

Surry County Board of Commissioners
 Meeting of April 13, 2021
 Budget Work Session

The Surry County Board of Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m., April 13, 2021, for a budget work session. The meeting was held in the Farm Bureau Training Room, Service Center, Dobson, N.C., virtually via Zoom and YouTube.

Board members present in-person for the meeting were Chairman Mark Marion, Vice-Chairman Bill Goins, Commissioner Larry Johnson, Commissioner Van Tucker and Commissioner Eddie Harris.

Others present in-person for the meeting, at various times, were:

- Todd Harris, Register of Deeds
- Sheriff Steve Hiatt
- Chris Knopf, County Manager
- Sandy Snow, Assistant County Manager
- Rhonda Nixon, Finance Officer
- Jessica Montgomery, Public Works Director
- Chief Deputy Paul Barker, Sheriff's Office
- David Speight, Interim Emergency Services Director
- Martha Brintle, MIS Director
- Jordan Wooten, Finance
- Nathan Walls, Assistant to the County Manager
- Other Register of Deeds Staff

Chairman Marion called the meeting to order. Commissioner Tucker delivered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Marion requested the Board review and approve the agenda. Upon motion of Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

Todd Harris, Register of Deeds, presented and detailed his department's budget request for fiscal year 2021-2022 (FY22). He said his budget request shows a savings and is the lowest for the Register of Deeds Office since FY14.

Mr. Harris detailed the savings for his office, said that he wants the office to become a certified passport issuer and recognized his staff. He said the savings from the previous fiscal year would be \$21,132 and a savings from FY20 of \$96,238.

Mr. Harris recognized Assistant County Manager Sandy Snow's hard work in assisting his office.

Commissioner Johnson and Mr. Harris discussed how the recent real estate boom has increased the office's revenues.

Commissioner Tucker and Mr. Harris discussed where the office found savings.

Mr. Harris also discussed electronic and technological efforts.

Jessica Montgomery, Public Works Director, presented and detailed her department's budget request. She said removing glass recycling at convenience centers would save money each year. The Board discussed the topic in detail with Ms. Montgomery.

The Board spoke with Ms. Montgomery about the need to make improvements at and potentially move the North Surry Convenience Center. A potential change of convenience center hours was also discussed. Commissioner Tucker recommended that Ms. Montgomery report back to the Board with her recommendations.

Ms. Montgomery reviewed Public Works fees and proposed changes to current landfill fees, to include a television disposal fee, which would help recoup costs Public Works has to pay for the televisions to be disposed.

Road signs, the household solid waste fee and the Facilities budget were discussed. Ms. Montgomery discussed a weatherproofing and first floor renovation project for the Historic Courthouse.

Ms. Montgomery requested a landfill budget increase of approximately \$200,000.

Discussion ensued about the litter marketing campaign and litter collection efforts.

Ms. Montgomery also discussed a new roof installation project for the Health & Nutrition Center for approximately \$290,000. She said no interior renovations can happen for the Health & Nutrition Center until the roof is completed. Ms. Montgomery said that it would cost approximately \$92,000 to seal the windows of the Government Center. She said the Government Center and Resource Center parking lots will need upgrades soon.

David Speight, Interim Emergency Services Director, presented and detailed his department's budget request. Mr. Speight said the department has a large amount of equipment that needs replacing. He said technology associated with the equipment is also advancing very quickly. Mr. Speight said heart monitors, mobile and handheld radios and stretchers need replacement.

He discussed a possible 10-year lease plan, totaling \$207,890, that would cover new CPRs, new heart monitors and new digital laryngoscopes for ambulances and QRVs. Each time the equipment is upgraded, the leasing company would automatically replace them at no extra fee. The plan requires no contracts or maintenance fees. Mr. Speight said Wake and Guilford counties are also researching the lease program.

Mr. Speight reviewed his request for ambulance chassis remounts, 16 Viking radios, three power stretchers, three Kenwood mobile dual band radios, two APX 6000 radios and other items.

He provided a heat map showing EMS calls and locations to the Board. Discussion ensued about moving QRVs to different areas to better serve the County.

County Manager Chris Knopf and the Board discussed the current model structure for rescue squads and volunteer fire departments.

Chief Deputy Paul Barker, with Sheriff Steve Hiatt, presented and detailed the Sheriff's Office budget request. Increases include the addition of four detention officer positions, 40k separation allowance for sworn detention officers, one overdose death detective position and one hybrid elementary school resource officer position. Needed vehicles and equipment also are included in the request. Radios, in-car cameras and body cameras were also part of the request.

The Board discussed with Chief Deputy Barker school resource officer hires over the last few years. The increase in detention officers from 32 to the proposed total of 50, between 2017-2021, was also discussed.

Mr. Knopf asked if some transportation officers could become detention officers, to which Chief Deputy Barker said no, they would still be needed for mental commitments and health transports.

Commissioner Goins said he has concerns with providing sworn officer benefits to 13 detention officers, because not all would be road-ready sworn officers. Sheriff Hiatt said some detention officers are doing field training to be on the road. Chief Deputy Barker said some people have a misconception that road deputies are in more danger than detention officers, which is not true.

The Board had a long discussion with Chief Deputy Barker and Sheriff Hiatt about 401k separation allowance for sworn detention officers and the number of counties who are providing the benefits.

Discussion occurred about training and education for deputies and detention officers.

Rhonda Nixon, Finance Officer, detailed the increase in the Sheriff's Office overall budget since 2019.

Chief Deputy Barker discussed in detail the overdose death detective position that is proposed in the budget request.

The vehicle lease program was discussed.

Commissioner Harris requested that Animal Control leadership come to a future Board meeting for an update on their activities.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:08 p.m.

Nathan Walls
Clerk to the Board