



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Thursday, May 24, 2018

9:00 AM

Agriculture and Conference Center

Budget Work Session

Present: 4 - Commissioner Jim Crawford, Chair Diana Hales, Commissioner Walter Petty and Vice Chair Mike Dasher

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Karen Howard

CALL TO ORDER

BOARD PRIORITIES

[18-2650](#)

Discuss the FY 2018-2019 Recommended Budget

Attachments: [BudgetWorkSessionSchedule FY2019](#)

[Work session presentation](#)

Budget Director Lisa West welcomed the commissioners and staff to the budget work session.

The budget theme is Plan Chatham - Team Chatham.

Ms. West gave a presentation to the Board. (Presentation attached)

Commissioner Petty stated the bullet points in the presentation would be helpful to have electronically. Lindsay Ray, the Clerk to the Board, will add it to the agenda and resend to the commissioners.

Chair Hales asked if Silk Hope Fire Department had accommodations for overnight staff. Renee Paschal, the County Manager will check with Tom Bender, the county Fire Marshal. Mr. Bender responded via email that they do have a room for overnight staff.

The County Manager said there were financial issues with Parkwood. It was taken over by Durham County three years ago. July 1 the city and county fire departments will merge. Staff met with Durham city yesterday. They are building a station closer to the county line which will improve service to Chatham. They will come to the July or August work session.

Chair Hales asked about canoe access and the easement. The County is letting the property under the bridge grow up. The NC Connect Bond is going to address the Old Bynum Mill site after which the county access may close. The state will want the County to maintain the state site. Work is scheduled to start in 2019.

Chair Hales inquired about Sheriff property seizure. Financial Operations Manager Hope Tally responded that it consists of property seized that we get back from state and federal, usually in drug busts, etc. Ms. Tally clarified that it can take years before we get a piece of it back and is strictly for use by the sheriff.

Chair Hales asked for further information on the coal ash settlement. The estimated expenditures include testing and work on the sewer line and the completion of the Moncure Fire Department request. There is another expected payment from Duke in June for about \$3 million.

Vice Chair Mike Dasher stated there has been interest from the Moncure community in putting funding towards community events. The County Manager suggested once we get the next payment and the bid for the wastewater line the Board may want to allocate \$50,000 for community events and then have an RFP process. Commissioner Petty thinks there should be some education about what has already been done with the funds, i.e. the Sprott Center, Moncure Fire Department and wastewater. The County Manager stated that when a user comes to the megasite the County will do an area plan for Moncure.

Commissioner Petty asked staff to look into recent allegations that the Sprott Center had funds go missing. He referred the County Manager to a news article from ABC 11.

Commissioner Crawford suggested having a Board of Commissioners Meeting at the Sprott Center. Vice Chair Dasher suggested it be a special meeting to discuss coal ash funds, megasite, wastewater, etc.

Commissioner Crawford asked Assistant County Manager Dan Lamontagne whether the referenced repairs to the road would get us to DOT compliance or if it was more a step in the right direction. Mr. LaMontagne stated that there are still more repairs needed.

Chair Hales inquired about Mr. Looney and whether or not we (the County) have eminent domain authority. The County Manager said the County will condemn the land and take it over.

Mr. LaMontagne stated that we going to have the segments with the culverts evaluated and that this will be in the upcoming CIP.

Budget Analyst Darrell Butts continued the presentation.

Chair Hales wanted to know if the county would be asked to help pick up some of Siler City's inspections when one of their inspectors retires. The County Manager stated that it was a possibility.

Commissioner Petty emphasized that succession planning is more important than it has ever been.

The County Manager mentioned that Lee Worsley with Triangle J has hired an intern for the summer and they may take on the tier project as part of their work. Commissioner Petty wanted to know if Siler City could qualify for grants based on the census, like Goldston. The key will be to find an ally with an influential legislator.

Vice Chair Dasher inquired about what became of bill that would remove riparian buffers from property tax. The County Manager said the bill is still active but staff does not know if it will affect the current budget or the future budget if it passes in the

short session.

The Board can vote on whether or not to levy the Article 46 tax on an annual basis if it passes by referendum. There is typically a four month lag time between approval and implementation so it could be on the ballot for the May primary and then the BOC could pass it as part of the next fiscal year budget. Commissioner Petty would want to tie the money generated by this tax to economic development. The Board could have a resolution specifying the intended use, as it is not stipulated on the ballot.

The County Manager stated she will send the Board the County's land acquisition process. Vice Chair Dasher said there is property on the river in Moncure, 130 acres. The County Manager asked for the contact information. The County could use the Parks and Recreation fee in lieu to pay for it.

Chair Hales stated Wake County has dedicated 1% of their property tax to affordable housing. Mr. Butts said they have a proposed tax increase.

Commissioner Crawford asked if public purposes are allowed are to overlap, for example a conservation area and a park. The County Manager stated the purposes could overlap but different funding mechanisms would have to be used for each purpose.

Vice Chair Dasher would like to see if a capital reserve/trust could coincide with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Commissioner Petty asked that it be an agenda item at a future meeting. The County Manager stated if the Board wants to start going after grants the County will need to hire a grant administrator.

Chair Hales wanted to know how the water fees are going to help with the new water intake. The County Manager stated that it will require general funding. She also expressed that she felt that stormwater fees could be a potential way to purchase land but understands that it's not really a way to generate revenue.

Chair Hales wanted to know if there is a way to use GIS to identify some areas in the county that could use more protection. Vice Chair Dasher suggested that the parks plan have a flood plain overlay.

The Board agreed to discuss Article 46 at the January Retreat. The capital reserve/trust will be at a future work session. Staff will proceed with the feasibility study for the watershed protection fee. Vice Chair Dasher expressed his apprehension in regards to watershed fees.

County Manager stated the board will have to be very strategic on how they would use Article 46 tax. Commissioner Petty would like to see this as an agenda item. The County Manager is not sure this would be the best time to introduce this concept if they would like it to be correlating with the parks master plan Commissioner Petty asked if there will be owner involvement in tax evaluation. The County Manager said there will be a work session prior to reevaluation.

Vice Chair Dasher stated Chatham Transit needs to find a way to be more visible in the county.

Chair Hales asked if the facilities budget included electric charging stations. Mr. LaMontagne said staff has found money for that this budget year.

Chair Hales asked if the arena at the Agriculture and Conference Center was complete. The County Manager stated it is just temporary; there is a bigger vision for a big arena and Cooperative Extension may use private dollars to fund it. Vice Chair Dasher asked if the County could fund the feasibility study. Commissioner Crawford posited that if the arena would be part of Extension programming, then some of the money should come from the foundation and even the state.

Chair Hales stated the library book sale is not making as much due to one of their biggest customers closing his book store.

Chair Hales inquired about the completion date for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Mr. LaMontagne said it would be completed by the end of January 2019.

The County Manager reminded the Board about the fire fighter appreciation dinners for the 11 departments in the county.

The Clerk reviewed youth engagement efforts.

Commissioners had questions about the Present Use Program. Finance Office Vicki McConnell stated there will be an audit of the 5,000 parcels currently in the program. The audit will be done in house and it will take staff about a year to prepare for the audit. The County Manager informed the Commissioners that there will be a work session or one on one sessions to address the issue before staff starts auditing.

County Manager stated that we have one year left for the Chatham Trades salary supplement. They will probably ask for that supplement to be renewed.

Rebuilding Together of the Triangle has been able to bring in \$3 for every \$1 the county spends.

Commissioner Petty asked for an update on the morgue. Mr. LaMontagne said architect has been hired.

Central Permitting and Inspector Director Jenny Williams and Human Resources Manager Carolyn Miller helped to design a job shadowing program to be implemented in school next year which they are hoping will be the first step to full-fledged apprenticeship. Commissioner Crawford inquired about the level of participation. The County Manager said not many. Chair Hales said it will be good to kick it off with the start of the new school. The County Manager stated the goal is to give students the first necessary class with the hope that this will help to keep skilled laborers like inspectors in the area. Commissioner Petty said this program may be more effective in the west because students in that part of the county are more likely to stay in the area. The County Manager emphasized that while she sees Commissioner Petty's point, this is a "foot in the door" measure.

The hotel in Chatham Park would substantially increase the Convention and Visitors Bureau's revenue.

Commissioner Crawford asked if there are there any practices where catchment basin could be beneficial to none potable water uses. Mr. LaMontagne said it may not be the most cost efficient way to go about it.

The County Manager said the County would have to hire a consultant to set up a domestic violence nonprofit.

Chatham County Schools Superintendent Dr. Derrick Jordan introduced the commissioners to some Northwood High School students that just wrapped up a student leadership summit.

Dr. Jordan reviewed with the Board the school system's budget requests.

Chair Hales asked where e-rate funding comes from. Chatham County Schools Chief Technology Officer Keith Medlin stated it is federal funding for telecommunication. It funds local and long distance service as well as cell service. Mr. Medlin stated they usually do this based on the district as a whole. If you do it school by school, the funds can only be used for those specific schools.

Commissioner Crawford suggested that maybe the number of students on free and reduced lunch could help us in our tier situation.

Ms. McConnell said that school construction would start in July when the money comes in but the design phase is 90% complete.

Commissioner Petty asked staff to run the last five year of assessed value for commercial property versus residential property.

Ms. West distributed a form looking at the \$30,000 request for a visitor's center in the Historic Courthouse. Vice Chair Dasher suggested also adding the Plan Chatham goals to the form. Chair Hales has concerns about the traffic circle and parking. The County Manager expressed concern about the safety of one person staffing the visitor's center. Maybe the Arts Council house could be a co-location. Commissioner Crawford asked about the SunTrust building. The County Manager stated that the plan is to reconfigure the site and sell it off.

The Board agreed to hold off on a decision until next budget year and allow them time to submit a proper request.

The County Manager emphasized that we need to be strategic about our funding. If the Board wants to give money to a broad array of groups it needs to come up with some criteria and an amount to allocate. She suggested the Board could do an RFP process when the CITs wrap up their work.

Vice Chair Dasher asked if staff could bring how to process requests like this at the retreat.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Dasher, seconded by Commissioner Petty, that this Agenda Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Commissioner Crawford, Chair Hales, Commissioner Petty and Vice Chair Dasher

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Howard

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Crawford, seconded by Vice Chair Dasher, that this meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Commissioner Crawford, Chair Hales, Commissioner Petty and Vice Chair Dasher

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Howard