



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Thursday, May 23, 2019

9:00 AM

Agriculture and Conference Center

Budget Work Session

CALL TO ORDER

Present: 5 - Commissioner Mike Dasher, Vice Chair Diana Hales, Commissioner Jim Crawford, Chair Karen Howard and Commissioner Andy Wilkie

BOARD PRIORITIES

[19-3096](#)

Introduction

Budget Director Lisa West gave a presentation to the Board. (Presentation attached)

Communications Director Mike Reitz gave an update on the requested radio system. The current radio system is a challenge. The new system partners with Viper, which saves the County a lot of money. The County is only building three towers. The new system will allow the County to talk with neighboring counties as well as in the county. Puts us in position for future growth.

Chair Dasher asked Mr. Reitz to talk about the bidding process. Mr. Reitz said they are working with Motorola, a Viper system. It is a state contract. It is under review by the attorneys. Signing now allows us to go through the permitting process.

County Manager Dan LaMontagne stated Mr. Reitz worked hard to get the cost down. Mr. Reitz said amending the tower ordinance to go taller allowed us to save money. A lot of work and thought has been put into this system design.

Commissioner Crawford asked what the life expectancy is of the new system. Mr. Reitz said the towers have a useful life of 30-40 years. Towers last a long time. Handhelds have a lifespan of 7-10 years. The deputies currently have to choose which tower they are going to talk off of. Deputies can't hear each other currently. If the Viper system goes down we will be able to go to a different channel and communicate.

Mr. LaMontagne said the reason the state is taking over maintenance is because the system will be used by Highway Patrol.

Commissioner Wilkie asked what department is responsible for the towers. Mr. Reitz said it is under the communications department.

Mr. LaMontagne said every first responder would tell you this is badly needed.

Mr. Reitz said close to \$1 million is from the 911 funds. Best case is 18-24 months for completion.

Vice Chair Hales said staff may want to do a press release about the need for the system.

Budget Analyst Darrell Butts continued the presentation.

Chair Dasher asked how comfortable staff is with the EOC expansion number. Mr. LaMontagne said staff is still refining the estimates but preliminary numbers are looking good.

19-3097

Revenue

Mr. Butts continued the presentation.

The Board had discussion about increased sales tax and what is binding for future boards.

Budget Director Lisa West said there is an education campaign to use the nine digit zip code for sales tax. Even with the quarter cent our sales tax will be lower than Orange County.

19-3098

Expense

Ms. West continued the presentation.

The Board agreed it would like a copy of the EDC budget. Vice Chair Hales said she would like to see a breakdown of the EDC allocation.

Commissioner Howard has a concern about the Arts Council budget falling under the EDC budget. Mr. LaMontagne said Hilary Pollan will take that on when she gets started. A question was also raised as to where the Small business center should be housed.

Commissioner Howard is interested in hearing from Neha Shah about what other CVBs are doing and what she could possibly tap into. Mr. LaMontagne suggested a one on one.

Chair Dasher said he is curious as to whether or not the veteran services person could help with court services. Mr. LaMontagne said that position really is not for court services.

Chair Dasher asked if there is a way to see what the fire districts spend per capita. Staff will look into it.

The Board discussed the request from Siler City for a .03 tax increase for the fire district. Commissioner Howard would like Siler City to come discuss this with the Board. The Board agreed to ask Siler City to come to the May 30th work session.

19-3099

Discussion

Mr. LaMontagne said the West Chatham Food Pantry is going to lose \$32,000 of funding. They are going to move in with Chatham Trades. They have asked if the

County could assist with the rent payment of \$24,000 a year. If the Board funds this, Ms. Pollan will work with them to help them figure out how to regain that funding.

Commissioner Howard said the students that go from high school to community college lose access to food because there is no more free and reduced lunch. Commissioner Crawford said CCCC has resources available for the students and there is the Last Mile Fund for someone with a special need and the need does not have to be school related.

A motion was made by Commissioner Crawford, seconded by Vice Chair Hales, to approve funding West Chatham Food Pantry's request for \$24,000 for their lease in the budget and use money from contingency. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Dasher, Vice Chair Hales, Commissioner Crawford, Chair Howard and Commissioner Wilkie

A motion was made by Commissioner Crawford, seconded by Vice Chair Hales, to approve a 3% salary increase for the County Manager, Sheriff, and Register of Deeds. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Dasher, Vice Chair Hales, Commissioner Crawford, Chair Howard and Commissioner Wilkie

Vice Chair Hales would like further discussion about a farmland preservation fund at an upcoming meeting. She would like for Alamance County to come and give a presentation on their program. Mr. LaMontagne thinks staff can gather that information and bring it to the Board.

Chair Dasher thanked staff for their hard work on the budget.

A motion was made by Commissioner Crawford, seconded by Commissioner Howard, to approve the FY 20 recommended budget with further discussion on the Siler City fire tax at the May 30th work session. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Dasher, Vice Chair Hales, Commissioner Crawford, Chair Howard and Commissioner Wilkie

ADJOURNMENT

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

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Dasher, Vice Chair Hales, Commissioner Crawford, Chair Howard and Commissioner Wilkie