

January 15, 2025

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a Recessed Meeting on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 9:00 AM in the Commissioners' Room, 116 Adams Street, Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Tracey A. Johnson, Ann C. Keyes, Carol V. Phelps, John C. Spruill and Julius Walker, Jr. were in attendance. Also, present were County Manager/ County Attorney Curtis S. Potter, Assistant County Manager, Jason Squires, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett and County Finance Officer Missy Dixon.

Chair Phelps called the meeting to order.

First order of business was to figure out lunch!

(The documents being referenced will be attached to the end of these minutes.)

Mr. Potter went over the list of department heads who will come to speak to the Commissioners.

Mr. Potter went over the Agenda he provided.

Ms. Dixon went over the Monthly Financial Summary.

Mr. Potter discussed the Washington County Fund Balance.

Mr. Potter discussed taxes in Washington County over the years.

Mr. Potter asked the Board if they were still interested in keeping the Tax discount. The Board's concern is getting the Tax bills out in a timely manner. Ways are being looked at to make sure they are sent out so citizens can take advantage of the discounts. We might be able to put out a notice on Hyper-Reach. The consensus of the Board was to keep the Tax discount.

Mr. Jason Squires talked to the Board about the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Commissioner Spruill mentioned that he feels the Courthouse needs to be updated or building a new one.

Ms. Laurie Zoll attended the meeting to go over the Grants sheet in the Agenda Workshop documents.

Mr. Potter briefly talked about the County's water rates.

Mr. Potter talked with the Board about Debt Set-Off.

Mr. Potter touched on the following:

Schools

MTW funding—hopefully no major funding issues this year

VFDs—hopes not to have the hold harmless issue this year

Do we continue the extra 1 cent? Mr. Potter said it should be in a separate fund b/c it accumulates.

Anything left over in the general fund is not held over to the next year.

Forestry—anticipate no new issues

Library—director is changing...new director from Tyrrell County

Special Commissioner Sponsored Events – budget for events and a gift= \$10K. Commissioner Keyes thinks that part-time employees should be included in attending events and receiving gifts.

Ms. Dixon said that the YORE system and employee events have improved employee morale from what she hears. The consensus of the Board is to increase this budget by \$2K to \$12K and include part-time employees who are scheduled workers (but not seasonal employees).

Funding for outside requests: \$8K total for 3 festivals, Albemarle Food Bank and this year included AGENC and Center for Domestic Violence and increased the budget. (The Clerk is to send out emails with deadline for inclusion in this year's budget to various agencies.) This fund increased to \$12K this year. The consensus of the Board is to stay at \$12K.

Commissioner Johnson said we would be getting a request from Mr. Vann Rogerson with NC East Alliance for a membership of \$1,150. (This would be in Dues & Subscriptions.)

Debt service in the water dept is steadily decreasing.

Transfers—one collective penny to the airport, 4 collected pennies to EMS, amount on hospital retirement may be decreased, Recreation pushing out \$10K for future PARTF grant fund, Reval-\$40,000

County personnel—

Mr. Potter said he has compared Washington County to other surrounding counties and does not feel that we need to do a comprehensive review this year. We do have some soft spots to address—such as law enforcement.

Some executive level salaries need to be reviewed such as Utilities Director, IT Director, EMS Director and Assistant Director, Sheriff and Chief Deputy, Finance Officer, and ACM.

Looking at a COLA increase again this year.

Adding Economic Development position. It may be under CMO or it may be an individual department. It may even be under Planning.

Airport—have not been able to hire a part-time airport employee. Maybe split a position between Facilities and Airport. Does not feel there is enough to do for a full-time airport employee

Mowing contract is up for renewal and Mr. Sasser, Utilities and Mr. Young, Facilities are comfortable with negotiating a renewal.

Mr. Squires stated that in years past the Landfill was under Utilities but is currently a standalone department. Mr. Sasser would like it to be moved under the Landfill to get a greater depth of understanding of what is needed and could also train some of his guys to fill in if needed. The new guy in the position of Landfill Operator, David Bowers, who moved from Facilities, has been a great asset to the Landfill.

Consensus of the Board is to move it under Utilities.

Proposal to move Senior Center under Recreation from Ms. Collier.

Mr. Potter said that the Library, Cooperative Extension, Senior Center & Recreation are the newly formed Community Enrichment Group.

Mr. Potter talked about the LFNC intern position. He is not sure we are getting another one, but the current LFNC, Mr. Waterman, thinks we might. However, Mr. Potter feels that if we hire Mr. Kelly Chesson, we will not need to get an LFNC and could put the funding towards to Economic Development position.

Clerk of Court—is asking for county funding of temporary deputy clerk position

Other Cost Saving Options or Efficiency Ideas--

Move up reval to 6 years instead of 8 years

Charge for some services in EMS

Buyout of Hospital Pension holders. Add to Strategic Plan.

Regional Jail? Washington County, Bertie & Chowan

Proposal to increase PO limit? To \$2,500 from \$1,000. Consensus of the Board to increase the PO limit to \$2,500.

The Board/County Manager asked Ms. Bennett to look at having an extra screen in the Board Room, look at mobile screens, and a new bracket for existing Mondopad.

DEPARTMENT HEAD DISCUSSIONS:

Detention, Ms. Clinta Blount, Ms. Tiffany Crumity & Chief Deputy Mr. Arlo Norman—Ms. Blount stated that the probes for doing rounds in the jail have been discontinued and they will have to buy a new system. They do not know if they can locate any extras for when one of them fails. Mr. Potter said to take one of the probes to Ms. Laurie Zoll, Grants & Procurement, to see if she can find one on the web to have extras. Price quote for new system: ~\$6,000

The sheet Metal on the walls are corroding in the cells. Mr. Potter said the Facilities Advisory Committee needs to tour the jail.

Have doors that will not open

Floors and showers not working on the female side. Ms. Blount said Facilities has looked at it and said they ordered parts. Facilities Advisory Committee will take these items over to find solutions.

Mr. Potter said he knows Detention is short-staffed and pay is an issue. Ms. Crumity said once they get a new employee trained, they soon leave to work somewhere else that pays better.

Mr. Potter asked if the employees felt safe in Detention.

Rebecca Liverman, Cooperative Extension Director

Handed out flyer of work they did this year

Handed out flyer for the Mobile Market—achieved from a grant. Starts coming every Friday to the First Christian Church. Anyone can go through it. Promotes healthy food and eating. A lot of residents have been taking advantage of this.

Budget: 50/50 between state and county government

Ms. Liverman asked what the current mileage rate is. Mr. Potter said we may be looking at raising the mileage rate. It is currently \$.50

Ms. Liverman said she is working with a partnership with Recreation & the Senior Center to use their bus since her new person has her CDL.

Has a few grants in the works.

Would like to replace carpet from 1995—will be putting it in her CIP.

May 7 is the Livestock Show....may be a small one again this year

Her staff is appreciative of the County's COLA increase.

**Commissioner Johnson made a motion to recess the meeting to January 16, 2025 @ 9:00 AM.
Commissioner Keyes seconded; motion carried unanimously.**

Julie J. Bennett, NCMCC, MMC
Clerk to the Board

Carol V. Phelps
Chair