

Surry County Board of Commissioners  
Meeting of April 24, 2018

The Surry County Board of Commissioners met at 5:00 p.m. on April 24, 2018 for budget work session #2. The meeting was held in Room 335, Surry County Government Center, Dobson, North Carolina.

Board members present for the meeting were Chairman Eddie Harris, Vice-Chairman Van Tucker, Commissioner Larry Johnson, Commissioner Larry Phillips, and Commissioner Gary Tilley.

Others present for the meeting, at various times, were:

Chris Knopf, County Manager

Sandy Snow, Assistant County Manager

Sarah Bowen, Finance Officer

John Shelton, Emergency Services Director

Doug Jones, Fire Marshal

Various members of Volunteer Fire Departments

News Media

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Chairman Eddie Harris reconvened the recessed April 16, 2018 meeting. Chairman Harris requested the Board review and approve the agenda.

Upon motion of Commissioner Larry Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Gary Tilley, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

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Chairman Harris delivered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Shoals Fire Chief Adrian Wall presented his department's budget request. Mr. Wall stated he would like to hold on a tax increase but needs additional funding. An increase from 6.5 cents to 7.5 cents would fund the \$12,500 which Mr. Wall stated he needs. The requested budget was an increase of \$29,000 which would change tax rates from 6.5 cents to 8.8 cents.

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The Board discussed with the Fire Marshal the establishment of boundaries and taxing districts versus responding districts. Fire Marshal Doug Jones stated whenever there is a structure fire, the three closest departments are paged out to assist.

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Skull Camp Chief Ricky Casstevens and department members addressed the Board. He stated Skull Camp is requesting a 1.3 cent increase, from 8.7 cents to 10 cents. He stated the department is planning to buy land to build a third station so all residents can be within 5 miles of a fire station location. Skull Camp is working on upgrading their ISO rating, and adding another location would assist in their efforts.

Mr. Casstevens stated Skull Camp utilizes an incentive program to reward volunteers. Management Solutions assisted them in the design of the incentive program.

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Chairman Harris commended the work of the fire departments.

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Westfield Chief Jonathan Sutphin presented the budget for his department. Westfield is asking for a two cents increase. Approximately 42% of their calls occur in Stokes County.

Westfield has paid firefighters and has a policy that volunteers can't be paid. They are working on improving their ISO rating.

Westfield is building an addition to their department and will be putting the project out for bids soon. Current bays are too small and a meeting room, storage room, and office will be included in the plans. 100% of a tax increase would go toward the expense of the building project.

The possibility of a QRV for the Westfield area was discussed.

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Derrick Manuel, Chief, and Board Chair Chet Jessup presented the Pilot Knob budget. Pilot Knob is not requesting a tax increase. Pilot Knob is evaluating options for replacement of a brush truck. They have been in the same building since 1966 and have outgrown the space. Pilot Knob hopes to purchase land and build a new station with the next 5 to 10 years.

Pilot Knob utilizes paid staff and would like to add additional. Radio options were discussed.

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Bannertown Chief Scotty Chilton and Rondal Ratcliffe, Board President, presented the budget for their department. Bannertown would like to request a 1 cent tax increase. They are interested in adding a paid fireman and discussed extra foam for airport availability. Their ISO rating was discussed.

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Four Way Fire Department's budget was presented by Chief Bruce Crigger and Board Chair Frank Shelton. Four Way has a new fire truck in the delivery process and should receive in September. They are requesting 1.3 cent tax rate increase to be used toward salary for a paid firefighter. Four Way lost approximately one-half of their budget when Cross Creek was annexed to Mount Airy.

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Wes Key, Ararat Fire Chief, presented the department's budget. Ararat wants to lower the ISO rating. They do not have any paid personnel and no immediate plans to hire any. Ararat will consider their request.

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Tony Tilley, Chief, and Donald Joyner, Assistant Chief and Treasurer, presented the budget for South Surry Fire Department. South Surry is requesting 1.5 cent tax increase. They have two trucks that need to be replaced. South Surry is preparing to build a new station, and plans were discussed. They currently have two paid firefighters on staff.

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Ricky Holsclaw presented the budget for Jot-um-Down Fire Department. They are not requesting a tax increase and have no paid firefighters. Jot-um-down replaced airpacks two years ago with a FEMA grant.

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Johnny Hiatt, Franklin Fire Department Chief, and numerous members, presented the budget for his department. Franklin has two paid firefighters and would like to add additional. They are working toward improving their ISO rating. They want to replace their air equipment soon. Franklin is requesting a 1.3 cent tax increase.

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Garth Badgett, Chief, and Eddie Jordan, Treasurer, presented the budget for White Plains Fire Department. They requested no tax increase. They have no paid staff and do not plan to hire any at the present time.

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Rodney Whitaker, Chief, and Scotty Coe, Treasurer, presented the budget for Central Surry. They are not requesting a tax increase this year. They are working on improvements for their ISO rating. The department is on a rotation plan for the purchase of airpacks.

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Chairman Harris commended all the volunteer fire departments for their work and dedication.

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Upon motion of Commissioner Phillips, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to recess until the next budget meeting on May 1. The meeting ended at 9:10 p.m.

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Sandra Snow  
Interim Clerk to the Board