

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION** June 13, 2013

**ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

PRESENT: James “Burkie Jennings, Chairman
Larry Yoder, Vice-Chairman
Ryan Mayberry
Judy M. Moose
W. Darrell Robertson

STAFF: Rick French, County Manager

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a work session on Thursday, June 13, 2013 in the County Administration Building downstairs conference room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jennings called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2013-2014 BUDGET REVIEW

Rick French, County Manager, gave a brief overview of the 2013-2014 proposed budget, which totals \$34,663,449. This is a \$574,616 or 1.6% increase from the 2012-2013 budget which totals \$34,088,803. He stated that the General Fund contained 20 new employees - 12 for the new Alexander County Detention Center, 2 for the Sheriff’s Department, one in Human Resources, one in Public Buildings, 3 at DSS, and one at the Bethlehem Library (transitioning a 32-hour position to 40 hours). A County engineer position is also proposed in the Water Fund.

He reported on revenue and expenses comparisons as well as property tax collections for current and past years, which has remained fairly consistent. He also discussed the differences in the Senate and House budget related to tax reform, noting that the NCACC projected a net loss of \$82 million to counties with the Senate proposal and a \$74 million net with the House proposal when fully implemented in 2018.

Mr. French stated that, so far, \$2,523,649 would be needed from the Fund Balance to balance the County budget; however, this number may increase or decrease before the budget is approved.

PROPOSED PROJECTS

Mr. French discussed the following projects planned for the 2013-2014 budget year:

- Water System Project - \$3.4 million no interest loan from the state revolving loan fund paid with water revenue. Staff also plans to apply for more funding in September.
- Courthouse renovations - \$1.5 million available from the Jail Project loan for the HVAC system and ADA compliance issues.
- Rocky Face Park - \$225,000 match necessary for PARTF grant to construct playground equipment, community building, and a wetlands project and will be paid out over a 2-year period.
- Demolition of old Dayton property – will create the need to locate space for the garage, TESC Program, and Probation & Parole.
- Evidence / storage building for Sheriff's Department – current building is at the old Dayton property and will be demolished.
- Garage – currently located at the old Dayton property.
- CVCC expansion / Taylor Togs property – renovations to be completed with a \$900,000 Golden Leaf grant.

He advised that there were currently no funds budgeted for the Dayton property demolition, estimated at \$75,000, and evidence building for the Sheriff's Department, estimated at \$100,000, and construction of a new garage, estimated at \$265,000 for building and equipment. Estimates for renovations at the Animal Shelter were higher than expected so the project will be put on hold.

Mr. French discussed County debt as of June 30, 2012 which totaled \$16,677,247 in addition to \$3,200,000 of water debt, as follows:

- CVCC / Alexander Center – remaining \$151,666 will be paid off in December 2015.
- Ellendale Elementary – remaining \$3,312,257 will be paid off in March 2021.
- DSS Expansion / ACHS Auditorium – remaining \$2,427,237 will be paid off in June 2019.
- Classrooms / renovations at various schools – remaining \$1,411,667 will be paid off in 2017.
- Bethlehem Branch Library – last payment made in August 2012.
- Sheriff's Office & Detention Center - \$9,333,333 will be paid off in 2026.

APPROPRIATION OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Mr. French asked for the Board's direction on additional funding for the school system as well as some of the unfunded projects.

After discussion, the Board agreed to provide the school system with an additional \$250,000 to help with the loss of the state low wealth funding. The Board also agreed to set aside funding in Contingency for the demolition of the Dayton property, the evidence building for the Sheriff's Department, and the garage. It was noted that these projects may need to be put on hold until the next budget year depending on how the state budget would affect county revenues.

DETENTION CENTER DISCUSSION

Sheriff Chris Bowman hoped to have all detention guards trained and in place by August 1, 2013 in order to begin accepting out-of-county inmates, noting that an initial 40 beds would be available and that 10 more could be added if necessary. He also pointed out that an evidence building would need to be constructed before the Dayton property and current evidence building was demolished. It will take staff 4 to 6 weeks to move items currently stored there. He detailed the expense of having seized vehicles towed and stored in impound and felt a fenced-in area was needed to store them.

Mr. French advised that a fenced-in lot was planned for the future garage. Chairman Jennings asked if a 40 x 60 evidence building was adequate. Sheriff Bowman replied that it was for the time being but suggested the building be constructed to allow for future expansion.

The group discussed the proposed positions for the Detention Center. Sheriff Bowman explained that there would be 3 female guards in the control room at all times providing 24-hour surveillance, controlling all entrances, monitoring all cameras throughout the facility, and answering intercoms provided in each cell. A minimum of 2 guards (one female, one male) is required for booking as well as one guard per pod to make rounds twice per hour. He also noted that these guards would also be picking up meals for inmates when the transport officers could not do so.

Commissioner Mayberry stated that he would agree to the 12 additional detention employees proposed for the 2013-2014 budget but felt that it was dangerous to have a guard in each pod. He felt it would be better to only have one guard on duty to monitor all pods.

Vice-Chairman Yoder questioned the hiring of sworn officers to serve as detention guards, thus requiring the County to contribute to the 401(k) specifically allotted for sworn law enforcement. Sheriff Bowman replied that not all guards would be sworn; however, he pointed out that sworn deputies employed as guards could help out with duties a non-sworn guard could not assist with, allowing road deputies to get back out into the public instead of spending hours in the office.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

Chairman Jennings stated that prior to the Memorial Day event held at the courthouse, he along with several others, picked up over 1,000 cigarette butts off the courthouse lawn. He asked if the Sheriff's Department could enforce the County's Tobacco Policy at the courthouse. Sheriff Bowman responded that he did not have the manpower to monitor and enforce the policy outside the building on court days.

Commissioner Mayberry suggested using part-time officers that could ticket smokers. Commissioner Robertson suggested allowing trustee inmates to enforce the policy.

It was agreed that this topic would be discussed at a later date.

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1 & 6) TO PREVENT THE DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION & PERSONNEL

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 8:13 PM to prevent the disclosure of confidential information and to discuss personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1 & 6). Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Robertson made a motion to adjourn at 8:47 PM. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

James H. Jennings, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board