

BUDGET WORK SESSION
JUNE 2, 2014

The Pender County Board of Commissioners met in Budget Work Session with County Departments on Monday, June 2, 2014 at the Pender County Public Assembly Room, 805 South Walker Street, Burgaw, North Carolina.

Chairman Williams called the Work Session to order at 1:00 p.m.

In attendance were: Board members David Williams, Fred McCoy, George Brown, Jimmy Tate, and Chester Ward; County Manager/Clerk to the Board Mickey Duvall; Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Butch Watson; Deputy Clerk to the Board Glenda Pridgen; and other staff.

Each Department explained their various requests and discussed their various programs and divisions. Dr. Duvall presented each department's budget on a screen and explained each line item. The Board held discussion and asked questions during and after each department's presentation.

The following departments reported:

Tax Assessor – Tax Assessor Tony Masiero. Dr. Duvall explained the Tax Assessor's budget actually went down \$2,000 less because a few of the line items had decreased from the current year.

Tax Collections – Tax Collector Barbara Murray. Dr. Duvall explained: Tax Collections have gone up every year since he has been here; there are some increases in fringe; \$1,500 was cut from contracted services. Other discussion included: Using debit/credit cards; charging user fees for debit/credit cards; advertising line item; if advertising can be done on-line; advertising has to be printed in order to meet the general population; advertising costs vary from year to year. Mr. Tate remarked Ms. Murray's department is one he hears few complaints about, and he actually gets compliments about how respectful and helpful the Tax Collections Office employees are to people.

Tourism – Director Monique Baker; Board Chairman Barbara Baker; and Board members Buddy Fowler, Tammy Proctor and Cathy Medlin. Discussion included: Concerns about reduction in promotions; reduction will affect advertising; they had the 800 number turned off; Tourism Office Assistant reduced to one-half time; Office Assistant would be shared with Veterans Services two days a week; Tourism is a customer service industry; the office should be open all day five days a week; Tourism brings in new tax dollars; they lost TDA Reserve Funds that they used for advertising; Burgaw Motel is the only one that provides Reserve Funds; number of visitors to the office; the Office Assistant does things for the office that IT Department doesn't have time to do; someone has to be there to manage the phone and the web site; they really need full-time Office Assistant; position really needed; Tourism partners with the Chambers; people need guidance to other things to do besides the beach; Tourism has \$17,000 left over; Tourism is really important. Ms. Baker distributed additional information. After more discussion, the Board gave a nod to go ahead and keep the Office Assistant full-time

for Tourism and allow Veterans Service to hire a part-time person. With respect to the Promotions line item, Dr. Duvall said it had actually increased instead of being cut.

Veteran's Affairs – Veterans Service Officer Roy Horne. Mr. Horne was informed of the part-time person he could hire and he thanked the Board for it. Mr. Horne explained: He needs confidentiality for his Veterans; he needs new space; Veterans come in and can't take his office because it is too confining; and he is an Advocate for Veterans. Dr. Duvall said plans are being made to move Mr. Horne and Ms. Mulhollen's offices to the Ag Building. Dr. Duvall noted Mr. Horne's budget increased because they made the part-time person in Hampstead full-time.

Utilities – Utilities Director Michael Mack. There was discussion concerning the flag at the Old Topsail School and it was the consensus of the Board to allow three flags at the site-United States flag, North Carolina flag and Pender County flag. Mr. Mack reported on the following:

Rocky Point/Topsail Water & Sewer District-Sewer: Discussion included: Commercial area; 11% decrease due to Coty's leaving; \$100,000 loss of Del Labs revenues; how much capacity. **Rocky Point/Topsail Water & Sewer District-Water:** Discussion included: 12% decrease; usage rate increase to \$4.50 per 1,000 gallons; commercial increase to \$5.00 per 1,000 gallons; very close to reaching sustainable rate; \$3,850 sign-up fee is used to offset debt service. Mr. Tate was concerned that lots of people who need the water can't afford the sign-up fee. Mr. Mack said they do have a Hardship plan in place where people pay \$850 up front and make payments for the rest. **Scotts Hill Water & Sewer District-Water:** Discussion included: Slight increase in usage rates of 4.9%, or 21¢ per 1,000 gallons; residents currently pay \$27.50 per month. Mr. Tate said he has concerns about rate increases every year. Mr. Mack responded the users pay for the cost of water and there are no tax increases for taxpayers. **Water Treatment Facility:** 43% increase; \$478,000 debt service principal; staff found good efficiencies with operations and maintenance; great and professional staff; revenues covered by bulk water sales; certifications and reclassification requests; positions totally enterprise funded. Ms. Mulhollen explained the reclassifications being requested. **Moore's Creek and Central Pender:** Discussion included: 45% grant money. **Maple Hill Water & Sewer District-Water & Sewer:** Discussion included: No rate changes in water or sewer; no debt service; sewer for 175 homes in Maple Hill. **Solid Waste:** Enterprise Fund; very large expense; 4% CPI this year; Transfer Station tipping fee increase; Convenience Center increase.

EMS & Fire – Director Woody Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan said his budget is the same as the one he submitted to the Board last month. Discussion included: Growth and fund balance are the only changes; Pender EMS & Fire objectives; what they accomplished; Scotts Hill moving along; balance of fire stations will be completed in October; 421 station will be full station, not a substation; there are no tax increases in EMS & Fire budget. Mr. Tate commented: Mr. Sullivan has constantly done more with less; he has taken on extra duties; he has taken on extra staff and training of staff; and he spent hours and days trying to make the merger work. Mr. Tate asked if the County can provide a 10% supplement to Mr. Sullivan's salary. Mr. Williams and Mr. Brown didn't think that would be a good idea. They agreed they were real impressed with the process of the merger and Mr. Sullivan does a good job, but thought this would "open up a can of worms." Mr. Brown suggested Mr. Tate ask the EMS & Fire Board. Mr. Sullivan said he would have declined this offer anyway.

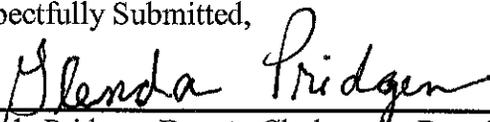
Emergency Management – Director Tom Collins. Discussion included: Budget is pretty much the same; five-year contract with Code Red; the County dodged a lot of bullets the past few years by not getting hit by hurricanes; we’re in good shape hurricane-wise; he has had a few rounds with FEMA; the ice storms from the past winter. Mr. Williams asked if we can get the word out quicker about debris sites the next time. Mr. Collins said FEMA won’t reimburse for using private property for debris sites, and they are trying to find a way to remedy this.

Board of Elections – Director Dennis Boyles. Discussion included: Disposing of obsolete Microvote Voting Terminals; and reclassification of the Elections Clerk to Elections Technician.

Library – Director Mike Taylor. Mr. Taylor asked if anything is left over during this budget process, if the Board will please consider giving employees a raise. He said we have good employees and volunteers, and the Library partners financially with Friends of the Library. Mr. Taylor named some of the services provided by the Library, including public access, wireless internet, and eBook collection. Mr. Williams said he had been getting lots of good feedback about the Board setting aside property for the Topsail Regional Library.

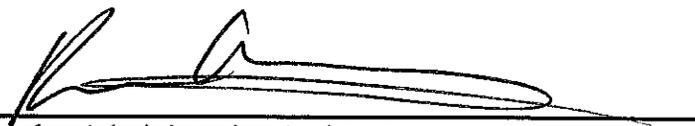
The Budget Work Session recessed at 4:15 p.m. and the Board went into its regular meeting. The next Work Session is scheduled for June 12, 2014 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Glenda Pridgen, Deputy Clerk to the Board

Reviewed By:



Butch Watson, Clerk to the Board/Ann Coombs, Administrative Assistant