

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners reconvened the recessed meeting from Monday, June 15, 2015, on Wednesday, June 17, 2015, at 6:30pm in the Board Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, North Carolina. The purpose of this meeting was for budget discussions.

Present: Chair Tom Smith, Vice-Chair Karen Leys, Commissioner Larry Davis, Commissioner Mark Evans, Commissioner Bobby Irwin, County Manager Don Adams and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans. County Attorney Donna Shumate was absent.

Chair Smith reconvened the budget meeting at 6:30pm.

Amy Lucas, County Extension Director, came before the Board to talk about the Extension Service's budget especially the Family and Consumer Science (FCS) position. She explained the new strategic plan with Extension Service with many offices seeing cuts in staff but this office has an opportunity to increase positions. She explained the roles and responsibilities for the FCS person. She further explained rules limit them to who they can partner work and Surry County is most logical one and not being able to partner with Ashe and Stokes because the FCS person is the director also Wilkes County's person is probably going to retire soon. She talked about the State is trying to partner all 23 counties in this region. She reviewed information about Carmen Long and her qualifications in FCS. She continued to review the FCS programming including things currently not being offered in Alleghany County. She talked about areas that Carmen Long would be very beneficial for in Alleghany County. She further talked about the focus of top healthcare concerns in Alleghany County.

Chair Smith mentioned that Aaron Ray Tompkins and Joe Ward are present today for Extension Service, too.

Chair Smith asked if 2009 was the last time Extension Service was fully staffed. Amy Lucas explained they have been short-staffed since she began in 2007.

Chair Smith asked what does the added position of FCS do to the secretary. Amy Lucas explained there are changes in the secretary positions too; Extension Service will fund 1 at 50% and the others are up to the counties to completely fund. She provided examples of things support staff does now that the agents are having to do.

Commissioner Leys and Amy Lucas talked about the strategic plan is NC State's through Extension Service, and there are substantial changes due to budget cuts. Amy Lucas explained how they developed the strategic plan. They talked about what ECA is and what they do.

Commissioner Evans and Amy Lucas talked about what ECA members do. They talked about Carmen Long is Surry County's full-time person.

Commissioner Leys and Amy Lucas talked about Surry doesn't necessarily have a choice because all agents who aren't directors must be shared.

Commissioner Davis and Amy Lucas talked about her work schedules at this point.

Chair Smith and Amy Lucas talked about there is another person in Wilkes County and that person is getting ready to retire and Surry county is willing to do this. She stated that this is a mutual agreement.

Commissioner Irwin and Amy Lucas continued to talk about the tentative work schedule for Carmen Long.

Commissioner Leys said that being on the health department board there was a case of botulism in Ashe County and that person will suffer the rest of their life. Amy Lucas said that FCS does a lot with proper food preparation.

Commissioner Evans and Amy Lucas talked about the areas that aren't being offered, Carmen Long can offer those and she will be more prepared to offer these things rather than someone else.

Commissioner Leys talked about if Alleghany did not partner with Surry County on this position, they make another match then what happens to us. Amy Lucas said she doesn't know but this is an opportunity that may not happen again for a while.

Commissioner Irwin asked how much time Carman Long has until she retires. Amy Lucas said she doesn't know.

Chair Smith and Amy Lucas talked about how the funding is shared; 33% Alleghany County, 33% Surry, 33% NC State.

Amy Lucas talked about NC State offers resources that we could not get anywhere else and provided examples. She stated that NC State receives funding by the State through education outreach.

Commissioner Leys and Amy Lucas talked about letting the representatives and senators know that and explained examples of visiting them in Raleigh.

Commissioner Irwin and Amy Lucas talked about these changes affect the whole State, not just Alleghany County.

Commissioner Irwin reviewed the costs from 2013/14 of \$91,871 to 2015/16 of \$139,645. He asked how we got there. County Manager Adams explained positions weren't filled so the money wasn't budgeted. The County Manager further explained the main reason of the increase is because of the new strategic plan changing the match for employees and adding the FCS position.

The County Manager reviewed the percentages that Alleghany County is responsible for; Brad Edwards 12.5%, Amy Lucas and Aaron Ray Tompkins 40%, Michele Hamm changes to 50% from 35% and Kathy Miller changes to 100% from 35% and adding Carmen Long at 33%. He explained that we have always had the FCS position but he just didn't budget it. He talked about the vast majority of this isn't something Alleghany County has done; this is something NC State has done. He explained everyone was at 35% and the NC State required changes to the percentages.

Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Adams talked about the difference between the requested and recommended amounts is a change in Kathy Miller's hours.

Commissioner Evans asked what role Kathy Miller serves. Amy Lucas explained Kathy Miller's functions. He asked about support staff for Carmen Long. Amy Lucas said that Michele Hamm will be picking up more.

County Manager Adams explained there were conversations about putting Kathy Miller on the County's pay scale, which is a lot less money for the 2 ½ days. He said that it is the same amount of money for 1 ½ days at the State's rate. He stated if the Board is going to have conversations about the 2 ½ days than the position should be in the County pay scale.

Commissioner Evans and Amy Lucas talked about Kathy Miller loves the Extension Service, wants to be here, and they will take her any way they can get for the 45 years of experience.

County Manager Adams talked about there is more money budgeted at the 100% for 1 ½ days than the 35% for the 2 ½ days last year.

Commissioner Evans talked about when services are expanded a lot of time support staff is needed and how important those people are in the effectiveness of the areas. He further talked about having more conversations about more time, maybe not as a County employee. He said he is concerned about bringing in more people with less support staff.

County Manager Adams said it is a decision of the Board.

Commissioner Evans asked can the County Manager run some numbers on it to see how much it would costs.

County Manager Adams talked about he has the current salary and in our salary scale and the differences is the requested versus recommended.

Commissioner Irwin asked about the auto expense in 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16.

County Manager Adams and Amy Lucas explained the reimbursement from the State, and Aaron Ray Tompkins travels a lot. The County Manager reminded the Board that one of the trucks from the Sheriff's Department would go to Aaron Ray Tompkins so that fuel line for next year shows one more person and one more vehicle.

Commissioner Irwin said the telephone expenses throughout the entire budget is close to \$100,000 and asked what we can do. County Manager Adams explained that changes would significantly reduce our capacity to communication, and it's not just telephone lines and call charges; it is internet, maintenance, key system charges, too. Commissioner Irwin talked about a lot meetings are over the phone.

Commissioner Irwin talked about what an impact Extension Services has on the farmers in this community and their knowledge along with the backup support of NC State. He said he appreciates everything they do.

Amy Lucas talked about the possibility to add another positions, which would be paid for by NC State but would be housed in Alleghany County and shared with Ashe County. She said that hardships came with the strategic plan but opportunities came out of it, too.

Chair Smith asked the Board about the additional numbers for Extension Service. Commissioner Leys and Commissioner Evans talked about the numbers for cutting the secretary from 2 ½ days. The Board agreed.

Commissioner Evans asked about the farmers' market money. The County Manager explained that Aaron Ray Tompkins was working on that as part of the grant and now it is hired independently.

Chair Smith started reviewing the capital portion of the Budget Message. County Manager Adams explained that the first section is in regards to recommendations to be purchased through a 5-year loan. Chair Smith reviewed the other 2 categories for the capital and asked for comments/questions.

Commissioner Irwin asked about the sedans. County Manager Adams explained how the Sheriff has purchased vehicles through the Drug Fund, and having two (2) 2007 Ford trucks to be replaced. Chair Smith and County Manager Adams talked about 1 goes to Extension Service and 1 goes to Maintenance and Maintenance then goes to Recreation. The County Manager talked about the Extension Service needs four-wheel drive. The County Manager said he is still talking to Josh Greene about Animal Control's truck and how to modify something for it, and whatever is left from Maintenance goes to Recreation. Commissioner Irwin, Commissioner Davis and County Manager Adams talked about the Sheriff's Department will still have four-wheel drives. County Manager Adams explained that all of those trucks were purchased through the Drug Fund with the exception of 1.

Chair Smith asked for additional comments on the other capital loan.

Commissioner Davis asked if the fire tower can be used without these changes. The County Manager explained they can still use it but can't get all of their trainings/certifications. Commissioner Irwin asked does the certifications help the people's insurance prices. County Manager Adams explained the different certifications required to become a fire person and to remain a fire person. The County Manager further explained the purpose of the trainings. County Manager Adams said the certifications were changed after the tower was built, and if we don't do this it devalues it. Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Adams talked about this is it unless they change the requirements for the certifications again.

Commissioner Davis said on the no-till drill we can't get parts for the one we have now. County Manager Adams said right now it is working and it has value for trade-in and seeing if a farmer wants it for the trade-in value, and the trade-in value could be used to

reduce the price of a new one. Commissioner Davis and County Manager Adams talked about getting a trade-in on the last one. Commissioner Irwin said Linda Hash got 2 quotes, and she didn't ask about a trade-in price. Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Adams talked about getting more money with a trade-in rather than a straight sale to a farmer. Commissioner Davis and the County Manager talked about one with a complete box, and this was priced with a way to drop the seed from the drill. Commissioner Irwin said he has never heard of a Great Plains drill, and having a price from John Deere and he knows John Deere's quality. Commissioner Irwin asked Commissioner Davis if he knows anything about the Great Plains. Commissioner Davis said no. Commissioner Irwin said he would rather have a John Deere and reiterated the need to keep this under roof as much as possible.

Commissioner Evans asked if any of these are unexpected items. County Manager Adams reviewed the items and their need. Commissioner Evans asked about the interest amount for the life of this loan is enough to pay for the no-till drill, as an example, and saving money and paying as we go to prevent spending interest money, if we don't have to.

Chair Smith asked about the stretcher and ambulance. County Manager Adams explained we will have another ambulance to replace next year. Commissioner Leys and the County Manager talked about how often we replace the ambulances is based upon their mileage and usage. Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Adams talked about if the ambulances are diesels and the possibility of remounting boxes, two-wheel drive to keep costs down and need to bid it out then see where the bids come in. Commissioner Irwin said he doesn't want one to break down with someone in it. Commissioner Davis and County Manager stated that it has happened in the past.

Chair Smith other questions or comments. No one spoke.

Chair Smith declared a brief recess at 7:47pm.

Chair Smith continued with capital discussions with the proposed General Fund direct capital expenses. He asked for comments or questions.

Commissioner Irwin asked the County Manager to review the floor repairs at the Jail and what it involves. County Manager Adams explained these monies are to replace the tiles, taking up the tile is more complicated if there is a finish on the concrete, which is very labor intensive, getting more quotes on that but it will be more money than the \$11,000. Commissioner Davis talked about having the inmates taking care of the floor in the past. Commissioner Irwin and Commissioner Davis talked about tile will be a lot easier. County Manager Adams talked about the grinding solution and problems Commissioner Davis ran into at the college and the pool doing that. The County Manager said we have inmates in there and have to be aware of that when grinding plus getting a 15-20 year solution with the tile. The County Manager said he appreciates where the Sheriff was trying to go because that was a permanent solution but won't know how much is involved based on previous experiences.

Chair Smith asked for additional comments/concerns.

Commissioner Evans asked if the computers in the budget are anything special. County Manager Adams said not that he is aware of. Commissioner Evans talked about an average costs of \$1,141 each. County Manager Adams said that may be an error but there is nothing special about them, and stated he will double check on that.

Commissioner Evans asked about Forestry Service's truck. County Manager Adams explained currently their truck has 96,000 miles and going off the State's schedule for replacement it is eligible for replacement. The County Manager further explained that \$17,914 is 40% of the costs because the State pays the rest. Commissioner Irwin and the County Manager talked about the State gets the old pickup. County Manager Adams explained he added the Forestry Service pickup because as he understands it as long as the State budget is ok they replace 8-10 vehicles per year and this truck would rank high in the regional discussions. They talked about if they don't buy the truck then we wouldn't pay this. County Manager Adams explained they bill us for their expenses.

Commissioner Evans and County Manager Adams talked about there are enough needs that the money will go to the Law Enforcement Center. Commissioner Leys and County Manager Adams talked about this is just for the Jail. Commissioner Leys talked about concern regarding the water in the front. County Manager Adams said that it has been like that for years, and we paint it until it rusts again. Commissioner Davis said that a painting lasts 5-6 years. Commissioner Leys asked is the water coming through it now. Commissioner Davis explained why it does that. Commissioner Leys said the rust is up high. Commissioner Davis said he doesn't remember seeing anything up high. County Manager Adams talked about water is difficult, agrees it needs to be repaired, sanded down and repainted.

Chair Smith mentioned the proposed grants & other funding sources. He asked for comments.

County Manager Adams explained these expenses including the Safety Fund monies and having \$4,000 more in that fund hopefully to be used as a contingency for the other repairs.

Chair Smith asked if there is anything else. No one spoke.

Chair Smith reviewed getting additional information about Social Services computers. Commissioner Irwin asked about seeing trade-in values and negotiations for the John Deere.

Chair Smith mentioned going to special appropriations; grants and mandates, volunteer safety, primary core functions, secondary functions, continuing & new items. He reviewed the grants and mandates category. He asked for questions or comments on grants and mandates.

Commissioner Irwin and the County Manager talked about the fines and forts monies go to the schools.

Commissioner Evans talked the revaluation monies of \$40,000, do revaluation every 8 years, and asked what the costs are for that. He said he would like to have a conversation about doing it every 4 years, not necessarily having the conversation during the budget. County Manager Adams explained that the costs are well over \$350,000 closer to \$400,000, which that is in range for the \$40,000 annually. Commissioner Evans asked about doing different kinds at the 4-year mark and a larger one at 8 years. The County Manager explained conversations that he has had with Rita Miller about other types of revaluations at the 4-year mark. Commissioner Evans said he doesn't want people to think it is to get money because it is just so everyone is paying a more fair tax.

Chair Smith asked for comments/questions on grants and mandates. No one spoke. He talked about volunteer safety and asked for comments/questions.

Commissioner Leys said she texted Lisa Osborne about the Social Services computers, and the extra cost is software.

Chair Smith asked about comments or questions on volunteer safety.

Commissioner Irwin asked the County Manager to explain the difference between EMS and the Rescue Squad. The County Manager explained the difference. Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Adams talked about we have 4 ambulances with 2 operating per shift and Rescue is backup to EMS. They further discussed what happens when an ambulance is out of the county, and having personnel available for 2 ambulances at a time.

Commissioner Leys and County Manager Adams talked about the fire departments all get different amounts. He provided an example of the ladder truck at Sparta fire department and recurring expenses on the ladder truck where an arrangement was made to provide an increase for Sparta-Alleghany Volunteer Fire Department for those expenses. He said it is little things like that. He reminded the Board that his recommended increase is across the board.

Chair Smith and County Manager Adams talked about having mutual-aid agreement with all counties around us with no financial assistance. Commissioner Davis mentioned Ashe has a fire tax so Laurel Springs get more. County Manager Adams continued to explain having mutual-aid agreements all around us.

Commissioner Leys and County Manager Adams discussed the fire commission amount break down; \$15,000 matching capital grant for each department, retirement, accident/sickness policy, fire parade expenses.

Commissioner Evans talked about out of all of the fire departments everyone turned in a budget request with the exception of Glade Creek and we should cut them. He asked has it happened before. The County Manager said yes it has happened before but not annually.

Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Adams talked about the fire departments all must routinely replace their personal protection equipment annually. Commissioner Davis said it gets outdated too, just like the trucks.

Chair Smith talked about getting through primary core functions tonight. He asked for primary core functions comments/questions.

Chair Smith said he serves on the Regional Library Board and their increase is mainly insurance costs. He asked for additional questions.

Commissioner Irwin asked about what happened recently regarding Golden Leaf and the library, and will it affect this budget. County Manager Adams said no it won't affect this budget. The County Manager explained the library project and the grant received and how they are going to proceed including it doesn't affect this coming year's budget but it will affect next year's budget.

Chair Smith asked about stopping here for tonight. The Board agreed.

Commissioner Irwin asked about the telephone line items, and said it shocked him that it is as much as it is. County Manager Adams explained that he can't change it to an extent that it still wouldn't shock you and provided examples.

Commissioner Leys and County Manager Adams talked about emergency communications.

Chair Smith declared this meeting recessed at 8:46pm until tomorrow, June 18 at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans  
Clerk to the Board

Tom Smith  
Chair