

NORTH CAROLINA

WAYNE COUNTY

The Wayne County Board of Commissioners met in special session on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 2:01 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room in the Wayne County Courthouse Annex, Goldsboro, North Carolina, after due notice thereof had been given. The purpose of the meeting was the 2021/2022 Proposed Budget work session.

Members present: George Wayne Aycock, Jr., Chairman; Freeman Hardison, Jr., Vice-Chairman; Barbara Aycock; Joe Daughtery; Bevan Foster; Chris Gurley; and Antonio Williams

Members absent: None

Others present: Members of the Wayne County staff

Call to Order

Chairman George Wayne Aycock, Jr. called the meeting to order.

Invocation

Commissioner Antonio Williams gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Joe Daughtery led the Board of Commissioners in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Discussion of the 2021/2022 Proposed Budget Ordinance

County Manager Craig Honeycutt explained the budget process to the Board and gave an overview of the County Manager's Recommended Budget. He stated the Budget Hearing is scheduled for June 1, 2021 and the budget could be approved any time after the hearing was completed, as long as it is done by June 30, 2021; otherwise an interim budget would have to be filed until the budget is adopted.

Chairman George Wayne Aycock, Jr. thanked the staff for their work on the budget.

Commissioner Joe Daughtery spoke on this being his 9th budget as a Commissioner and said he believed the responsibility of the Board was to be the eyes and ears of the citizens of their districts.

Chairman George Wayne Aycock, Jr. said he believed the Board represents all citizens, not just those in their individual districts.

Following the review by the Board of the County Manager's budget message, Commissioner Joe Daughtery spoke on the proposed study for the jail that had yet to be completed. He stated he had an issue with a 3% COLA increase and believes it should be 2%. He said the County is mandated to increase retirement 1.2% for all employees and another 1.2% for law enforcement employees. He said that is a raise in itself. Commissioner Daughtery stated he also wanted to discuss new positions proposed in the budget.

Chairman George Wayne Aycock, Jr. reminded the Board there was no increase in pay for Wayne County employees in 2020 and only a 1% COLA and the possibility of a 1% merit in 2019.

County Manager Craig Honeycutt said operationally, the County did not need to raise the tax rate; however, Capital Projects would bring new debt of \$58 million, raising the rate by \$.054. Mr. Honeycutt said the new rate would still be lower than all surrounding counties.

Commissioner Joe Daughtery asked for the tax rate in 2012 and Tax Administrator Alan Lumpkin stated it was \$.7025.

Chairman Aycock asked Mr. Honeycutt if the tax increase would be needed if the projects were not built; Honeycutt said no. Aycock asked the Board if they wanted to increase the taxes to take care of the needs presented or “kick the can down the road again?”

Commissioner Bevan Foster asked for the tax rates for surrounding counties. Wilson - \$.73; Johnston - \$.76; Lenoir - \$.845; Greene - \$.786; Duplin - \$.735; Sampson - \$.825. He said these needs will continue to be an issue and asked at what point is Wayne County going to continue to be behind, adding, if not now, when? He discussed the ages of the Health Department and the Department of Social Services buildings and asked how much new construction would be in the future.

Commissioner Antonio Williams asked if the budget numbers could be reevaluated, possibly cutting costs in departments to assist with new projects, including the sewer issues that were a big problem and very costly.

County Manager Craig Honeycutt said there were areas in the budget where mistakes were made and corrected that would show as savings, but he said cuts could still be made, though the debt service would still be there. He recommended lessening the amount of fund balance used to balance the budget.

Commissioner Joe Daughtery stated if departments have it, they will spend it. He said anywhere reasonable cuts in spending and reasonable adjustments in revenue can be made, the County should do it. His goal was to make small changes that would move the tax rate increase from \$.054 to \$.044.

Chairman George Wayne Aycock, Jr. reminded the Board the only thing Wayne County can offer its citizens is service.

Mr. Honeycutt reminded the Board that management has asked the departments to cut their budgets by 2% each year for the past few years.

2:25 P.M. Vice-Chairman Freeman Hardison, Jr. Joined the Meeting

2:28 P.M. Commissioner Chris Gurley Joined the Meeting

In responding to an earlier question by Commissioner Barbara Aycock, Finance Director Allison Speight stated last year’s expenditures should be lower than anticipated and the revenues higher than anticipated, and the County should end the 2020-2021 budget year in the black.

In discussion of COVID/CARES funding, County Manager Craig Honeycutt stated no ARP funds were used in the 2021-2022 proposed budget.

Discussion of EMS Budget with EMS Director Dave Cuddeback

County Manager Craig Honeycutt stated the upcoming year would be year two of the pay classification adjustment, which has reduced vacancies of 35% to a waiting list for employees in that department. He thanked Mr. Cuddeback for what he has done to turn the department around.

Vice-Chairman Freeman Hardison, Jr. asked Mr. Cuddeback about overtime and Commissioner Joe Daughtery stated he had a problem with an increase in the budget from \$800,000 to \$1 million. Mr. Cuddeback explained his budget and planning for the year, as well as the fluctuating time schedule used in emergency management.

Following a question and answer period, Commissioner Joe Daughtery asked Mr. Cuddeback to reduce his overtime budget by 12%. More discussion followed regarding overtime and holiday pay.

Commissioner Bevan Foster stated it appeared an issue is being made out of something that shouldn't be an issue. He said it hadn't been looked at for eight years and was in the personnel policy. Commissioner Daughtery said holiday pay was not included in the salary study two years ago and that skewed the numbers. Mr. Cuddeback stated all surrounding counties provide holiday pay. County Manager Craig Honeycutt explained why the employees in emergency services received the pay and how their schedules worked.

Commissioner Chris Gurley asked for clarification on lowering the line item for overtime and calculated the reduction at near \$89,000.

Discussion of Various Departments

Staff Attorney Andrew Neal explained any individual changes to the proposed budget would be put on a separate sheet so they could be voted on individually, versus rewriting the entire proposed budget prior to its being passed.

Chairman George Wayne Aycock, Jr. asked the Board to go through each department, beginning with the front of the budget book.

Following a discussion of bank fees, (\$66,000 from BB&T), County Manager Craig Honeycutt stated the County postponed examining other banks until after the new software implementation.

Commissioner Joe Daughtery discussed the telephone charges for the entire County and the tax office.

Tax Administrator Alan Lumpkin advocated for the 3% increase for all employees.

Staff Attorney Andrew Neal discussed foreclosures and revenues generated by the same.

Discussion of Register of Deeds Budget with Registrar Constance Coram

Commissioner Joe Daughtery asked about the increase in revenue estimates from Ms. Coram. She stated records are being destroyed and discussed items related to expenses. Commissioner Joe Daughtery then referred his questions to Finance Director Allison Speight, asking if she could advise on the revenue estimates provided.

Register of Deeds Constance Coram discussed issues and the "mess" the Register of Deeds Office was in. Commissioner Bevan Foster asked Ms. Coram if she had asked for a budget amendment for increased revenue. Commissioner Chris Gurley stated the housing industry boom would account for much of the increase.

Ms. Coram discussed new online services and a new software program she would be starting soon for requesting records online. Discussion followed on the safety and security of retrieving personal records online.

Discussion of Information Technology Budget with IT Director Ryan Preble

Commissioner Joe Daughtery stated he had an issue with the request from IT for additional personnel to replace potential retiring personnel. Mr. Preble explained the need and the Board discussed the issue with him.

Commissioner Bevan Foster asked if technology was steadily growing and what the County had added in the five years since Mr. Preble had been with the County. Commissioner Antonio Williams agreed with Commissioner Foster on ever-changing technology.

Commissioner Daughtery asked Mr. Preble to explain training for two years. Further discussion of various line items under IT ensued.

4:19 P.M. Commissioner Chris Gurley left the meeting

Other items discussed included wireless infrastructure upgrade, camera replacements, and licensing updates.

4:24 P.M. Commissioner Chris Gurley returned to the meeting

Discussion of Facilities/Fleet Services/Sewer Budget with Facilities Director Kendall Lee

Discussion items included service and maintenance contracts, uniforms, and steel-toed boots, as well as sewer system budget items, current studies, and City rates.

Commissioner Joe Daughtery stated no one is happy with the handling of Fleet Management, and discussed the costs and charges, as well as why the County is charging itself. Mr. Lee said he knew and felt the County should simply pay the mechanics and stop transferring money between departments.

Commissioner Antonio Williams asked about fuel costs and the possibility of using electric vehicles. He asked Mr. Lee if electric vehicles had been researched. Staff and Board members commented on the shortage of charging stations in the County and the difficulty of getting rid of electric cars once they are no longer useful.

5:02 P.M. Commissioner Joe Daughtery left the meeting

5:05 P.M. Commissioner Joe Daughtery returned to the meeting

Discussion of Sheriff's Office and Jail Budget with Sheriff Larry M. Pierce

Discussion began with the line item of professional services, which the Sheriff explained was related to the accreditation program called CALEA. The Sheriff stated he is trying to streamline as much as possible but guessing on a price, as that is not known until the program is created for his department. Various other line items were discussed.

Commissioner Antonio Williams asked about professional services for the Detention Center and Major Robert Thaxton explained the cost was for the medical provider, Southern Health Partners. Discussion included many line items and the possibility of catastrophic inmate medical insurance.

Commissioner Joe Daughtery asked Major Thaxton about holiday pay and questioned SROs (School Resource Officers). Commissioner Daughtery stated it began with Sandy Hook shootings and wants their cost added to the school budget to show fully what the County gives to the Wayne County Public Schools. Commissioner Antonio Williams agreed. Commissioner Daughtery also discussed Day Reporting and expanding the program to save jail costs.

Discussion of 911 Call Center/Emergency Services/Public Library with Managers

Of note in these discussions was the County paying for the Workers Comp Insurance for the volunteer fire departments; and repairs to the Fremont Library.

Discussion of Health Department Budget with Dr. Brenda Weis

Dr. Brenda Weis explained changes to her budget and answered questions with the Board. Dr. Weis explained new revenue projections for her department, resulting in a \$750,000.00 reduction in her budget for the County.

Commissioner Chris Gurley asked about a capital needs grant. Dr. Weis said it was difficult to obtain capital needs grants but possible for programs. Commissioner Joe Daughtery questioned school nurses for \$250,000 and Dr. Weis explained the program. Daughtery asked the amount to be added to the total public schools budget.

Discussion of vaccination efforts began and Vice-Chairman Freeman Hardison, Jr. asked how to get citizens to get their vaccine. Dr. Weis explained various efforts and also praised EMS Director Dave Cuddeback and his staff for all they did to make the vaccination efforts at the Bussman Building successful.

Various Items Discussed for the Proposed Budget

School Funding, the new DSS/Health Department building, DSS operations budget, cutting the proposed tax rate from \$.054 to \$.044, a review of reductions requested during the work session, and the Sheriff's Office pay raise effective date.

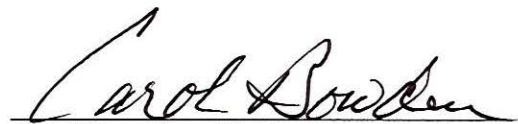
Closed Session

At 7:11 p.m., upon motion of Vice-Chairman Freeman Hardison, Jr., the Board of Commissioners unanimously declared itself in closed session to consult with attorneys employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorneys and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged.

At 7:32 p.m., upon motion of Commissioner Antonio Williams, the Board of Commissioners unanimously declared itself in regular session.

Adjournment

At 7:34 p.m., Chairman George Wayne Aycock, Jr. adjourned the special meeting of the Wayne County Board of Commissioners.



Carol Bowden, Clerk to the Board
Wayne County Board of Commissioners