

Board of Commissioners met on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 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 and Board discussion.

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 called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner Prince gave the invocation.

Chair Evans covered a few questions that remained from the previous budget meeting on Wednesday, June 14, 2017.

Karen Evans explained the ammunition budget and told the Board the Sheriff would be willing to reduce it by \$7,000, but they may have to come back to ask for money for tasers later in the year. The Board discussed what to do with the extra money.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to reduce the ammunition line to 3,500 and move \$3,500 to an equipment line. Commissioner Prince seconded. Vote 5:0

Josh Green explained the need for a new shop building and his ideas how to

The Board discussed all the aspects of a new shop and how they could go about adding that to the budget for this FY 17/18. They discussed the debt load for the County and if it was an option for grants.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin made a motion to set aside \$150,000 to build a new maintenance shop. Commissioner Prince seconded. Vote 5:0

The Board then moved through the special appropriation. They skimmed through bank service fees, regional library, and then discussed the request from the Appalachian Health Department.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to cut the Health Department to \$175,000. Commissioner Prince seconded. Vote 5:0

Then they went over mental health, BROCC, council on aging, the discussion was had about the Arts Council and what their programs do for the County.

Chair Evans asked who would be in favor of leaving it at \$6,000. (Chair Evans, Commissioner Bobby Irwin, Commissioner Smith) and who is not (Commissioner John Irwin and Commissioner Prince).

They moved forward with special appropriation, next was the Chamber of Commerce. The Board discussed the actions of the chamber and what they do for the County. Some felt they should be self sustaining and others felt it was helpful for the County's economic development.

Commissioner Larry Prince made a motion to give the chamber \$5,000.

County Manager Mike James said he felt like with the buying local incentive it would not behoove the County to cut the Chambers funding.

Chair Evans explained about a grant and a position associated with the grant funding they had received in the past.

The Board then discussed at what level of funding everyone was at for the Chamber. For the recommended \$10,000 Chair Mark Evans and Commissioner Tom Smith, for a decreased \$5,000 Commissioner John Irwin and Commissioner Larry Prince and supporting no funding was Commissioner Bobby Irwin.

The Board moved on to, transfer to re-evaluation fund, to help build the fund for the coming re-evaluation. The Board then moved on to discuss the fire departments.

Chair Evans offered a 2.5% increase for all fire departments. Commissioner Bobby Irwin and Commissioner Tom Smith agreed. Commissioner John Irwin stated he wanted more and Commissioner Larry Prince said he was good with the recommended, but he didn't know enough about the topic so he supported Commissioner John Irwin. They moved on past the fire commission, fire control, and the 2.5% increase for the rescue squad. Then they moved along to Alleghany Memorial Hospital. The Board discussed holding the money until they can have a voting Commissioner on the Hospital Board. Voted 5:0

The Board discussed the planning committee and agreed to move forward with that. Then they moved on to Wilkes Community College, Health Advisory Council, Alleghany Connection, Fireworks, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC), Occupancy Tax, Fines and Fords. The Board then discussed the Wellness Center request and voted 3 (Chair Evans, Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Prince): 2 (Commissioner John Irwin and Commissioner Bobby Irwin).

Then they moved on to deed stamp, transfer to register of deeds enhancement fund, transfer to transportation fund, senior services, group homes, channel 50/21 support, potential liabilities, Sparta Revitalization Committee. Business Development Center, Voting Machines, security at 6 facilities, emergency services communication, historical society, and decided to leave the \$2,500 for music on main in case they ask for money for the next year.

The Board then moved on to talk about the new requests from the partnership for children and Our House of Wilkes. They discussed housing for the partnership for children.

Commissioner Larry Prince made a motion to go forward with the \$50,000 for the Partnership for Children. Commissioner John Irwin Seconded. Vote 5:0

The Board moved on to discuss the request from Our House of Wilkes. The Board decided to take the \$7,000 out of the budget pending further information of the group. Vote 5:0

County Manager Mike James explained an idea from Commissioner Bobby Irwin about shifting some of the maintenance salaries over to the Transfer Facility fund. County Manager, Mike James said there was only two employees that would be allowed by their job descriptions. The Board discussed moving the salaries and concluded they were not ready to make that move just yet.

The Board then went through the transportation fund, fairgrounds fund, they discussed recycling as a revenue in the transfer facility fund, and continued to discuss the E-911 fund, salaries in all the other funds. County Manager Mike James explained the school capital project fund.

Commissioner John Irwin asked when the Board will talk about County taxes.

County Manager Mike James said that his recommendation was not for a raise in taxes this year, but that would need to be a discussion later especially as the next budget year comes around.

Commissioner Prince stated next year he would like to have an across the Board 3% decrease in departments throughout the County. He also wanted to see all the special appropriation groups to get together and discuss where they overlap.

Chair Evans thank Finance Officer, Karen Evans, County Manager Mike James, Clerk to the Board, Lauren Linker.

Karen Evans offered her appreciation and time spent working through the budget.

County Manager Mike James echoed what Karen Evans had said and spoke to the dedication of the Commissioners for putting in the time to thoroughly go over all aspects of the budget.

Commissioner Larry Prince made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner John Irwin seconded. Vote 5:0

Respectfully Submitted,

Attest:

Lauren Linker  
Clerk to the Board

Mark Evans  
Chair of the Board