MINUTES – JUNE 22, 2020

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners reconvened in special session at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, June 22, 2020. The meeting was held electronically using Zoom Webinar software. Members present: Rick McVey, Chairman, David J. Owen, Vice Chairman, Sterling Carter, William E. Carter, Nathaniel Hall, Jeremiah Jefferies and Steve Oestreicher. Also present: Bryan Miller, County Manager and Gwen Vaughn, Finance Director. Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board, recorded the minutes.

WELCOME

Chairman McVey reconvened the budget work session.

PROPOSED FY 2020-2021 BUDGET (cont’d)

Chairman McVey asked Ms. Vaughn to give the Board a general overview of where the budget stood.

Ms. Gwen Vaughn, Finance Director, stated that she was expecting Mr. Miller to give the overview but she would do it. She stated that the overview would be based on the June 15, 2020 budget work session’s review of the revenues and expenditures and the department requests for personnel and capital outlay items. Ms. Vaughn stated that the consensus for the personal items were mostly put on hold and not added to the budget and there were several capital outlay items that were not included as well. She stated the Maintenance capital outlay request was revised from $208,000 to $122,703, the sheriff’s requested 9 lease vehicles and 4 were approved which went from $50,000 to $36,040. Ms. Vaughn stated that there was one request that was not added Farmer Lake requested a patrol boat for $20,000. She stated that she had reviewed the revenues and made changes accordingly and one change increased the revenues and that was the ad valorem taxes which were increased by about $150,000. Ms. Vaughn stated that after Mr. Caison’s response to the Board Building Inspections’ was put back at $230,000. She stated that she made changes to the Economic Development’s budget on the expenditure side. Ms. Vaughn stated that at this point the revenues are at $22,404,164. She stated on the expenditure side there was an adjustment to Maintenance for the telephone from $4,000 to $14,000 and the capital outlay from $208,000 to $122,703, the Sheriff’s budget was decreased by $64,393 for the 1.75 position and the lease vehicles from $50,000 to $36,040. Ms. Vaughn added that the Vehicle Service Repair for the Sheriff Department was requested at $50,000 and the Sheriff’s has now requested this be moved to $65,000 since 5 vehicles were cut out of the budget. She stated there was no change to Public Education, increase on the transfer to Special Separation for retired sheriff deputies from $78,000 to $93,000. Ms. Vaughn stated that at this point the expenditures are at $22,164,417 so there is a difference of $239,747 of revenues over expenditures. She stated that this would give the Board the opportunity to reduce the fund balance appropriation or make changes within the expense side or make changes to the revenue side.

Sheriff’s Department

Commissioner W. Carter asked the county manager if the Sheriff’s budget was a trade off with going up $15,000 for vehicles maintenance where if the Board would give the 5 vehicles at $16,000. Mr. Miller responded from a budget standpoint that was correct but the money for maintenance and repair money is only spent when needed but the vehicles lease money would be spent and that would only be the real difference in the two.

(At 1:13 p.m. Commissioner S. Carter entered the meeting.)

Commissioner Owen stated that his opinion was to leave the leased vehicles at 4 and vehicle service & repairs at $50,000 and if this money runs out the Sheriff can come before the Board to have it increased. Commissioner Hall, Jefferies, McVey and Oestreicher agreed.

Public Education

Commissioner Oestreicher asked Ms. Vaughn if there were any changes made in Public Education. Ms. Vaughn responded that this was correct. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he thought the $30,000 for teachers’ supplements should be changed to $300,000. Ms. Vaughn responded that the Board said no to the teachers’ supplements. Commissioner Oestreicher stated as well as the social worker. Ms. Vaughn responded that the social worker was $55,000 and that was included. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he thought the Board said no to $70,000 so a social worker. Commissioner S. Carter responded “That was the additional social worker.” Chairman McVey responded that this was the social worker that was no included in the budget. Commissioner Oestreicher then stated that the SRO for $49,000 would be revisited in October. Ms. Vaughn responded that this was correct. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that this amount is not included in the $22,164,417. Ms. Vaughn responded that this was not included. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that the current expense of $150,000 was not included either. Ms. Vaughn responded that the additional $150,000 is not included. Commissioner Oestreicher stated the capital outlay at $155,000 was not included. Ms. Vaughn responded that the additional capital outlay for $155,000 is not included.

Sheriff’s Department

Commissioner S. Carter asked “How much were the 4 cars?” Commissioner Owen responded “$36,040.”

Commissioner W. Carter stated that the only problem he had with not buying 9 cars is there are still some 2008 and 2009 Crown Victorias that are still running with excessive miles. Chairman McVey responded that he understood but the Sheriff can come back before the Board late. Commissioner Oestreicher responded that the Board had a discussion with the Sheriff and he did not think with the lease program that he could get more than 4 cars anyway.

Piedmont Community College

Commissioner Owen stated that the Board had discussed doing the roof at PCC and he asked Ms. Vaughn if the roof at PCC was included in the budget. Ms. Vaughn responded that the roof at PCC was not included in the budget. Commissioner Owen stated that he thought the consensus from the Board was to do the roof. Ms. Vaughn responded that PCC request for capital outlay was $217,000 and the budget has $65,000 which meant that $152,000 would need to be added to cover the cost of the roof. (Commissioners S. Carter, W. Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher and Owen voted yes.)

Parks and Rec and the Library

Commissioner Owen stated that the Board had talked about $10,000 for the Rec and $10,000 for the Library for security and he asked if this money was already included in the Sheriff’s budget. Ms. Vaughn responded that this was not added to the Sheriff’s budget; it was reduced from the Library and Parks and Rec’s budgets. She added that the Sheriff said he could work this out with his staffing. Commissioner Owen stated thank you.

Mr. Miller asked Ms. Vaughn if she was finished with the budget overview and ready to entertain questions. Ms. Vaughn responded yes.

S.R. Farmer Lake

Commissioner W. Carter stated that the boat at Farmer Lake has not been discussed. Commissioner Owen responded that he would prefer to put this off until October.

Chairman McVey asked if the current boat was operating okay. Commissioner W. Carter responded that the boat is over 30 years old.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman I’ve always had concerns with that boat in the last 10 years or so. I was on a visit down there one time and I know it was not functional. I know there has been instances where it has failed to meet the needs of the lake. I am fearful that if some major event happened the boat would be inadequate and I think it being a capital one-time expense I think it’s long overdue and I see it as a public safety concern. I think considering what we are doing, you know, with other departments and what have you I feel like a boat is not a huge deal when it comes to this budget.” Chairman McVey responded “Well I don’t know what he has.” Commissioner S. Carter continued “It’s basically a…”

Commissioner Hall stated “Mr. Chairman I’m going to relay my story, it is quite embarrassing and it was embarrassing to the lake range also. I was out on the lake about a year ago and my boat died so I called the lake ranger and he said he would tow me in. He came to tow me in, he hooked up, and his boat died and he had to get his toolbox out and work on this boat before he could get it started and then to tow me in. He kept saying this is the first time this ever happened, it’s the first time, and I know he was truly embarrassed, I was embarrassed for having to call him and I was even more embarrassed for having a friend with me to see the county had a boat that would die. So if there is any way possible and I won’t call it junk but I will say it’s seen it’s better days.” Chairman McVey responded “Okay.”

Commissioner W. Carter stated “Well as Commissioner Sterling Carter said it’s a matter of public safety. If he has to respond to a drowning or for a distress or help or something other.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “I feel like he can find a 20-foot skiff like a Carolina skiff that is on the coast, flat bottom boat and not have to spend a tremendous amount of money on something different.”

Commissioner Owen asked how much the request was for. Ms. Vaughn responded that the request was for $20,000. (Commissioners S. Carter, W. Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher and Owen voted yes.)

Revenue & Expenditure Analysis

Mr. Miller asked Ms. Vaughn to go over the revenue and expenditure analysis that she had currently. He also asked if she could go over how much fund balance was appropriated as well.

Ms. Vaughn stated that the fund balance that is appropriated is $1,927,018.

Mr. Miller asked if this was the most recent fund balance amount that was on the most recent spreadsheet that was sent out to him. Ms. Vaughn responded yes.

Commissioner W. Carter asked what percentage this would put the County at with fund balance. Ms. Vaughn responded that the fund balance would be about a 6% decrease which would bring it to about 28%.

Commissioner Owen asked if this was the total fund balance. Ms. Vaughn responded yes the total fund balance would be around 28%.

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he thought the fund balance was at 21%. Ms. Vaughn responded that she did another projection on Thursday or Friday and the beginning fund balance the county started with a general unassigned fund balance at 13.78% and maybe about a 15% at the end of the year. She stated the total fund balance started at 26.49% and she is looking at about a 28% end of the year fund balance.

Commissioner Owen stated that the projected unassigned balance at the end of this fiscal year was $4,950,000 and the Board will appropriate approximately $1.9 million for this budget so that will lease $3 million in the unassigned fund balance. Ms. Vaughn responded that at this point everything is still within budget and the fund balance appropriation is still at $1.9 million and based on the changes there is still $82,747 so the fund balance can be reduced by this amount of the Board can make a few more changes to the expense side.

Mr. Miller asked Ms. Vaughn what the amount of fund balance would still be left. Ms. Vaughn responded that she was looking at a percentage of about 15 and just over $3 million.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked “I thought we were at $239,747 less 152 which leaves us 87,747 minus 20 leave us $67,747, is that right?” Ms. Vaughn responded “I’ve got $82,000 what was the amount that you did for the school, for PCC?” Commissioner Oestreicher continued “152.” Ms. Vaughn responded “152. I’ve got 82,747.” Commissioner Owen asked “And that’s including the boat for Farmer Lake?” Ms. Vaughn responded “That is included, I added the boat in there too.”

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Gwen could you remind us that despite the fund balance appropriation how we’ve been over the last three or four years with not using that really since 16-17?” Ms. Vaughn responded “Yes, that past 5 years the appropriation, the fund balance appropriation has been set to balance the budget but it hasn’t been used. Only in one year when the taxes, the tax collection was miscalculated in 16-17 so the appropriation was 1.2 million and we were down about 1.5 million so then after that year after year we’ve added a little bit more each year to the fund balance and it’s come back at the end of 18-19 we had an amount that was substantial.” Commissioner S. Carter continued “I just wanted that to be restated because I know there could be some confusion in the public as to appropriation versus actual.”

Ms. Vaughn stated that she wanted to get back to Commissioner Oestreicher. Commissioner Oestericher stated “What I had was, let me double check my math, you showed revenues at 22,404,164.” Ms. Vaughn responded “Right.” Commissioner Oestreicher continued “And expenditures at 22,164,417.” Ms. Vaughn responded “Yes.” Commissioner Oestreicher continued “That left a balance of 239,747?” Ms. Vaughn responded “Yes.” Commissioner Oestreicher continued “So if you subtract 152,000 from that I got 87,747. I didn’t use new math or the common core to get that but I think that’s right. And then if you subtract 20,000 from that I get 67,747.” Mr. Miller responded “That’s what I have too.” Commissioner W. Carter responded “That’s what I’ve got.” Ms. Vaughn responded “Okay I had 65 for the sheriff vehicles so we went back and you need to add 15 to that because it went 65 back to 50,000. Commissioner Oestreicher stated “Touch down, good.”

Department of Social Services

Commissioner Owen stated that DSS has a capital outlay of $30,000 in the DSS budget for paint and carpet. He asked if the Board was going to fund this capital outlay or wait until October. Chairman McVey responded that he thought this should wait. Commissioner Owen stated that he would like to wait on any capital outlay that is not necessary.

(Commissioners S. Carter, W. Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher and Owen voted yes to wait until later.)

Elections

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if a decision for made on the printer for Elections. Ms. Vaughn responded yes it was included in the budget. Commissioner Owen stated that he asked for more clarification and the printer does not cost $50,000, the software was $30,000 in this program.

Library

Commissioner Owen stated that the Library requested $20,000 for new books, in the past before the construction of the new library the request was $14,500 for new books. He stated that he did not know when the Library would reopen but he asked the Board if it wanted to fund the $20,000 or the $14,500. Chairman McVey recommended budgeting $14,500 and then revisit it in October. (Commissioners S. Carter, W. Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher and Owen voted yes to approve $14,500 now.)

Ms. Vaughn stated that the $19,500 would be reduced to $14,500 for new books.

Horticulture Club

Commissioner Owen stated “I think I am done, the only other thing is and I think I mentioned this the other day, come October I don’t believe we will be much better off than what we think but if we are I would like for us to remember to consider the Horticulture Club maybe being able if we have the money to give them a little bit because you know they take care of this are down here in front of the Sheriff’s office, as well as the Square, as well as the Arboretum, and they do a wonderful job so that will be something for October. I think we will need to look at that.” Ms. Vaughn responded “Commissioner Owen are you saying there is no appropriation for the Horticulture Club? We had $12,000 and I didn’t take it out. I didn’t hear the consensus on that at the last meeting.” Commissioner Owen continued “Well I think we need to come up with a consensus on that. I don’t know that we want to do $12,000.”

Commissioner Oestreicher thought it was reduced to $8,000.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “All I’ve got is notes on their expenses and their request.”

Commissioner Hall stated that he did not see where anything was settled the last time but the Horticulture Club requested a minimum of $4,000 and added that he would be comfortable with the $4,000 for now. Commissioner Owen agreed.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “But previously we did not contributions right?” Chairman McVey responded that this was right.

Chairman McVey asked for a consensus on $4,000. (Commissioners S. Carter, W. Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher and Owen voted yes.)

Position Reclassifications & Salary Adjustments

Commissioner S. Carter asked “What’s left to determine in all of this?” Mr. Miller responded “The only thing is the list that I have left is $17,000 for 3 position reclassifications and 2 salary adjustments, 1 salary adjustment. Commissioner S. Carter continued “What was your number?” Chairman McVey responded “$17,000. Put it out there so they can hear you.”

Mr. Miller stated “The last thing I have that is not included in the current budget is $17,000 for 3 position reclassifications and 1 salary adjustment. The three positions are, actually it’s two position reclassifications that is not in the budget and one salary adjustment. One is an Administrative Assistant to Administrative Assistant III. The other is a salary adjustment for the Assistant Register of Deeds and the third one is a reclassification from Finance Officer to Finance Director.” Commissioner Owen responded “I thought we did the Register of Deeds.” Mr. Miller responded “You did in closed session but you need to in open session.”

Chairman McVey asked “Are you not going to add that?” Mr. Miller responded “Well that one is currently in the budget. You said to leave it in then you would decide at a different time. So the other position reclassification that is currently in the budget, so it’s not a new number, is Planner to Planning Director and here again that’s because of the work being down surrounding zoning and the 160D codification that will require the Planning Department to make director level decisions and we only have one planning department person so that person will be the planning director at that point in time.”

Commissioner W. Carter asked what the total amount on the salary. Mr. Miller responded that the total amount that is not included in the current budget is $17,000.

Commissioner Hall stated “Mr. Chairman I’m going to stand a position that I’ve had the whole time no new positions, no salary adjustments, no reclassifications. I think there was some discussion about one position that the Board had committed to so even on that position I’m going to vote no and the Board can vote however.”

Chairman McVey asked the Board if it would be willing to go half on the $17,000. Commissioner W. Carter responded not on the register of deeds because a commitment was made on that position.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “I would like to see us to the roughly $3700 for the register of deeds. I’m not in favor of the other increases and I am for removing the $16,863 that’s in the budget, at the bottom of the list.”

Commissioner Jefferies stated “I vote for the register of deeds and for the rest of them leave them where they are.”

Consensus on Assistant Register of Deeds. (Commissioners S. Carter, W. Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher and Owen voted yes.)

Commissioner W. Carter stated that the Planner goes well and beyond what he is required to do. He added that he is handling the zoning as well as other things. Commissioner W. Carter stated that he was one of the best planners the County has ever had. He added that he is doing a great job. Commissioner W. Carter stated that he could possibly be an assistant county manager one day. Chairman McVey recommended holding off on the other positions until October.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “This is the one that is already in the budget, keep that in mind, this is not the $17,000. We are talking about this one here, it is already in there at $16,863.”

Commissioner Hall stated this is a substantial increase and a lot of people are doing a good job and a lot of people would like a reclassification but now is not the time.

Consensus on Planning Director at $16,863. (Commissioners S. Carter, Hall, McVey, and Owen voted no and Commissioners W. Carter, Jefferies, and Oestreicher yes.)

Commissioner S. Carter stated “So that now goes into that $67,000 right.”

Chairman McVey stated now that leaves the other 2 positions. Mr. Miller responded finance and administrative. Chairman McVey stated that he was of the same opinion on all of them to leave alone at the time being and revisit in October.

Consensus on Finance and Administrative Assistant. (Commissioners S. Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, and Owen voted no and Commissioners W. Carter and Oestreicher voting yes.)

Commissioner S. Carter stated “I just want to thank Ms. Seamster for being very patient with us during this.”

Mr. Miller stated that Ms. Vaughn will need a couple of days to get the budget ordinance ready.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman I just had a quick question in line with what the manager said, do we have a final tax levy amount for the high school?” Mr. Miller responded “No we don’t.”

Ms. Vaughn asked the Board if the difference was to be reduced from the fund balance. Chairman McVey responded yes.

Consensus was to meet next on Monday, June 29, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

FY 2020-2021 Budget Public Comments

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if there were any public comments on the budget. Ms. Seamster read the public comments that were received by Tuesday, June 16, 2020 at 9:30 a.m.

“Mr. Phil Barfield, 910 Melvin Wrenn Road, Yanceyville stated The proposed budget should consider expenditures associated with the current moratorium including issues with vested rights and permit choice and costs to zone or adopt a new UDO amendment.  These costs could be substantial and should be budgeted or at least considered.”

“Ms. Caroline Laur, 12671 NC HWY 62, Burlington stated I request that the budget should consider expenditures associated with the current moratorium including issues with vested rights and permit choice and costs to zone and adopt a new UDO amendment.  The citizens will not understand if this is not added to the budget! We now have 95 documented pre-existing illnesses within a one-mile radius of the proposed Asphalt/Cement Plant. 85% are the citizens within the Black Community.  COVID 19 has provided data and research that Black Americans are at a disproportionate risk for death than other populations. Harvard Studies and other studies are bringing to light that Black Americans are 3 x's more likely to die from pollution than other populations. See article's and Harvard below. Put “Black Lives Matter” & “Tile 6” into the Budget. Environmental racism has left black Americans three times more likely to die from pollution!  (And coronavirus) Without a touch of irony, the EPA celebrated Black History Month by publishing a [report](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/02/the-trump-administration-finds-that-environmental-racism-is-real/554315/) that finds black communities face dangerously high levels of pollution. African Americans are more likely to live near landfills and industrial plants that pollute water and air and erode quality of life. Because of this, more than half of the 9 million people [living near hazardous waste sites](http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/7987/toxic-wastes-and-race-at-twenty-1987-2007.pdf?1418432785) are people of color, and black Americans are [three times more likely](http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1702747) to die from exposure to air pollutants than their white counterparts.  Rest of the story: [Why Black Americans are three times more likely to die from pollution](https://qz.com/1226984/environmental-racism-has-left-black-americans-three-times-more-likely-to-die-from-pollution/).”

“Mr. Richard Long, 12671 NC HWY 62, Burlington stated Next time put this notice in the paper so all of us can see. Many of us are essential workers. So you can get everyone's opinion including those that do not use computers. Or do not have the time to sit in every meeting. And it takes months before we can see in written records.  You got us in this mess. You mislead us and acted like you did not know. Each of you were asked when you found out. And for months you attempted to mislead the community.  One person even put it in writing, attempting to make us think he found out in August in that letter from the Asphalt Company. Manipulating the truth! You need to budget to get us out of this mess – You put us in this!  You should have given us a choice in 2013! Not 2020!  Put the money in the budget to fix this!”

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman may I ask a question?” Chairman McVey responded “Yes sir.” Commissioner S. Carter continued “Mr. Miller I don’t know how you can answer this but I’m just curious, along those lines of putting in expenditures for those reasons how would that even be estimated or determined?” Mr. Miller responded “Well moving forward if you were to put, if you were to include zoning in the budget it would not necessarily be done at this point in time, it would be added as a special project after it had been approved by the Board of Commissioners.” Commissioner S. Carter continued “Once we know what it is.” Mr. Miller responded “Exactly and as we move through this special project you will make appropriations throughout that process.” Commissioner S. Carter stated “No way to estimate it ahead of time without finalizing what it is to be.” Mr. Miller responded “Well no, there are certain steps you could analyze and determine about advertising, public hearings, and things like that but if there is outside resources that are going to be needed those kind of things and those are the things that would bear the most expense, printing costs, so on and so forth, you can’t really determine those. Commissioner S. Carter continued “Thank you.”

Commissioner Jefferies asked Commissioner Owen if he discussed lifting the freeze for DSS. Commissioner Owen responded that he was waiting for the DSS director to have that conversation with the county manager but he could have the conversation with the county manager.

RECESS

At 2:20 p.m. Chairman McVey recess the budget work session until Monday, June 29, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

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Paula P. Seamster Rick McVey

Clerk to the Board Chairman

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