

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Budget Work Session

June 2, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Yarbrough, Chair
Frank Rose, Vice Chair
Finch Holt
Greg Ingram
Tony Smith
Brian Totten

OTHERS PRESENT

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

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina met in a Budget Work Session meeting scheduled on Monday, June 2, 2025 at 3:00 pm at the Gunn Public Library.

Welcome:

Chairman Yarbrough called the meeting to order. He thanked everyone for coming out and called for Interim Manager Renee Paschal to continue with the pending budget items.

Ms. Paschal stated that the items for discussion were Solid Waste fee and the School budget.

The Solid Waste Director stated that he and the Manager revisited the proposed fees for users who were not currently paying solid waste fees and determined they could be lowered to \$55 for availability fee and \$75 for disposal. Everyone would pay the availability fee. The currently paying customers would pay \$130, a \$5 increase. The revenue would be the same. He recommended a \$60/ton for hauling. That would be a \$15/ton break. The Director stated that he would like to put a recycling container in a convenient location for town residents.

Regarding mobile home parks with five units, the Director asked the Board how they wanted to charge. The Chair responded that there were five units and there should be five availability fees—one for each unit. The same would apply to apartment units. There was discussion regarding the fee going to the owner and then is assessed to tenants by the owner. If there is no dumpster on site, the fee would be \$130. An exception could be made for Section 8 housing. There was consensus.

Schools

The Board discussed the tour of the schools to assess capital needs. The Manager shared photos of the findings. Dillard has issues with water running back into the walls from downspouts backing up. North and South have pipes outside the building and can be repaired. Two or three chillers need to be replaced. Updated software for thermostats will not accept the old systems being used at this time. They do not make parts for the current air handlers. The Board discussed issues with downspouts, especially when there are hard rains. There are trees that may have damaged the foundation because they were planted so close to the building and are overgrown.

Chairman Yarbrough commented on the HVAC and roof issues. The Maintenance representative expressed concern about the health and safety of the students.

Vice Chair Rose expressed concern regarding the leaking at the new high school.

Superintendent Stokes compared the 1% and 1.5% increase. Ms. Paschal explained that if you give the money as an increase in salary, every time the State gives an increase, it must be matched and it is very difficult to manage from a budget perspective. She recommended a flat subsidy. The cost for teachers only would be \$443,718.00 for the \$2000 flat supplement.

Commissioner Smith asked about prioritizing the operating budget. Superintendent Stokes responded that once the schools receive the funds, they have to make decisions and prioritize how they are spent. He was not aware of a formula used to determine priorities. Operational and legal fees must come out of County funding and not State.

North and South schools' enrollments are below capacity.

There are \$1.1 million in needed capital projects. Ms. Paschal recommended allocating project money in capital outlay but hold it back until a project ordinance can pay based on when the work is completed. The Superintendent assured the Board that funds allocated would be spent appropriately. Capital spending would be a project ordinance separate from the operating budget. The Board gave consensus for \$1.1 million in capital spending. The schools will use the rest of the funds received from ABC to pay for projects if the County allocates \$1.1 million. After further discussion, the project ordinance will be \$888,000 and the other funds in capital outlay. A breakdown of expenses at schools will be needed for inclusion in the project ordinance.

Ms. Paschal noted that landscaping was not an eligible capital expense.

Chairman Yarbrough recapped the \$888,000 for project ordinance which can come out of capital reserve. There was consensus.

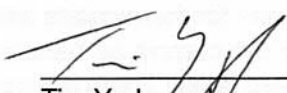
Commissioner Totten spoke about the challenges of keeping teachers in the classroom. He agreed with a supplement. Commissioner Ingram favored a supplement. Commissioner Smith favored a supplement. Vice Chair Rose stated that the County was in the same situation regarding salary increases. He preferred the flat amount.

Ms. Paschal shared an idea that it would require a 2-cent tax increase to fund the teachers supplement. Put Article 46 sales tax back on the ballot for the 2026 primary at ¼ cent. If voters approved the ¼ cents, the 2 cents will come off. The amount would be \$484,000 for a flat rate (\$2,000) supplement for 166 teachers. If the intent is for all employees, the amount will have to be recalculated. There would be a 5-cent tax total increase. The discussion will be continued at the June 2, 2025 Regular Session.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 pm.

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Respectfully submitted by Michelle Parker (*external Clerk contracted to prepare minutes on behalf of Caswell*)


K. Scott Whitaker
Clerk to the Board


Tim Yarbrough
Board Chair