

Surry County Board of Commissioners
Meeting of June 1, 2020

The Surry County Board of Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m., June 1, 2020. The meeting was held in the Board Room, Historic Courthouse, Dobson, N.C., virtually via Zoom and YouTube.

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

Others present in-person for the meeting, at various times, were:
Chris Knopf, County Manager
Sandy Snow, Assistant County Manager
Rhonda Nixon, Finance Officer
Ed Woltz, County Attorney
Nathan Walls, Assistant to the County Manager

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

Chairman Johnson requested the Board review and approve the agenda. Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Marion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the June 1, 2020 agenda.

Chairman Johnson requested the Board consider the minutes of the May 14, 2020 budget work session as presented. Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

Chairman Johnson requested the Board consider the minutes of the May 18, 2020 meeting as presented. Upon motion of Chairman Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

Chairman Johnson requested the Board consider the consent agenda. Upon motion of Commissioner Marion, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda as follows:

Requests from the County Manager:

- Appoint Denise Brown, Administrative Officer III, to also serve in the role of Purchasing Officer for Surry County.
- Approve the refund of \$559.70 in Occupancy Tax overpayments from White Sulphur Springs because of subsequent cancellations due to COVID-19.

Requests from the Assistant County Manager:

- Approve a request from Sheriff Hiatt to award a service weapon and badge to a retiring officer.
- Approve a settlement agreement as negotiated by Travelers Insurance and authorize the County Manager to sign, following approval by the County Attorney.

Chairman Johnson declared the meeting to be an open forum and invited members of the audience to address the Board on any matters

of civic concern.

While no citizens spoke virtually from the Surry County Service Center, emails were received and provided to the Board members prior to the meeting. The emails were from Jessica Johnson, the Mount Airy Public Library Board of Trustees, Anne Gulley, Crystal Morphis, the Dobson Community Library Board of Trustees and Stephanie Johnson. Each email requested that the Board not cut library funding in the FY 2020-2021 budget.

Ms. Johnson's email also asked that the Board encourage the public to wear masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

There being no further comments, Chairman Johnson closed the open forum.

Chris Knopf, County Manager, presented the FY 2020-2021 budget proposal with a PDF. He reviewed how budget requests are made and vetted, mandates and top priorities and how the budget is allocated.

Mr. Knopf reviewed budget highlights and budget revenues. He said he anticipates that sales tax revenues will be about 12 percent lower than the current fiscal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioner Tucker and Mr. Knopf discussed how he came up with the allocated fund balance for the upcoming fiscal year compared to the current year. Mr. Knopf said a review of actual revenue collections will be conducted in September 2020. Additional cuts may be necessary following this review.

Commissioner Harris asked what tax collection rate is budgeted, to which Mr. Knopf responded 97 percent. Mr. Knopf said Surry County's tax collection rate is normally approximately 99 percent. Commissioner Harris said he likes the practice of budgeting for less, but normally collecting more revenue.

The Board discussed the tax collection rates during the last recession with Mr. Knopf, which occurred in 2008. The Board was comparing that time period to the current COVID-19 time period.

The Board discussed the upcoming property revaluation with Mr. Knopf, which was projected at the time of the Planning Retreat to see an approximate 5 percent increase.

Mr. Knopf reviewed Expenditure Highlights.

Commissioner Harris and Commissioner Tucker discussed school funding with Mr. Knopf.

Mr. Knopf reviewed other budget considerations, including no Cost of Living Adjustment for employees and an overtime pay formula change for Emergency Services and Communications.

Mr. Knopf reviewed recommended budget restrictions to be adopted for FY 20-21 due to COVID-19.

Mr. Knopf thanked all of the department heads for their assistance during the budget process.

The Budget Proposal PDF is saved on the Government Center Shared Drive.

Mr. Knopf told the Board that the June 15 budget public hearing, which will be held during a regular Board meeting, will be open to the public in the Board Room with social distancing guidelines. The

Surry County Service Center will be opened for overflow with virtual capabilities, if needed.

Mr. Knopf and the Board discussed potential dates for a budget work session.

Upon motion of Commissioner Marion, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board unanimously approved holding a budget work session on Tuesday, June 9 at 6 p.m. in the Board Room of the Historic Courthouse.

Chairman Johnson thanked staff who assisted with the budget proposal.

Chairman Johnson requested the Board discuss any general business items.

Commissioner Harris said Surry County citizens have been blessed with good weather.

Commissioner Marion said Surry County citizens are very blessed to live in a rural county and said prayer is needed for large cities.

Commissioner Tucker discussed the budget proposal and how services must be based on revenues. He agreed with Commissioner Marion that Surry County citizens are very blessed to live in a rural county.

Upon motion of Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board unanimously approved to adjourn at 6:54 p.m.

Nathan Walls
Clerk to the Board