

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session

June 2, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

OTHERS PRESENT

.....

Tim Yarbrough, Chair
 Frank Rose, Vice Chair
 John Claggett
 Greg Ingram
 Tony Smith
 Brian Totten

.....

Scott Whitaker, County Manager
 Melissa Williamson, Deputy County Mgr.
 Renee Paschal, Interim County Mgr.

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina met in a Work Session meeting scheduled on Monday, June 2, 2025 at 5:00 pm at the Historic Courthouse, Courthouse Square, Yanceyville NC.

Welcome:

Chairman Yarbrough called the meeting to order. All were invited to pause for a moment of Silent Prayer and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

Recognitions:

Vice Chair Rose asked everyone to be in prayer for the Johnston family. Attorney Johnston's father passed. Commissioner Smith thanked the Board of Education and staff for inviting the Board of Commissioners to come out to look at critical capital needs.

Agenda:

A. Agenda

Chairman Yarbrough announced that the FY25-26 recommended budget would be discussed as the last item on the agenda.

Chairman Yarbrough introduced the appointment of John Claggett to fill the vacancy of Rick McVey and invited him to come forward to receive the oath of office from the Clerk of Court.

B. Open Session minutes for 5/19/2025

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Vice Chair Rose to approve the Work Session agenda with the change. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion Items:

Danville/Caswell Water and Sewer Services Agreement Amendment

Manager Whitaker referenced the original water and sewer agreement with the City of Danville that dated back to 1990 along with five different amendments that relate to the Cherokee project. A concern is being discussed between the attorneys related to amendments and the timing related to the Cherokee project. A proposed amendment has been written. County Manager Whitaker will get the Board a copy of the proposed amendment tomorrow for consensus. Once there is consensus, the Manager will speak with the Danville Manager for approval. If approved, the item will be on the Caswell County agenda for action on June 16th.

Chairman Yarbrough recalled that the current agreement permits the City of Danville to cut off water with three years' notice. He asked Board members to let the Manager know if there were any concerns.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice Probation Lease (339 Wall St., Rooms 405 {#20} and 406 {#19})

Manager Whitaker stated the item involves two rooms at the Guilford Mills facility. He referenced the lease proposal and facility diagram. The Lease will be reviewed by the Attorney and brought to the Board on June 16th for action. The space will be used by Probation Officers. There is a State statute that requires space for probation officers. The lease is a continuation.

Action Items:

CoSquare Event Policy and Fees

Attorney Johnston and Manager Whitaker had spoken regarding the proposed policy. The proposed policy does not allow political rallies or events promoting specific candidates or parties. After research, the Attorney determined that it was a political decision. The facility is for public use and business use facility. If allowed, there could be undesirable events planned for the facility. The Manager explained that the caveat would be that whatever is done is done uniformly.

Commissioner Claggett asked how the proposed policy would affect the current facility use policy. Ms. Paschal responded that it will not affect the current policy.

Vice Chair Rose did not think it would be an issue if it was just a rented building and there were no tenants, but if there are occupants who lease space, there could be some issues.

Commissioner Totten asked about the process for renting the space. He noted that in the application, there is a description of the type of activity. The Manager stated from an administrative standpoint, if the Board decides that the political rallies will not be an acceptable use, the rule will be no political rallies. He stated that Management will not make a decision and there will be no Manager's discretion. The Board's decision will be to allow or not allow.

Commissioner Smith felt it could get extreme with no controls.

Manager Whitaker discussed the issue of security. It meshes with the request and additional usage. There is a preferred vendor that will provide cameras for \$21,236.48. He asked the Board to consider delaying rentals until cameras were installed if they approved the policy and fee schedule. He noted that funds were available in the current budget. The camera purchase does not have the three-bid requirement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Totten to approve the policy and fee schedule along with the cameras and seconded by Chairman Yarbrough. The motion carried 4-1 (Claggett opposed).

County Manager Updates:

Manager Whitaker stated he is making changes that will work better for citizens to view presentations. He demonstrated how larger wall projection allows in-room attendees to see more presentation detail. Staff is continuing to fill some key vacancies, and the most pressing are the Human Resources Director and CFO.

County Attorney Updates:

Not present

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Smith stated that the largest hurdle is to reconcile the school budget. He recommended reaching out as possible to the school board to encourage them to communicate to determine upcoming needs.

Chairman Yarbrough welcomed Commissioner Claggett to the Board.

FY 25-26 Recommended Budget:

(Continuation of discussion from Budget Work Session)

The Board continued to discuss the school budget. They discussed teachers' supplements. After conferring with several board members, the Chair proposed allocating \$1000 for certified teachers and \$500 for classified staff. That would net a one cent tax increase in the amount of \$240,000.

Commissioner Totten concurred.

Commissioner Ingram suggested allocating half of the bonus at Christmas and the other half at the end of the year. Ms. Paschal stated that the allocation timing would be determined by the school board although the Board could make a recommendation.

Commissioner Smith asked how much was cut from the original request. Ms. Paschal responded that it was approximately \$200,000.

Commissioner Claggett asked about the current status of County funds. Ms. Paschal replied that as of the FY23 audit, the County added to fund balance. A surplus is projected for FY24, but a deficit is projected for FY25. The projections are based on actual spending and revenues.

Ms. Paschal clarified that there were 166 certified teachers and 149 classified staff which equates to 315 school staff.

Commissioner Smith commented that teachers were important to the community and he wanted to do something that was fair to help retain teachers in the County. He felt it was a good compromise.

There was consensus on the supplement.

Operating Budget:

The schools requested \$3,869,047 which is an increase of \$1,089,819 or 39 percent over last years' budget. Ms. Paschal commented that one of the reasons the request is high is because the schools are not appropriating any fund balance. The fund balance is budgeted at \$608,000.

Commissioner Smith commented that there needs to be enough budgeted for the schools to keep them financially healthy, however, he felt there were a number of items submitted that were not the County's responsibility.

Ms. Paschal stated that most counties in North Carolina now were funding more than their legal responsibilities due to State budget cuts for the schools. Counties have had to increase funding to continue operations. She was concerned that the more State functions that the County assumed, when the State increased salaries, a local match would be required for local funding.

Manager Whitaker interjected that he had received updated staff numbers to 398 employees. The breakdown is now 166 certified and 232 classified staff. The new total is \$282,000.

Chairman Yarbrough recommended that the \$1000 certified remain and the remainder of \$74,000 be divided by classified staff and the total remain \$240,000.

There was consensus on the Chair's recommendation.

Discussion resumed on the operating budget. Vice Chair Rose asked for more explanation of the policy leadership and curriculum athletics.

Commissioner Smith suggested leaving the operating budget at \$2.8 million as approved last year plus an inflation percentage increase of 2.1 percent. The allocation would increase by \$58,363 for a total operating budget allocation of \$2,837,592.

There was consensus among the Board.

Ms. Paschal inquired about where the funds would come from. Chairman Yarbrough suggested adding $\frac{1}{4}$ cent to the tax. He stated that in 2018, when the school bond referendum was approved by voters, it was stated that a tax increase may be necessary. The bonds were sold later and the project was completed in 2023. \$644,648 or 2.5 cents on the tax bill was used for the bond. 2.6 cents will be the total for schools.

Ms. Paschal stated that the Board sets the salaries for Manager, Sheriff and Register of Deeds. It is anticipated that the positions will receive the same 1.5 percent as other County employees. The Board concurred with her recommendation. She will prepare the Budget Ordinance for approval on June 16th.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Smith moved, seconded by Commissioner Ingram, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



 Scott Whitaker
 Clerk to the Board



 Tim Yarbrough
 Board Chair