

Board of Commissioners met on June 14th, 2017 at 9 am in the County Administration Building at 348 South Main Street in Sparta, North Carolina, for budget hearings from special appropriation groups.

Present: Chair Mark Evans, Commissioner Bobby Irwin, Commissioner John Irwin, Commissioner Larry Prince, Commissioner Tom Smith, County Manager Mike James, Finance Officer Karen Evans, and Clerk Lauren Linker.

Chair Mark Evans led the pledge of allegiance and gave the invocation.

Bruce Benton, Chamber of Commerce President went over the past years budget for the Chamber and explained the request of \$15,000 for the current year.

Commissioner Larry Prince asked why the heritage festival was so expensive.

Bruce Benton said most of the cost was for advertising.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin asked about membership, dues and fund balance. He then noted the increase of dues could help offset the expenses of the chamber.

Commissioner Tom Smith asked about the amount of membership dues.

Becky Miller from Alleghany County Group Homes went over the programs that are available at their facility.

Joan Sherif, Northwest Regional Library, went over the request and where the slight increases are in their budget.

Commissioner Larry Prince asked about the group insurance, stating that is a big number compared to salaries.

Joan Sherif said yes it has been about that same amount, but this year there is a slight increase.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin asked if there had been an increase in people into the library since they have moved.

Debbie Brewer, local library director, said there is definitely an increase in public usage.

David Higgins, Glade Creek Volunteer Fire Department, went over the struggles that face the fire departments. He said that most of their funding comes from the State, but that only helps with things you can plan ahead for since they have to be completed before the year starts.

Commissioner Smith asked about a past discussion about needing a station at the end of Glad Valley Road and 18 Hwy.

David Higgins Said they are still working on that project, but it has to do with money and time to get it done.

Commissioner Prince stated there was some new procedures for the fairgrounds and asked if he thought would help from a revenue standpoint.

David Higgins said he didn't think it would help with revenues, but felt it would help with the organization and headache of using the facility.

Commissioner John Irwin asked what the average age of the departments trucks were.

David Higgins explained that one of their first response vehicles is 25 years old.

Crystal Bobbitt of the Partnership for Children went over the budget for the previous year and their request to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin asked how much square footage is needed for their new location.

Crystal Bobbitt said they would need two offices, a play room for children and an observation room.

Dare Stromer, from Blue Ridge Opportunity Council (BROC), went over the programs they provide and all the fundraising they do to support their programs within the County.

Craig James of Alleghany Memorial Hospital, went over what has occurred over the past year and gave a highlight for the future of the hospital.

Chair Evans asked about the shared services with Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center.

Craig James explained Alleghany Memorial would become a member hospital with Baptist.

Commissioner Smith noted he had kept track with surrounding counties dealing with similar issues.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin stated that last year they were able to reduce their overhead and asked if that would be able to happen again this year.

Craig James said they were as tight as possible currently, but they had to flex due to influx of business. |

Commissioner John Irwin said it was a nice change from what they had heard from the hospital in the past about partnering with another hospital. He said he understood the need for a County hospital, but still needed to think about the County as a whole.

John Kilmartin, from the Sparta Revitalization Committee, gave a recap of all the events they coordinate for the Town and County.

Commissioner Prince spoke about an electronic billboard at the entrance to town to have all the upcoming events displayed on Main Street.

Commissioner Smith said he felt like that would be a good thing for the county to invest in.

Beth Lovett, Appalachian District Health Department, went over the budget summary. She expressed concern for the cut of federal dollars.

Brian Womack from American Red Cross went over the last years incidents in Alleghany County and explained how they assisted in all cases.

Maria Julian, Health Advisory Council, went over the things that was completed last year with the budget and explained why the money was not spent.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to recess until 1 pm. Commissioner Tom Smith seconded. Vote 5:0

Chair Evans called the meeting aback to order at 1 pm.

The Board discussed increasing the capital amount from \$500 to

The Board then discussed the capital purchases from each department. They discussed the length of the loan and the payments per year.

The Board then discussed different avenues for using money from the sale of property to help purchase the recreation vehicle.

The Board agreed the plat cabinet for the Register of Deeds was needed for their operations.

The Board then moved on to talk about the Sheriff's department and School Resource officer (SRO) requests. They discussed the radio situation for the School Resource Officer as well as the body cameras.

The Board moved on to discuss the addition of security cameras at the Courthouse. Karen Evans noted a quote that had been turned in that was more than what was budgeted. County Manager Mike James said he would do some checking on that and let them know.

Then the Board moved on to the jail request for the HVAC units and timekeepers units. Chair Evans noted he had seen the need there on his own.

Next the Board discussed the request for multiple dual monitors for social services to help meet state requirement. They discussed that it was State mandated, but had no State funding to back it.

The Board moved on to talk about the County fee schedule. They agreed the Building Inspection fees were good where they were. Then moved on to talk about the Transfer Facility fees and discussed options for increasing residential fees possibly.

The Board then moved on to the employee pay scale and all agreed to move forward with it because it has done exactly what it was intended to do because the County is no longer a training ground for other Counties.

The Board then moved back to the budget book and started to progress tab by tab through the book.

The Board discussed the construction of a new maintenance shop and the money options for the building.

They moved on to the Sheriff's department and school resource officer expenditures.

County Manager Mike James explained the biggest difference for the dispatch budget was the new emergency dispatch equipment.

The Board moved on to talk about the jail and some of the cost from the facility. The Board skimmed through Emergency Management, Building Inspections, Medical Examiner, EMS. There was discussion about the salaries for the Extension Services split with the State. Then they moved on to Soil and Water, Veterans Office and discussed the indirect cost for the Transportation department. There was a discussion on why there are two transportation funds. Next they moved to Social Service and discussed the programs that have reimbursements from the State compared to the expenditures from the County. The Board next discussed the insurance budget and the county debt. Then the Board moved to the schools budget and capital budget.

The Board discussed a recess and the next date to discuss budget will be on Friday, June 16th at 8 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Lauren Linker
Clerk to the Board

Mark Evans
Chair