MINUTES – MAY 7, 2018

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at the Caswell County Historic Courthouse in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, May 7, 2018. Members present: Rick McVey, Vice-Chairman, Sterling Carter, William E. Carter, Jeremiah Jefferies, David Owen and Kenneth D. Travis. Absent: Nathaniel Hall. Also present: Bryan Miller, County Manager and Brian Ferrell, County Attorney. Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board recorded the minutes.

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

Vice Chairman McVey welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Vice Chairman McVey opened the meeting with a moment of Silent Prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board of Commissioners and all the guests in the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Owen asked to add an item to the agenda in reference to a North Carolina DOT project. Mr. Miller asked for Item #11 Fleet Car Management Responsibility to be removed from the agenda. Vice Chairman McVey stated to move NC DOT to Item #11.

Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner W. Carter to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner W. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

The following items were included on the Consent Agenda:

A. Approval of Minutes of April 16, 2018 Regular Meeting

B. Approval of Minutes of April 26, 2018 Special Meeting

PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies that the Board enter into a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed amendment to the Caswell County Unified Development Ordinance – Article 9, Part VII – Shooting Range Facilities. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Catesby Denison, County Planner, stated the Caswell County Planning Board at their March 2018 meeting reviewed a request from a current shooting range owner. The county has two permitted shooting ranges in the county. The request was to adjust the size requirements for signs that surround the perimeter of the range. The size of the sign is 12 x 16 with 6” letters posted every 100 feet. One of the current shooting range owners is looking to expand and he realized that this would be very cost ineffective for him and prohibitive perhaps to make these signs long lasting. Ms. Denison showed the Board examples of the sizes of fonts. The Planning Board decided that 2” letters versus 6” letters was appropriate for the intervals that are required within the UDO.

Commissioner Owen stated that in the UDO it states that colors should be highly visible, he asked if the coloring referred to the letters or to the sign or to whatever the owner chooses. Ms. Denison responded that this would be determined by the UDO administrator. Commissioner Owen asked what was currently being used. Ms. Denison responded that if they have black and white that is visible but if it is gray she may not interpret that as being visible. Commissioner Owen then asked why there had to be so much writing on the sign. He asked if it could read ‘Shooting Range, Keep Out’, ‘Danger, Shooting Range’ where the 6” size letter could still be used. Ms. Denison responded that the current two options available are ‘A Shooting Range Area Keep out’ or ‘Caution Firearms in Use Keep Out’ so if the Board feels it is appropriate to adjust the text that is also an option. Commissioner Owen stated that his concern was reducing the size of the letters from 6” all the way down to 2 because of the safety of the citizens. Commissioner Owen asked if the shooting range owner wanted to have plastic signs. Ms. Denison responded that the shooting range owner could speak to that.

Clint Hilbert stated that the issue wasn’t the size of the sign itself but trying to get a 6” letter on the sign as presented in the ordinance because the sign was a 12 x 16. He added that he was trying to find a media that was a lot more affordable as well as durable. Mr. Hilbert stated that the signs last about a year and a half with the weather. He added that by reducing the size of the letters he could get the words on there more visibly because they are very close together now. He wants to see a balance between the size of the letters and the size of the sign itself.

Vice Chairman McVey asked Mr. Hilbert if the size of the sign he was holding up going to be the size that he was going to use. Mr. Hilbert responded that it is the size of the sign that he currently has now.

Commissioner Travis asked Mr. Hilbert if he was planning to leave WARNING as it is on the sign. Mr. Hilbert responded yes sir and added that the red WARNING brought the sign out a little bit better. He added that he is very concerned about safety of his neighbors and someone trespassing through the woods. Mr. Hilbert stated that the fire break is cut and clearly marked so that the signs are visible on the back side as well as all the way around the property. He asked for more flexibility on how to design the signs.

Commissioner Travis stated that if the WARNING is left like it is and then the lettering below it that would be okay. Vice Chairman McVey responded that he does not like the idea of reducing the lettering to 2 inches. Commissioner Travis stated that the WARNING would be left on the top. Vice Chairman McVey responded that reducing the letter size may compromise someone seeing the wording.

Commissioner Owen asked if the 2” letters was the only size that would fit on the sign that Mr. Hilbert is looking at. He wanted to know why the size went to a 2” because this is a drastic drop from 6” to 2”. Mr. Hilbert responded that in order to get the 2” letters he would still have to use a narrow font on a 12 x 16 sign. He added that he was thinking about getting a 24 x 18 sign which is a standard election sign and he would use a robust material for the signs.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that the sign that Ms. Denison has is the one the Planning Board recommended. Commissioner Owen responded that he could not vote for 2” letters. Vice Chairman McVey added the he could not vote for 2” letters either. Commissioner Owen stated that he understands the point of trying to get a better sign but he wondered if there would be a happy medium where Mr. Hilbert could get the size sign he wants but with larger letters. He added that if the letters are smaller he would like for the WARNING to be larger. Mr. Hilbert responded that the WARNING was not a part of the requirement. He added that the text WARNING was more appropriate. Commissioner Owen agreed with that because it catches his eye more. Mr. Hilbert asked for a compromise on the size of the letters such as a 4” letter or a 3” letter. Commissioner Owen requested that Mr. Hilbert bring back the size that he wants to have to give the Board a better view of what a 4” letter and a 3” letter would look like. He added that he would have to vote no on a 2” letter. Mr. Hilbert responded that the signs are required to be every 100 feet. He added that the more affordable the signs the closer they can put the signs. He added that 100 feet is okay with 6” letters but he wants to put the signs closer so the letters will not have to be that large. Commissioner Owen stated that he appreciated Mr. Hilbert doing that but that would not apply to anybody else, they could still place the signs 100 feet apart because that is how the ordinance reads. Ms. Denison responded that both operators are concerned about safety. Commissioner Owen responded that he did not doubt that but he added that he knows some people and regardless whose fault it is if a person walks across there and they get shot and killed he thinks the county will hear that. He added the county will not bear the necessary responsibility but the county does bear a morale and ethical responsibility so that is his caution on the size of the letters.

Vice Chairman McVey asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak during the public hearing.

Ms. Candace Detweiler came before the Board and stated that from a hunter’s point of view the 2” lettering is a little small and anyone with any type of eyesight issues would not be able to read it. She added that she understands signage and the WARNING in red is more visible but the 2” is just too small to be seen.

Commissioner W. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to go out of public hearing. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner W. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to accept the recommendation from the Planning Board on the signage. The motion failed by a vote of two to four with Commissioners S. Carter, McVey, Owen and Travis voting no.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman, can we not go ahead and amend the ordinance instead of sending this back and then coming back in another meeting as a matter of detail and try to figure out what we would like? We seem to agree that 2” is not enough. We seem to agree the red WARNING sign is good and sufficient and I agree with that. We have an amendment down at the bottom of the recommendation where it says ‘Warning signs’ with the dimensions and the lettering color, distance and the wording on the signs. Can we not go ahead as a Board and determine what we would like?” Commissioner Travis responded to make a motion. Commissioner S. Carter continued “Well I mean it is a matter of figuring out the details so a 12 x 16 inches is the sign size that the Planning Board recommended. We are talking about an election sign, 18 x 24, was that correct? Yes. Would that be sufficient for 6” letters?” Commissioner Travis responded no. (Ms. Denison made a comment but could not understand what was said). Commissioner S. Carter stated “I guess we are talking about changing the amendments on the size.” (Ms. Denison made another comment but could not understand comment). Commissioner S. Carter continued “So we are fine with the 12 x 16 size?” Commissioner Owen responded minimum. Commissioner S. Carter continued “Size, yes?” Commissioner Owen responded “At the minimum yes.” Commissioner S. Carter asked “Then which letters should we go with then, 6, is that what we agree on?” Vice Chairman McVey asked Mr. Hilbert how big the sign was that he has. Mr. Hilbert responded “18 x 30.” Commissioner S. Carter continued “And those are the 6” letters?” Mr. Hilbert confirmed that it was 6” letters. He added that it would be a great compromise to require a 4” or 3” letter and he hoped this could be decided today so he could get the new signs ordered. Commissioner S. Carter stated “Alright so we are at the size of the letters, more than 2.”

Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to require 4” letters on the warning signs. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Now Mr. Chairman the second portion was the wording, I agree with Mr. Owen’s sentiments on having a more concise set of words. I like the gentlemen’s sign; the WARNING is at the forefront in a different color so would we like to move forward with including the word WARNING in all signs?” Commissioner Travis responded “Warning and shooting range is all you need.” Commissioner S. Carter continued “Warning, shooting range, keep out like his said.” Commissioner Travis responded “Right, I think it was perfect.”

Mr. Ferrell stated that just for clarification so the planning director can work on the amendment. He stated the two options for lettering are ‘A Shooting Range Area Keep Out’ and ‘Caution Firearms in Use Keep Out’ and he asked if the motion was to include ‘Warning Shooting Range Keep Out’ or alternatively ‘Warning’ instead of ‘Caution’ ‘Warning Firearms in Use Keep Out’ which essentially changes the word caution to warning in the second option and to add warning in front of the first option ‘warning shooting range keep out’ which was on the sign that Mr. Hilbert had. He wanted to make this clear so it will be in the ordinance correct. Commissioner S. Carter responded “Warning, for the second option, Warning Firearms in Use Keep Out.”

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Would you like to make the motion Mr. Travis?” Commissioner Travis responded “Go ahead.”

Commissioner S. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Travis to amend the warning signs by adding ‘Warning Shooting Range Keep Out’ or ‘Warning Firearms in Use Keep Out’. The motion carried by a vote of five to one with Commissioner W. Carter voting no.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice Chairman McVey opened the floor to Public Comments.

Ms. Tracy Stanley came before the Board and stated that she lives at 65 Fawn Drive, Reidsville. She said that she was here as a parent and not a school board member. Ms. Stanley stated that she has had several conversations with her kids’ friends’ parents and they wanted her to express the support they have for the new high school. She is a concern taxpayer, mother of a sophomore at BY, a 4th grader at Stoney Creek and she asked the Board to approve the funding for the new high school. She described the high school as a 61 year old building with exposed wiring, pipes, in adequate lighting, asbestos in halls 1 through 3. She added that it sounds like a scary place. She asked if this is where someone would want their child, grandchild, niece, nephew or dear friend to attend. She added that is what her son, teachers and staff deal with day and day out. The high school has 34 doors that lead to the outside of the building which means 34 opportunities for an unauthorized person to enter the buildings to harm students and employees. She added that with school violence at an all-time high the security should be high at the schools. Ms. Stanley stated that the Caswell County Detention or jail is only 4 years old and the prisoners in Caswell have nicer facilities than the children of the county. She added that we reward our criminals but punish the future farmers, mechanics, governors, senators, school board members, doctors, commissioners, pharmacists. She added that there was not this much controversy over the money for the jail and detention center, the Board voted and passed it and it was built. It never had to be placed on a ballot and it was never talked about. She asked how the county could grow with an outdated high school. She stated that it is time to show our children that they are important and a part of this county and that we value families and their future. She added that it was time to stop hesitating and start building a new high school. She stated again that she is here as a parent and not a school board member.

Ms. Lisa Watlington came before the Board and stated that she is a former educator and citizen of Caswell County and she agreed with Ms. Stanley on some of the points she made. She talked about safety first. She stated that it needs to be two referendums. Safety needs to be on a separate referendum because she is all for safety. She explained that there needs to be two separate referendums and she agreed with Ms. Stanley that something needs to be done with the high school but also the elementary schools but to wait 2, 3 or 4 years for something to happen. She asked why not put the safety on a separate referendum and these safety issues can be resolved now. There needs to be more SRO officers at the high school, need more cameras, there is a need for a fence and metal detectors to make the school safe. She also added to install bullet proof windows. Ms. Watlington stated that Ms. Stanley was talking about the school being so old but George Washington High School was built in the early 1960s, Eastern Alamance was built in 1953, Western Alamance in 1962, Rockingham County in 1952, Reidsville High School in 1962. She added that all of these schools were built prior to Bartlett Yancey and all have upgraded. She asked why the rusted shelters and pipes not been fixed. She asked the Board if they have a problem such as their air conditioning going out or problems with plumbing they would be on the telephone to have someone to fix the problem. She asked why the school has been neglected for so long. She added that there are latches not on the bathroom doors. He nieces told here about the latches. A male student told her that one of the lights in the bathroom was not fixed. She asked what the problem is, is it maintenance or it is not being reported. Ms. Watlington stated that before the county spends $40 million on a new high school the school system needs to address some of the issues that are there now and put that safety referendum on the ballot and deal with the safety issues now and then later on build a new high school. She added that the other schools that she listed are still standing and are still viable. They have upgraded their schools with additional security, metal detectors, and new windows and not raised the taxes of the citizens of their county. She stated that she would like to see two referendums on the ballot, one for safety to address the issues of safety now because that is what she wants and what the school board wants. Think about the children and about next 20 or 30 years and safety should be the way the county goes first.

Vice Chairman McVey asked if anyone else would like to speak during Public Comments. With no further comments Vice Chairman McVey closed Public Comments.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Miller stated that Caswell County would like to recognize Captain Arnold Gwynn Brandon, Jr. and asked Captain Brandon to come up to the podium. He added that in 1989 Captain Brandon was hired as a deputy. In 1993 he was promoted to Corporal. In 1998 he was promoted to Sergeant over Narcotics. In 2005 he was promoted from Corporal to Sergeant. In 2009 he was promoted to 1st Sergeant. In 2013 he was promoted to Lieutenant and in 2017 he was promoted to Captain. In 2018 Captain Brandon is retiring with 30 years of service to the Caswell County Sheriff’s Department. Mr. Miller stated that this something that is not seen very much of because most of the time people would have worked for the Department of Corrections and then retire or work at another agency but Captain Brandon had devoted his entire career at the Caswell County Sheriff’s Department. Captain Brandon served as a K-9 officer, a narcotics officer, a sergeant, a lieutenant, a captain of the patrol division. He served as the Sheriff’s Emergency Response Team, the Area Crime Team and is the Program Coordinator for the Governor’s Highway Safety Program. Mr. Miller asked everyone to join him in wishing Captain Brandon the best in his retirement.

APPROVAL OF CATS’ FY 2018-19 SUCCESS PLAN

Ms. Melissa Williamson stated that NCDOT/PTD requires every year for CATS to complete a Success Plan for goals that CATS would like to meet in the new fiscal year. CATS’ Mobility Specialist from NCDOT/PTD has reviewed CATS FY 18-19 Success Plan and approved it. This Success Plan has also been shared with the Caswell County Transportation Advisory Board. CATS is required to have the Board of Commissioners approve the Success Plan and the plan is due to NCDOT/PTD no later than May 15, 2018. CATS’ mission statement for FY 18-19 is ‘We provide safe and efficient transportation.’ The vision statement is ‘To be the provider of choice for our passengers and a transit system that provides enhanced mobility for passengers.’ CATS’ values are to be responsive to customer needs, commit to safety and continuous improvement in everything they do, respect and protect the public investment and trust, respect, support and encourage each other. CATS will have a successful year if they achieve a net promoter score of 35+, maintain fleet PMS at 80% or higher, increase marketing budget by 1% and achieve a rating of 6 or higher on their marketing efforts as well as have a balanced budget at the end of the fiscal year. CATS will be conducting customer service surveys to see if CATS is meeting the needs of their customers and if they are satisfied with what CATS is doing.

Commissioner W. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to approve the CATS FY 2018-19 Success Plan as presented by the CATS Director. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF SALE OF 8 CATS’ KENWOOD TK-880HK RADIOS

Mr. Miller informed the Board that CATS has 8 Kenwood radios and the county received an offer to purchase the radios. These radios are no longer in use by CATS. The agency that wants to purchase these radios if allowed to sale will be used for wide load vehicles as required by the state. This agency has offered to buy all 8 radios for $2,000. These radios were the first radios used in the CATS vans when they first started operating. The radios were purchased with revenues from CATS, no state or local tax dollars were used for the purchase of the radios. Mr. Miller stated that if the Board wishes to authorize the purchase the Board needs to authorize the county manager by resolution to declare the property surplus and dispose of the personal property efficiently and economically at fair market value following all procedures as set forth in GS 160A-266 and 267. Mr. Miller read the resolution.

Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to approve the resolution authorizing the sale of surplus property. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION

CASWELL COUNTY

AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MANAGER TO USE PRIVATE NEGOTIATION AND SALE TO DISPOSE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the local governing board may authorize one or more officials to declare the property surplus and to dispose of the personal property efficiently and economically at a fair market value following all procedures as set forth in G.S. 160A-266; -267;

WHEREAS, Caswell County has received an offer of $2,000.00 for 8 Kenwood TK-880HK UHF Mobile Radios;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that effective May 7, 2018:

The County Manager is authorized to declare this property surplus and use private negotiation and sale to dispose of personal property (8 Kenwood TK-880HK UHF Mobile Radios) with a value of up to $2,000.

Adopted this 7th day of May, 2018.

S/Rick McVey\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Rick McVey

Vice-Chairman

S/Paula Seamster\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Paula Seamster

Clerk to the Board

FY 2018-2019 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Miller stated that each Board member has a budget workbook in front of them. He asked them to turn to Tab 1 of the Budget Workbook is the budget message. “Commissioners, in compliance with NCGS 159-8 through NCGS 159-13 and in accordance with the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act (LGBFCA) the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget and Budget Message are presented this morning. The deadline for presentation is June 1st of each calendar year. A copy of the budget and budget message will be filed in the office of the clerk to the board, where it will remain for public inspection until the governing board adopts the budget ordinance. The clerk will publish a statement that the proposed budget has been submitted to the governing board and is available for public inspection. The clerk will also make a copy of the proposed budget available to all news media in the county. The Caswell County Board of Commissioners will hold a Public Hearing concerning the budget during the first regularly scheduled meeting in June (June 4th, 2018). This interim period affords citizens time to review the proposed budget and voice their opinions or objections to governing board members. During the public hearing any person who wishes to be heard on the budget will be allowed time to speak: In the interim, the board will hold a series of budget review meetings and briefings on each of the major budget categories at which time changes may be made to the budget and departments will be given the opportunity to speak about their needs and programming. These meetings will extend until the adoption of the budget if needed. Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget ordinance is anticipated no later than the second regularly scheduled meeting of the Board in June (June 18th, 2018) but may occur earlier in the process if deemed appropriate by the Board. Therefore, I respectfully submit the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget that is balanced and in conformance with North Carolina law. The budget is in compliance with state statutes, Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and in compliance with the direction given by the Board of Commissioners. The following pages are an overview of the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget and an overview of the process and issues that drove the development of the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget including a discussion of revenues and expenditures. The purpose of this budget is to provide the county with a fiscally responsible plan. The formal budget development process and the use of a budget aids to ensure that the county's financial strength and integrity is maintained and enhanced. An adopted budget is a legal document that serves many purposes; it embodies the priorities, goals and objectives of government. It defines not only financial aspects of government, but government organization and operations as well. This budget contains information that gives citizens insight into government activities. The recommended budget takes into account two primary concerns expressed by the County Commissioners regarding their budget priorities; 1) balance the budget for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 and 2) do not add to the economic stress of county citizens and businesses. When the Commissioners met on January 10, 2018 during a planning retreat, they established the fact that their wish was to be presented a streamlined budget without the use of fund balance proceeds or a tax increase. You have also requested options available by department for discussion for inclusion by the Board. To implement these priorities, I asked the departments to initially prepare their budgets as normal and include all additional resources needed to complement their department in anticipation of meeting the goals established by the Commissioners. The county departments began the budget process in March when I, along with the Finance Director, met and reviewed budget preparation procedures and expectations. After the budget requests were submitted and calculated, the General Fund budget was $2,750,580 out of balance. We conducted an initial review and reduced nearly $2,050,000 million of expenses. After a close review of all revenues and expenditures, we found the means to balance the budget by additional various expenditure decreases. The decreases in expenditures were mainly contained to capitol requests. Revenues come with varying degrees of strings attached. Some revenues are restricted in that they can only be used to offset the costs of specific programs or services. Major unrestricted revenues are, therefore, extremely important because they yield the most flexibility and discretion in strategic allocation. Ad Valorem. The total recommended General Fund budget is $20,077,669, which represents a 12% decrease from FY 2018. Property tax revenue is the primary source of governmental fund revenue, providing 52% of the General Fund revenue. We are projecting a 4.5% decrease compared to last year's budgeted ad valorem revenues. The total taxable property value for FY 2018-2019 is estimated to be $1,502,439,289 and is comprised of real and personal values of $1,634,459,570. Utilities are set at $110,649,891. Deferred Values and Exclusions are represented at $242,670,172. The recommended budget includes an ad valorem tax rate of 70.9 cents (73.59 including Special Fire District Tax) per $100 of property value which is a rate equal to the previous year. In accordance with the North Carolina Local Budget and Fiscal Control Act, the collection rate as reported in the most recent audited financial report must be applied to the gross levy and the result of that calculation is the amount that can be included in the new budget. The collection rate of 98.37% has been applied to the real & personal category and the motor vehicle category. One penny on the tax rate generates approximately $150,244. Sales Tax. A portion of the sales tax revenue is restricted by general statute specifically for school capital needs and is recorded directly into a reserve fund designated for the approved purposes. The remaining amount of sales tax revenue is unrestricted intergovernmental revenue and represents a significant source of discretionary funding. The local portion of the sales tax is 2.75 cents and the State sales tax rate is 4.75 cents for a total of 7.5 cents pending no other sales tax changes by the General Assembly. Revenue expected from sales tax is $4,075,659 ($2,229,834 Unrestricted and $1,845,825 Restricted). Other key revenue changes 1) Public Health is projecting an increase of 9% or $142,690 in revenues which aligns the department with more realistic expectations. 2) No use of Fund Balance is included in the FY 2019 recommended budget. This represents a $426,803 decrease from the FY 2018 adopted budget; Based on projections after the recommended allocation, the remaining fund balance percentage should be 22%. Expenditures. Positions. There are no new positions included in the FY 2018-2019 budget. All new position requests will be evaluated during the budget review meetings and briefings to be held over the next five week period. Three new positions have been requested by Department Leaders, one administrative position for Environmental Health, one additional Building Inspector/Code Enforcement employee and the addition of a Maintenance Supervisor. Sheriff Department. The request for ten new patrol cars is not included in the recommended budget but will be evaluated during the budget process. Elections. The request for elections equipment is not included in the recommended budget but will be evaluated during the budget process. Employee Pay. There is no COLA or salary adjustment included in the FY 2018-2019 budget. Any salary adjustments requests will be evaluated during the budget review meetings and briefings to be held over the next five week period. Capital. The major capitol items included in the recommended budget total about $50,000. All other major capitol requests will be evaluated during the budget review meetings and briefings to be held over the next five week period. Other Significant Expenditure Items. We have experienced additional expenses due to significant employee and retiree health insurance premium rate increases of 7.3% or $124,611. The County was originally quoted an increase of 23% however through rebidding and through the efforts of Mark III we were able to reduce the amount of risk associated with our book of business and contain increases to the previously stated 7.3%. Caswell County Board of Education. The Caswell County Board of Education has requested an increase of 31% or $1,505,722. This request is not included in the recommended budget. Teacher's Supplements were also removed from recommended budged to meet the directives set by the Board of Commissioners. Piedmont Community College. Piedmont Community College has increased their requested allocation for FY 2018-2019 by 24.9% or $122,786. The requested increase is not included in the recommended budget to meet the directives set by the Board of Commissioners. Fire Districts. A Fire Service District was created by the Caswell County Board of County Commissioners. The rate for the district remains in the recommended budget at $.0369 for FY 2018-2019 per $100 valuation. The rate for the Casville Fire Service District also remains at $.0369 per $100 valuation. Library. The first payment of $99,524 for the expansion of the Gunn Memorial Library is included in the FY 2018-2019 recommended budget. In conclusion, the outlook for FY 2018-2019 is once again, one of stabilization. Therefore, it is imperative that we continue to identify and evaluate alternative ways of doing business that will result in cost reductions while maintaining service levels as well as searching for revenue enhancement opportunities other than in the property tax revenues. I would like to thank the Board of Commissioners for providing valuable direction to the staff to assist in the development of this recommended budget. I also commend the Department Leaders and their staff for their diligent work on the Fiscal Year 2018 -2019 budget and truly appreciate their willingness to sacrifice when reducing expenses. I look forward to working with the Board to develop a final budget for FY 2018-2019 that will meet the service needs and expectations of everyone we serve. Respectfully submitted, Bryan S. Miller.”

Vice Chairman McVey asked if there were any questions.

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Commissioner Owen stated that there is a Mill Creek Estates in the Providence Township and in this is a Shadow Ridge Road and off of this is a Shadow Ridge Road Extension. Part of this road was added and paved when the housing development was built but later the road was extended and there are about 12 houses on that extension from where the pavement stops so it is a private dirt road. The citizens on Shadow Ridge Road Extension have been working with DOT since early October or earlier trying to get the DOT to take that road over as a graveled road. DOT has been there, Commissioner Owen has talked and met with DOT and the requirements are a little sticky when it comes to what general statutes say and what you have to have and the citizens cannot find one key piece to turn this road over to the state. Commissioner Owen asked the Board for a consensus to allow the county manager and himself to work on a letter to send to NC DOT to get an official response from them on why DOT will not take this property over. He added that DOT has made the statement that Shadow Ridge Road Extension is one of the best private roads maintained that they have seen. The problem is that any upgrade to this road the citizens have to bear that burden and there is other property that could take other houses. Individuals are more apt to move onto a road that is state maintained. According to Commissioner Owen DOT stated that this road would have to be turned over to public but the road has to be paved up to NC DOT standards and that is quite an expense to the residents. Commissioner Owen stated that he wants to try to work with DOT, send a letter so the county can get an official response so the county manager, himself as well as others can see what other routes can be taken.

The Board came to the consensus allow Commissioner Owen and the county manager to send a letter to NC DOT to try to have something done with Shadow Ridge Road Extension.

GUILFORD MILLS LEASE RATE INCREASE

Mr. Miller stated that the current lease rate for Guilford Mills office space is $8.00 per square foot. He added that in evaluating this year’s budget it came to light that the utilities were overspent so the county is looking for a rate increase for the rental rate at Guilford Mills for office space to $8.25 per square foot. Mr. Miller stated that this is an item in his opinion that could be addressed during the budget work sessions along with all the other fee schedules and rate increases that may be proposed.

Commissioner Travis stated that if the county is losing money then the rate needs to be increase enough to take care of the difference. Mr. Miller responded that this rate increase would do that. This does not cover the full amount because PCC utilizes have of Guilford Mills the county pays that portion of the utilities but looking at the rate on a per square foot basis it is equitable on the percentage of the utilities that they should be paying.

Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner W. Carter to raise the lease rate at Guilford Mills to $8.25 per square foot.

Commissioner Owen asked what the rate per square footage goes for in Yanceyville. Mr. Miller responded that there are three kinds of office space, Class A, B and C and this is a Class C office space.

Upon a vote of a motion, the motion carried unanimously.

HIGH SCHOOL FINANCING

Referendum

Vice Chairman McVey stated that the Board had already taken a general consensus on the referendum so he asked for a motion to move forward with the referendum.

Commissioner Travis stated the he would like to see the Board put two referendums on the ballot this November, one for the high school project and the other for the security of all the schools. He added that he has been receiving telephone calls on this and felt like the security of the schools would pass but not the high school project as a whole.

Commissioner Owen stated that he thought the Board had already vote on putting the referendum on the ballot but the Board needed to clarify the amount for the resolution. Mr. Miller responded that this was correct.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that like Mr. Travis he has received numerous calls and several visits from the citizens in his district about the school bond referendum and what he is hearing mainly is the safety concern. He agreed that there needed to be a second referendum for the security for all the schools only. He added that he believed that the county manager said this would be $2.5 million. Mr. Miller responded that the security amount would be an increase from what the School System included in its FY 2018-19 budget which is approximately $1.5 million. Commissioner W. Carter continued by saying that the high school security would have to be added to this amount. Mr. Miller responded that the high school security would be higher but he did not have that number. He asked if the Board would like for Dr. Carter to respond to this because he does not have a good true number for the security at the high school.

Dr. Carter stated that there were a couple of things that she wanted to share. She stated that she knew there were a lot of concerns about or questions about new construction and she believes a lot of people are unsure of what the School Board is asking for. She added that the School Board is not asking to bulldoze down BY including the CTE building, the civic center and the good buildings. The only building the School Board is asking for new construction is Halls 1, 2 and 3. Dr. Carter stated that yes the high school is sixty plus years old and yes there are other schools in North Carolina that are as old if not older. She added that the ones that were mentioned from Alamance the commissioners just approved a referendum of $150 million and $70 million of that is to go to the construction of those particular schools that were indicated as being older and one of those is new construction of a high school. Dr. Carter stated that the point is should the money be spent on BY but that is the only high school in this county. The labs are not adequate so the science labs cannot be done. She added that there are the 34 entrances that were discussed earlier but the high school is open at every aspect for anyone to ‘come on board’ and is almost impossible to secure. She added that the list goes on and on and on. There is a huge need for security at BYHS but it is $33 million worth of need. Dr. Carter stated that she could not pull out the eye wash stations are more important than the 34 entrances or secured corridors that the school would like to have. She stated that it is said the schools need better scores and people moving into the county, the county needs teachers but the only teachers they can get to commit are the natives of Caswell County. Dr. Carter stated that the schools have done a lot of things over the past year. They have put in systems that they hope will increase the students’ academic scores. Just last week the CTE scores, platinum is the highest a student can score and 14 students scored platinum. Last year no students scored platinum. She asked the Board what message is being sent to the teachers that we don’t appreciate what they are doing, their surrounding or their safety. Dr. Carter stated that she hoped the Board would take into consideration that everything the School Board has asked for with the high school involved academics and safety with safety being a priority and she added that she cannot pull out the things that are not safe because it all goes together. She did not like the statement that was made earlier that the school system does not keep the schools up because she believes they do keep them up with the money that they have. Dr. Carter stated that the A/C at Oakwood went out last week and it cost $5,000 and decision had to be made that day so the school system needs money in reserve for these kinds of things. Dr. Carter asked the Board to put Bartlett Yancey High School and education as a priority.

Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner W. Carter to have 2 separate referendums on the ballot in November, one for security and one for the high school.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman, I don’t see how we can do that at this time since today is our deadline for this resolution to…” Commissioner Travis responded “Hold on Mr. Carter, we can do whatever we want to do, we are in charge, not them, this Board right here is in charge, now you can step up and do your job or get on the school board, one of the two.” Commissioner S. Carter continued “Mr. Chairman may I continue, we have a deadline for this resolution before us and we also need a number in there for the calculations for the safety portion of the referendum because the $1.4 million for all of the schools other than Bartlett Yancey and we have this conglomerate of estimates for the construction/renovation of the school and we have yet to calculate what that be and I don’t see how we can do that when we don’t have that information. I will ask the sources at hand who deal with that.”

Mr. Ferrell stated that just as a point of clarification, the Board took action at the last meeting to move forward with a referendum on the high school construction but the blanks need to be filled, the not to exceed amount for the resolution as well as the anticipated tax rate. He added that the manager pulled together his best estimates of those numbers and is prepared to give the Board several scenarios to fill in those blanks which would allow the Board to adopt the resolution of intent to move forward with a referendum. Mr. Ferrell stated that Mr. Travis has moved and it has been seconded to have a second set of resolutions to have approved that would essentially to deal specifically with the safety and security at all the schools. He added that the same thing would be needed for this resolution, a dollar amount would be needed for the not to exceed amount as well as the anticipated tax rate on the resolution. Mr. Ferrell stated that the manager does not have the numbers for the safety issues. Bond counsel has informed the county that in order to make the publications that are necessary, applications to the LGC that are necessary all in time to have the wording for the bond referendum printed on the ballots in November the Board is at that breaking point today to get this done for the ballot.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman in addition, of course we have this resolution but can we just write a new resolution for the safety portion for another referendum, do we have that ability to do that?” Mr. Ferrell responded that the Board probably has enough information and direction from the Board today a second referendum could be put on the ballot in November for safety and security issues. Commissioner S. Carter continued “Mr. Chairman we don’t have those numbers and the numbers that were presented to us at our last work shop how much of that is for safety and security? Can we come up with that number and have it ready today is my question?” Commissioner W. Carter responded that after talking with the manager if the Board includes Bartlett Yancey it would be $2.5 million and the Board can put in the resolution not to exceed $3 million.

Mr. Miller stated that he does not know what the safety and security number would be. He added that the $2.5 million was a million over the School Board’s request in the budget but he did not have a number to address the safety concern at Bartlett Yancey. Commissioner Travis responded that he did not think the School Board was 100% sure on the $1.5 million for the other schools. He added that it did not make any difference what the cost is something will have to be done about the security at the schools. Commissioner Travis continued by saying that if the taxpayers agree to pay $2.5 million and the Board has to pay half a million that is better than taking it all out of fund balance.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that he heard what Mr. Travis said and he heard what Mr. Carter said but the Board agreed that it was going to do a referendum and the county does not need two referendums. He added if the taxpayers vote the referendum down they vote it down if that is not what they want. If they vote it down the school board can bring it back to the Board and the Board will still have to do it. He asked why the Board would want a $1.3 or $2 million referendum and then a $33 million referendum because it did not make sense to him. He recommended that it be included in one referendum and whatever the outcome is the outcome. Commissioner Jefferies stated if the taxpayers vote it down they vote it down. He added that the county does not need two referendums and that is the way he feels. Commissioner Travis responded that this was Commissioner Jefferies thought but he thinks the county needs to offer 2 referendums so the taxpayers can decide.

Commissioner Owen asked the attorney if the tax rate increase would be required for the resolution as well as the dollar amount. Mr. Ferrell responded that the county manager informed the Board that a one cent tax increase equals about $150,000 so that tax rate can be determined after the dollar amount is decided.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman, just one comment, we have had several workshops on this, we have had meeting on this and presentations and most recently last Thursday, what changed between last Thursday and today? Why wasn’t this discussed last Thursday with the full board? This is coming up at the last minute on the last day.” Commissioner Travis responded “We don’t have to discuss it with them. We make the decisions. Don’t you understand, this Board here makes the final decision on the money we spend and how we spend it? We are giving the taxpayers a way to vote two different ways. What is wrong with that?” Commissioner S. Carter continued “My question is, why wasn’t this discussed prior to today. That’s all I am asking.” Commissioner Travis responded “I just told you why.” Commissioner S. Carter stated “That’s not a sufficient answer in my opinion.” Commissioner Travis responded “It may not satisfy you but I am just telling you like it is. This Board here has the final say on this right here.”

Commissioner Jefferies stated that the Board has a policy that it does not bring up something and vote on it the same day. Commissioner Travis responded that this policy has been broke ever since he has been on the Board because it has been done a lot.

Upon a vote of the motion, the motion failed by a vote of two to four with Commissioner S. Carter, Jefferies, McVey and Owen voting no.

Commissioner Owen stated that the Board needs to give the county manager a figure to go into the resolution.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman the figure that we discussed at previous workshops was $36.5 million which includes $1.5 million for the security of the other schools, that is the figure that we approved by consensus that we would pursue.”

Commissioner Owen asked the county manager if this was the number that included the security. Mr. Miller responded that the $36.5 million is the number that includes the safety and security measures.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to approve up to $36.5 million to go into the resolution.

Mr. Miller stated that the tax rate increase which also has to be included in the resolution is affected by the term of the loan so the Board needs to identify the term of the loan as well.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he thinks the Board needs to determine the term of the loan before the amount of the loan.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman at the last regular meeting of this Board I made a request to or maybe it was the meeting before I may be mistaken, but I made a request to Chairman Hall to take a consensus vote for clarity and to determine the term of the loan and I was beginning a set of comments when I was cut off by a lack of information because we did not have all of the information prepared and I was cut off and Mr. Jefferies I think was the only one that vote against the 30 year, I was bringing it back up again because based on previous workshops we have some commissioners now that want 40 years and I am adding my name to that list that requested a 40 year term so I would first like to make a motion on this to determine whether it needs to be 40 years.”

Commissioner S. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to make the term of the loan 40 years.

Commissioner Owen withdrew his motion to approve up to $36.5 million to go into the resolution.

Commissioner Owen stated that just for information the Board needs to realize that 40 years is going to cost Caswell County an additional $8 million at minimum over that 10 extra years. Commissioner Jefferies responded if the county used the 10 extra years. Commissioner Owen stated it would be the same with 30 years the county could pay off the 30 year loan and save even more money. He added that the county has never paid off anything early that he is aware of. Commissioner Owen stated that he wanted the public to know that this would cost the county an additional $8 million. He added that he would rather use that $8 million for some infrastructure in the county because the county has a lot of issues as well. Commissioner Jefferies responded that the county is supposed to be getting a $15 million grant or at least he hoped the county will receive it. Commissioner Owen responded that the county could get the $16 million from the state. Commissioner Jefferies stated that with 30 years it would be almost 8 cents but with 40 years it would be a 5 cent tax increase. Commissioner Owen stated that the county needs to look at the debt management because the detention center amount is decreasing and if the Board will take that amount that is being decreased the Board would be able to eliminate a couple of cents on taxes. He added that he detention center payment will decrease by about 22,000 and the next year is forty some thousand and the year after that is sixty some thousand and this could decrease a 30 year loan or a 40 year loan.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman, to the best of my knowledge the $3 million in the ADM fund that the school is willing to contribute to this we have to decide either to use as debt service or to offset the initial project cost so their $3 million could offset this estimated $8 million or more if we do the 30 year loan or the 40 year we will have to decide that after the term.”

Upon a vote on the motion, the motion failed by a vote of three to three with Commissioners McVey, Owen and Travis voting no.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Here’s what waiting until the last minute does for you.”

Mr. Ferrell stated that there are two open items on the resolution. The first is the notice of intent to apply for the general obligation bonds and that is the Notice of Intent to apply to the LGC and it says ‘To pay costs of capital improvements of acquiring, constructing, improving, expanding, renovating and equipping County public school facilities…’ and the county is going to add to that ‘and including additional security measures for other schools’ so the language will be amended and then there is a dollar amount. He added that the term and how the county anticipates paying for the debt service will depend on the term and how the $3 million will be used but he added that there seems to be a consensus amongst the Board on the dollar amount, the not to exceed dollar amount and if this is the case the Board can proceed that filling in the blank. He suggested that if the Board wanted to fill in that blank and then move to the anticipated debt service impact. Then the Board would have the notice of intent done.

Commissioner Owen stated that if that is what the Board can do then he would restate his motion.

Commissioner Owen moved not to exceed $36.5 million.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “We would like to add that we need a bit of information, we have to decide what the $3 million ADM funds will go to, either to offset the costs because if we do that it would be $33.5 million towards the debt service.”

Mr. Miller stated the first blank the commissioners see in the resolution is a not to exceed number and the project cannot go over this number without a lot of things taking place. He added that the tax rate increase should be close but it doesn’t have to be absolute so the Board can go on the high side with the tax rate increase and feel safe with the projection if the Board would like to do that. Commissioner Jefferies asked the county manager why he would go on the high side of the tax rate would that be so that the referendum would fail. Mr. Miller responded no that is not the reason behind it; it is to move the process forward.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman, I have a question, would you consider making the decision on the $3 million so we can get the not to exceed amount? Does that make sense?” Commissioner Owen responded that the Board can decide on debt reduction or whatever but the Board needs to decide on the key amount for the resolution. Commissioner S. Carter continued “The $3 million could reduce that amount to $33.5 million.” Commissioner Owen responded that it would not matter in the resolution because if the county does not spend but $33.5 million the county would not exceed the $36.5 million.

Mr. Ferrell stated that this does not discount what Mr. Jefferies said, the voters will want to know the amount and this is not an easy decision.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner W. Carter not to exceed $36.5 million. The motion carried by a vote of five to one with Commissioner Travis voting no.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman, can we follow through with the request I made on the $3 million?”

Commissioner Owen asked the county manager where the $3 million was listed. Mr. Miller responded that it was in both options. He added that there are 4 scenarios, 2 with the 30 year term and 2 with the 40 year term.

Commissioner W. Carter asked if the term would remain at 30 years since the vote on the 40 years did not pass. Mr. Ferrell responded that there was no definitive decision at this meeting on the term so it is still open for debate. Commissioner W. Carter continued by saying there was a vote already taken for the 30 year term. Commissioner S. Carter responded “I would just like to add Mr. Carter that was before we received some additional information.” Commissioner W. Carter stated that this did not make any difference because the term was voted on. He then asked if the term had been decided. Mr. Ferrell responded that the term is still open for debate. Commissioner Travis stated it was a consensus and not a vote on the term.

Vice Chairman McVey stated to get back to Mr. Sterling Carter’s question on the $3 million. Commissioner S. Carter stated “To use it to offset the project, I am just seeing how the Board feels about it.

Mr. Miller stated the average tax increase between the four difference scenarios is 7.47 cent. He added that the scenarios range from 8.79, 7.14, 7.75 and 6.23 cent tax increases. Mr. Miller stated the lowest tax rate increase would be associated with using the $3 million upfront and a 40 year loan term.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman to add to that when we had the workshop and the full Board was not present then, we had this, I had this question a couple of months ago as well with this 7 odd cent tax increase figure here can be spread through multiple years so there is not as much harsh increase in one, two or three years and I want the citizens or anyone reading the minutes to know that it does not have to be a 7 cents hike all at once.”

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he knew the security was the most important thing for the schools but he thinks the $3 million down payment on the loan could be used to pay for security in all the schools and that could be something that could start immediately.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman that Mr. Carter would then confound the capital request for us and we would not be able to make the decision today.” Commissioner W. Carter responded that it would be the same because $3 million in the loan is for security so the loan would still be the same.

Commissioner Owen stated that someone needs to make a motion.

Commissioner W. Carter moved in lieu of using the $3 million as a down payment on the school project to use the $3 million for the safety and security of the schools. The motion died due to a lack of a second.

Commissioner W. Carter stated there goes the security.

Commissioner S. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to use the $3 million to offset the original project costs.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he wanted to Board to realize that the $3 million could be used this budget year for security instead of having to wait 2 or 3 years down the road.

Upon a vote of the motion, the motion carried by a vote of four to two with Commissioners W. Carter and Travis voting no.

Vice Chairman McVey stated the Board still needed to vote on the terms of the loan.

Commissioner Jefferies moved, seconded by Commissioner S. Carter for a 40 year term. The motion failed by a vote of two to four with Commissioners W. Carter, McVey, Owen and Travis voting no.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Travis for the term of the loan not to exceed 30 years. The motion carried by a vote of four to two with Commissioners S. Carter and Jefferies voting no.

Mr. Miller stated there will be a $33.5 million debt issuance over 30 years with an expected tax increase of 7.75 cent.

Mr. Ferrell stated for clarification the Board has the blanks filled in now for the resolution. He added the not to exceed amount is $36.5 million and the estimated tax increase is 7.75 cents so the Board now needs to adopt the resolution and also approve the notice of intent to apply to the LGC.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he would like to go on record again that the $3 million that is going to be used for the down payment could have been applied towards the security of the schools this year and could have gone into effect this budget year and the security of the schools could have been updated for the safety of the children. Commissioner Owen added that he would like to add that the School Board could have made that decision because the School Board is the one that made the decision that the $3 million would be used towards debt and not security. Dr. Carter stated that the $3 million for the loan has stipulations and cannot be used for repairs.

Commissioner S. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to adopt the resolution with the information of not to exceed $36.5 million and the 7.75 cent tax rate increase. The motion carried by a vote of six to one with Commissioner Travis voting no.

Commissioner S. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to approve the Notice of Intent to apply to the LGC. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Great.”

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

COUNTY MANAGER’S UPDATES

Personnel Policy Work Session Dates

Mr. Miller stated that there have been three commissioners to reply to the Personnel Policy Work Session Doodle Poll that was sent out for May 21st, 22nd and 23rd and any of these dates were good for the 3 commissioners that responded. He asked if these dates were good for the rest of the Board.

Commissioner Owen recommended that the county manager pick a day and time and if the commissioners can be there that is fine and if not that is fine as well.

Mr. Miller stated that the Personnel Policy Work Session will be held on May 23, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

ANNOUNCMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

A. Memorial Day Service – Monday, May 28, 2018 @ 11:00 a.m. – Civic Center

 B. Caswell County Blood Drive – Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

 C. Heritage Festival – Saturday, June 23, 2018 @ 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The clerk stated that the Cheers and Steers event that was originally scheduled for June 17, 2018 has been rescheduled for September or October of this year.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that Highway 87 Auction collected 2 large boxes of food and supplies to send to the U.S. troops in Syria.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner W. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Travis to go into Closed Session to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential (NCGS 143-318.11(a)(1)). The motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR SESSION

Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to resume the regular meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The clerk informed the Board that she would be attending the Clerks’ Certification Course the week of May 14th through 18th so the agenda for Monday, June 4, 2018 will be sent out on Friday, May 11, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:11 a.m. Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Paula P. Seamster Rick McVey

Clerk to the Board Vice Chairman

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*