

Surry County Board of Commissioners
Meeting of June 13, 2017

The Surry County Board of Commissioners met on June 13, 2017. The meeting was held in Room 335, Surry County Government Center, Dobson, North Carolina to discuss budget related items and other County business.

Board members present for the meeting were Chairman Eddie Harris, Vice-Chairman Van Tucker, Commissioner R.F. "Buck" Golding, Commissioner Larry Johnson and Commissioner Larry Phillips.

Others present for the meeting, at various times, were:
Chris Knopf, County Manager
Conchita Atkins, Clerk to the Board
Sandy Snow, Assistant County Manager for Human Resources and Operations
Sarah Bowen, Finance Officer
Rhonda Nixon, Internal Auditor
Sheriff Jimmy Combs
Surry County Schools Superintendent and Staff
Elkin City Schools Superintendent and Staff
Mount Airy City Schools Superintendent and Staff
News Media

Chairman Harris called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Tucker gave the invocation and led the pledge of allegiance.

Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Phillips, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda with the addition of the following item.

Commissioner Johnson addressed the Board regarding the need for additional funding for the Summer Recreation Program. Commissioner Johnson stated there were five children who have no funds to attend. Commissioner Johnson asked the Board to allocate \$1,350 to allow five children to attend Summer Camp.

Upon motion of Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Chairman Harris, the Board voted unanimously to allocate an additional \$1,350 for the Summer Recreation Program for five children to attend Summer Camp.

The Board discussed the schools current expense ADM. The County Manager's proposed budget sets the expense at \$1,115 per child. Chairman Harris discussed past ADM allocations.

Dr. Travis Reeves stated the enrollment numbers had decreased. Dr. Reeves stated that Surry County Schools are concerned with the proposed current expenses/ADM.

Dr. Kim Morrison stated the Mount Airy City Schools percentages are different from Surry County Schools. Dr. Morrison stated that Mount Airy City Schools are getting more exceptional needs children.

Dr. Myra Cox is concerned regarding the reduction in funding from the State. Dr. Cox stated that Elkin City Schools are seeing an increase in exceptional needs children.

Chairman Harris stated the school systems are requesting \$1,175 per child and stated that the County cannot budget \$1,175 per child this fiscal year. Chairman Harris stated he feels that \$1,140 is warranted which is an improvement over the County Manager's recommended budget. Chairman Harris stated he feels that \$1,140 is a reasonable amount.

Commissioner Johnson agrees that an increase is warranted and wants what is best for the children.

Commissioner Phillips asked at what point can the County stop picking up unfunded mandates and not raise taxes. Commissioner Phillips stated the County keeps raising ADM numbers each year. Commissioner Phillips asked what is the breaking point. The State is shifting more and more to counties.

The Board discussed lottery proceeds.

Commissioner Golding stated he supported the County Manager's recommendation. Commissioner Golding asked what can we afford and sustain before we raise taxes.

Commissioner Tucker stated he appreciated each Board members' view point. Commissioner Tucker stated the Board should use caution on how much the County can afford. Commissioner Tucker stated there are a lot of moving parts on the table. Commissioner Tucker stated the schools have not had an increase in a while and will support \$1,140 per child. Commissioner Tucker suggested the Board consider leaving the school capital/ADM at \$110 per child.

Commissioner Phillips stated that the County does not have the answers regarding State funding, but rural counties get the shaft. Rural counties are at a disadvantage.

Commissioner Tucker stated the following:

Last year Elkin City Schools ranked 7th in the State and was funded at 39th.

Mount Airy City Schools was ranked 24th in the State and was funded 53rd.

Surry County Schools was ranked 15th in the State and was funded 96th.

The Board will discuss the ADM funding at the Monday, June 19, 2017 meeting.

The Board discussed the Surry County Schools' supplement budget request in the amount of \$895,736.

Dr. Reeves stated that Surry County Schools is the largest employer in the County. Dr. Reeves stated the supplement is a flat fee for an increase for school employees.

Commissioner Harris stated he feels an amount is warranted for the supplement request for Surry County Schools.

The Board discussed the supplement budget request.

Chairman Harris stated Elkin City Schools and Mount Airy City Schools are requesting a supplement tax rate increase. Elkin requested a 2.3 cent increase, and Mount Airy requested a 2 cent increase.

Dr. Morrison stated the increase is needed in Mount Airy.

Richard Brinegar, Elkin City Schools, also stated the increase is needed in Elkin.

The Board discussed the supplemental tax increase request for the Elkin City Schools and Mount Airy City Schools.

Sarah Bowen discussed the Volunteer Fire Department tax rate increase requests. Six departments requested a tax increase. The following fire departments requested 1.54 or 2.0 cent increases: CC Camp, Central Surry, Four Way, Franklin, Skull Camp and South Surry.

The Board discussed the ISO rating which would assist citizens with their homeowners' insurance rates. They also discussed paid full-time fire fighters. The Board discussed the Finance Officer contacting the six requesting fire departments regarding a reduction in their request.

Chris Knopf discussed \$150,000 for general fund contingency.

Sarah Bowen discussed Emergency Services rate increase for 2017 Medicare allowable amounts. Ms. Bowen recommended 150% of the Medicare allowable amount.

Sarah Bowen discussed the budget for the Medical Examiner.

Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to go into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6).

The Board came out of closed session and resumed regular business.

Commissioner Golding left the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

The Board took a five-minutes recess.

The Board resumed regular business.

Chris Knopf discussed \$93,779 allocated to the Board of Elections for a special election. Mr. Knopf stated it is a possibility the election will not take place this year.

Chris Knopf discussed an additional \$1,468 request from the Children's Center of Surry, Mount Airy Museum of Regional History's request of \$20,000 for HVAC repairs, Northwestern Regional Library's request of \$13,295, and a 7% increase for both the Flat Rock/Bannertown Water and Sewer District and the Elkin/Gentry Road Water System.

Chris Knopf discussed the following late budget requests: YVEDDI increase of \$6,000 due to a decrease in funding from Yadkin County for the Jonesville Senior Center. \$70,000 for Emergency Services taking the BLS Convalescent Services to twenty-four hour shifts. Allocating the remainder of \$75,000 to the Town of Dobson for the Dobson Water Plant contribution. A request from the Town of Dobson to waive fees for tax collections, code enforcement, and zoning services. The amount would be approximately \$9,000 per year. A request from Emergency Services in the amount of \$5,400 for a blood storage unit to be placed on a supervisor unit. A request from the Town of Elkin in the amount of \$115,000 for a shell building for the 2017-2018 budget and following that, the Boards would have an equal partnership in putting money to create and solicit proposals for a shell building; the Town's Economic Development Committee would request an equal contribution of \$250,000 in the 2018-2019 budget year.

Upon motion of Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to go into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6).

The Board came out of closed session.

There was not further business to come before the Board.

Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Phillips, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn. The meeting ended at 11:45 p.m.

Conchita Atkins
Clerk to the Board