the meter, this would not be where it is today. We saved a lot of time. All of our staff that was there, stepped up. It's just very notable of you. R.D. Hayes said it wasn't just me. County Manager Meszaros said but the whole team has done an exceptional job handling this. Thank you.

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Chairman Jefferies asked if there were any more questions.

Commissioner Yarbrough said so Jennifer, you're saying that this budget amendment that you need to approve to pay the vendors for work to be done at CoSquare, but this money will be reimbursed hopefully by the insurance. Finance Director Hammock said every bit of it except for that \$1,000 deductible. Commissioner Yarbrough said hopefully we can get that plus some out of the individual that caused the damage. From his insurance.

Maintenance Director Hayes said I will say this, I've worked with this adjustor of another claim, and he's very laidback and very understanding to everything.

Vice Chairman Holt said what I'd like to say is I know I've talked you (R.D. Hayes) about keeping up your time. Mr. Hayes said yes sir. Vice Chairman Holt said but Scott you need to keep up like if they're having to do things too. County Manager Meszaros said sure. Ashley Powel said so I am. I'm keeping a log of everything that's happened with CoSquare along with you know the inventory and things like that. But I'm also keeping up with time that maintenance, me, or Melissa, or anybody has been involved to total those hours together.

County Manager Meszaros said the documentation, photos, and work that goes into this, it's really been done nicely. Vice Chairman Holt said R.D. has done a fabulous job too. He's got an inch and a half pictures. I appreciate it. Thank you.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Yarbrough and seconded by Commissioner McVey and **carried unanimously** to approve the Budget Amendment #14. (Ayes: Commissioners Rose, Yarbrough, Holt, Gwynn, Dickerson, McVey, and Jefferies)

ELEVATOR REPAIR AT THE COURTHOUSE:

County Manager Meszaros said so the elevator issue. So again even though staff was extremely busy with the CoSquare issues, they stepped up also got the bidders from both companies to give us a turnkey bid on the elevator in the courthouse. They do differ. I know the gentleman said that they were identical. So you have the TKE bid there and the Kone bid. We've done all of the diligence. R.D. has actually contacted, I don't know Josh the secretary's last name I forget, the Secretary of Labor. So we have a letter from the Secretary of Labor and the state/local fire jurisdictions. Sprinklerization is not required. He's gone through and itemized all of the work that needs to be done with electrical, fans, heating and cooling, and all the diligence that was in that packet. The same estimator came out and did the bid for one is actually giving it to the other bidder. I don't know how the prices come in different, but they both got the same information and same numbers. So you have before you a turnkey quote. I didn't speak to them myself; R.D. did all that work. The one company that's significantly lower is actually going to guarantee that they'll be in there in six days I believe. It's going to be a lot quicker than the six weeks. They also have warranties, and they also provide on that third page is a maintenance program. So that's true maintenance not just coming out to inspect every year and do the renewal. So if you have technical questions, I hate to turn it over to R.D. because he's already done so much. These are turnkey and ready for your consideration.

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Commissioner Rose said basically Kone was \$183,578 with 18 weeks on parts and then five weeks that it'll be down. The modernization of TKE is \$148,992.54 excluding sales tax, which if my math is correct that would be 6.75% sales tax \$10,057. So that would bring a total of \$159,049.54. And there's still 18 weeks on parts, but 7 to 10 day down time on the elevator. County Manager Meszaros said yes sir.

Vice Chairman Holt said R.D. he didn't, he really wasn't leaving out anything on this from TKE. Was he? Maintenance Director Hayes said all right what I did is I called Kone, and they met with you all last week. Kone did; the two engineers. Once they got to explaining with you all, they kept talking about some add-ons. After we walked out the meeting, I said that's crazy. You don't give a quote, and not give me a turnkey price. I said how much do you think the add-ons are? They said it'll be 60 Grand. I said no, that ain't going to cut it. So I told them, we've already reached out to another company. I'm going to get with them. So I reached out to TKE. These guys are great. I gave him a crunch and told him he had four days to come up with \$150,000 proposal. So they did, and what he told me is with Kone, it's a 14 to 16 week to order the parts and get them in. Kone wants another two to three months to set it up and do the work. So I called TKE, and said look, you got to sweeten the deal. You got to make it a little better for us. He said look, I can give you the best price we can. He said but I can guarantee you this, 14 to 16 weeks on the parts, and it takes me two weeks to set up the crew. He said I can shut that elevator down on Thursday, and I can open it back up in 7 to 10 days with a North Carolina certificate. We've been using Kone here for years; they're a good group of guys. They've been here every time we've called, but the thing about it is I always try to throw somebody new in the mix. To be honest with you, they're hungry, and they want the work. I mean that's a fair price. When I got the quote today it was around 3:00, and I showed Mr. Holt. I physically texted him and asked is this a turnkey price with no hidden fees. He said absolutely. I'll send it to you in writing in the morning with my letterhead on it. Vice Chairman Holt said he's going overhead also, right? R.D. Hayes said yes. He's going overhead. Basically the elevator companies, like they said, they are union. So prices are about the same and the way they do it, but I don't understand that because that's what they told us. But to me a difference of 30 grand, the prices aren't the same.

Commissioner Rose said we did find out that sprinkler system was not required. Maintenance Director Hayes said yes sir. I have signed letters from Shannon Petry, our Inspection Department, the Fire Marshall, Yuri Dixon, and the Department of Elevators.

Vice Chairman Holt said on the call centers and all that and electrician, is his turn key? R.D. Hayes said it's all in this price right here. There's no hidden fees whatsoever. Vice Chairman Holt said because they weren't covering that. R. D. Hayes said the first Kone estimate that you seen for \$132,000, if you look at page 21 and 22 that's your additions. If you look at the new proposal they sent today with a much higher price, you will notice them pages are gone out of the estimate. So that's their turn key price, and TKE. There's another pamphlet that you got. This elevator stuff is only warrantied for three months. What they've told me, I've actually called about four different elevator companies just to verify that, it is because it's electrical components.

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I said well, that ain't really assuring me nothing. He said well I tell you what I'll do. I'll send you a copy of our gold warranty agreement. It's like a maintenance agreement. He said right now through Kone, you got grease and elbow type of warranty. He said basically we come out and grease it, and you call us when you need us. He said the gold package is a little bit more money, but since we're putting it in, we will service it. He said if you actually read through this warranty, you will actually save money by buying it. To be honest with you, I really didn't have much time to look at it because he sent it to me today at 5:15 so I'm going off his word. But so far from the estimates and stuff, he hadn't lied to me yet. So I got a feeling it's a good warranty. I just need to check into it.

Vice Chairman Holt said I saw something, but I can't find it now. It said jack packing. R.D. Hayes said neither one of these quotes is the jack. Neither one. Vice Chairman Holt said he's repacking the cylinder. R.D. Hayes said they're going to repack it and test it. Both quotes state that. In both of these quotes, they're without a jack. Vice Chairman Holt said right, but he's going to repack it. Mr. Hayes said yes sir. I actually got to see a picture of a jack, and it's like a hydraulic cylinder on the tractor. People repack and do them all the time. If they got a scratch in them or they're bad. but to me I think if we repacked it, we could give it a whirl and see what we got.

Commissioner Rose said it looks like, excuse me, \$24,528.46 is savings with TKE versus Kone. Mr. Hayes said yes sir.

Chairman Jefferies said are there any more questions for R.D. from the Board. Then the Chairman said thank you to the Maintenance Director. I appreciate all you are doing.

Vice Chairman Holt said Scott this is something we need to go ahead and do before budget. County Manager Meszaros said yes.

Commissioner Yarbrough said installation will be in the next fiscal year won't it? Vice Chairman Holt said yes.

Chairman Jefferies said What's the pleasure of the Board. Do you want to go with TKE? This was \$148,992.54.

Commissioner Yarbrough said Mr. Chairman, it doesn't sound like there's much repairing the one we have. A **motion** was made by Commissioner Yarbrough and seconded by Commissioner McVey to go with TKE to replace the elevator in the Courthouse.

Commissioner Rose said it's something we can't get around. Vice chairman Holt said it's something we have to budget. Commissioner Rose said we are stuck because we got to get it fixed.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Yarbrough and seconded by Commissioner McVey and **carried unanimously** to go with TKE to replace the elevator in the Courthouse. (Ayes: Commissioners Yarbrough, Rose, Holt, Gwynn, Dickerson, McVey, and Jefferies)

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CATS DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY:

CATS Director, Melissa Williamson, said the USDOT published and updated a final rule with revisions to 49 CFR Part 40. This regulation is the USDOT's drug alcohol testing regulation. The Board approved updates to our last policy on May 4, 2020, and there have been updates and revisions to the USDOT Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulations 49 CFR Part 40 since this update. We have updated and revised our policy to comply with the new revisions. Mr. McNeil, the Compliance Specialist, at DOT with Integrated Mobility Division has approved our policy. Now we just need for the Board to also approve it. The amendments were made to ensure or to consider the consistency within the DOT by: removing or adjusting reference to the word urine, adding reference to oral fluid, removing and amending some definitions for conformity, other miscellaneous technical changes or corrections, and we also now are required to include two Substance Abuse Professionals instead of one. It's not our procedures of how we're doing the testing, it's just more of the language in the document that has been changed by the 49 CFR Part 40. We just have to have this approved in order to be in compliance with the new regulations.

Chairman Jefferies asked are there any question for Mrs. Williamson? What's the pleasure of the Board?

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Rose and seconded by Commissioner McVey and **carried unanimously** to approve the drug and alcohol policy. (Ayes: Commissioners Yarbrough, Rose, Holt, Gwynn, Dickerson, McVey, and Jefferies)

COUNTY MANAGER'S UPDATES:

County Manager Scott Meszaros said I don't have any specific updates. It's been a long week and a half for the staff, and I just want to commend all of them on the hard work that they do It's much appreciated.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner McVey: This past week I had a constituent call me. I think some of you know I get a lot of calls from constituents. They were very upset about something that took place about a Commissioner screaming at somebody else. This individual, supposed, turned around, looked at the Commissioner, and they said something to them, to that particular individual. There was another Commissioner there that was a witness. The individual that called me wanted to know what could be done about this. The only thing that I knew that could be done would be to call the Ethics Department in Raleigh. So that's what I recommended they do, but I was very ashamed to hear that something like that had gone on.

Commissioner Gwynn: I want to let you know that Dillard Middle School has called and requested that we send a Commissioner, asked if I would come, and also our County Manager. So they're having a Career Day, and I want to thank Carla for making us some brochures to pass out. She has other things too. It will be Wednesday from 8 to 12, I believe. I'm not looking at my

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calendar right now, but in this is all your pictures and what we do. So I think this is real good for middle school.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

- April 1, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting at 6:30 pm at the Gunn Memorial Library

CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made at 7:45 pm by Commissioner McVey and seconded by Commissioner Rose and **carried unanimously** to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, which is hereby acknowledged NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (4). (Ayes: Commissioners Yarbrough, Rose, Holt, Gwynn, Dickerson, McVey, and Jefferies)

ADJOURNMENT:

A **motion** was made at 8:47 pm by Commissioner Yarbrough and seconded by Commissioner Holt and **carried unanimously** to adjourn the meeting. (Ayes: Commissioners Yarbrough, Rose, Holt, Gwynn, Dickerson, McVey, and Jefferies)

Carla R. Smith
Clerk to the Board

Jeremiah Jefferies
Chairman

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