

BUDGET WORK SESSION
MAY 21, 2015

The Pender County Board of Commissioners met in Budget Work Session with County Departments on Thursday, May 21, 2015 at the Pender County Public Assembly Room, 805 S. Walker Street, Burgaw, North Carolina.

In attendance were: Vice-Chairman George Brown; Commissioners Fred McCoy, David Piepmeyer, and Demetrice Keith; Randell Woodruff, County Manager and Clerk to the Board; Melissa Pedersen, Deputy Clerk to the Board; Sylvia Blinson, Interim Finance Director; and other staff.

Vice-Chairman Brown called the Work Session to order at 1:07 p.m.

EXCUSE COMMISSIONER

Mr. Piepmeyer made a motion to excuse Chairman Williams, Ms. Keith seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Each Department Manager was available to answer questions that they Board may have. Mr. Woodruff had provided advance copies of the proposed Department Budgets.

The following Departments reported:

Tax Assessor – At 1:07 Tax Assessor Justian Pound appeared before the Board to answer any questions the Board might have regarding the Tax Assessors Budget. Mr. Pound stated that there has been some fluctuation in Salaries due to recent turnover. Discussion ensued regarding vehicle taxes and the \$108,000.00 fee for the software that handles the vehicle tax. Ms. Blinson stated that those funds had been moved to the Tax Collectors Budget. Discussion ensued regarding residency concerns with DMV and vehicle registrations due to address zip codes. Mr. Pound stated that corrections do get made through DMV if there is a residency error when paying online.

Tax Collector – At 1:16 Tax Collector Barbara Murray appeared before the Board to answer any questions the Board might have regarding the Tax Collectors Budget. There was brief discussion regarding the tax attorneys and collection benefits and costs. Ms. Murray also mentioned a reclassification that she asked for that had been cut out reclassifying a Tax Assistant to a Deputy Tax Collector. The \$108,000.00 fee for the vehicle tax software was also mentioned as a change in the budget from what was requested to what was proposed to the Board. Discussion then ensued regarding Bank Fees and collection rates. There was also extensive discussion about accepting Credit Card Payments and taking payments over the phone. Ms. Murray stated that her department is working on being able to accept Credit Card Payments and she will talk to Mr. Thurman regarding over the phone payments with regards to County liability.

Register of Deeds – At 1:34 Register of Deeds Sharon Willoughby appeared before the Board to answer any questions the Board might have regarding the Register of Deeds Budget. Credit Card discussion continued over to the Register of Deeds Budget regarding the policy for that department and its processing fees. Discussion ensued regarding revenue and the steady increase of revenue due to population growth. Ms. Willoughby explained that her staff is cross trained and ready for that growth, and that her Department stays busy. Discussion also ensued regarding Electronic Birth and Death Certificates.

Courts – At 1:45, the board held a brief discussion regarding the Courthouse. Discussion took place regarding the court fees and revenues received at the courthouse. Through the end of April, the courthouse has received

\$67,000.00 in fees and \$11,000.00 in revenue from the movie studio. Mr. Woodruff explained what those court fees and revenues cover.

Schools – At 1:55 School Superintendent Dr. Terri Cobb, Chief Financial Officer Betsy Chestnutt, and Director David Smith appeared before the Board to answer any questions the Board might have regarding the Pender County Schools Budget. Discussion began regarding custodial services for \$1.7 Million. Mr. Smith explained the policy and procedures for custodial services. Discussion then moved to Instructional Support. Ms. Chestnutt explained where these funds go. Discussion took place regarding Drivers Education. Dr. Cobb explained the changes at the state level with regard to funding and how the district plans to move forward. JROTC was also another discussed topic. Dr. Cobb stated that the Armed Services have cut all funding and therefore it is now paid for solely by the district. Dr. Cobb also explained the requirements for offering the program and stated that it is only offered at Pender High and Trask. Dr. Cobb also talked about the recent growth study and the need for a Middle School Director. Discussion then ensued regarding West Pender Middle School with focus on Sports and upgrades to the school both with programs and structurally. Mr. Woodruff asked Dr. Cobb to get Ms. Keith copies of all of the School Bond Information and Plans. Discussion then ensued regarding Lottery Funds and where those funds go. Long range planning was also discussed with regard to the Bonds. Mr. Woodruff stated that since 2009, the school system has grown by about 1,000 students. More discussion took place about the growth study and the future of the study. In closing, Mr. Brown recognized the school Board members in the audience and thanked all those with Pender County Schools for their attendance.

Forestry – At 2:51 Forestry Agent Hagan Blake appeared before the Board to answer any questions the Board might have regarding the Forestry Service Budget. Mr. Blake stated that the Forestry Budget is composed of 60% State funding and 40% county funding. Discussion ensued about the Forestry Towers and state owned property. Mr. Blake stated that since the use of the towers has ceased, planes now patrol for fires. There was discussion on ideas to put the towers to use. Mr. Brown thanked Mr. Blake for his time.

Emergency Management – At 2:58 Fire Marshall Charles Newman and Deputy Fire Marshall Tommy Batson appeared before the Board to answer any questions the Board might have regarding the Emergency Management Budget. Mr. Woodruff stated that the only change from the requested budget to the recommended budget was that the new position for the Safety Compliance Officer and a vehicle for that person has been removed due to a lack of resources in this budget. Mr. Batson answered questions about what that position would encompass. Mr. Newman explained for Ms. Keith what the Emergency Management Department does. The progress and growth of the department was also discussed.

Fire Departments – At 3:05 Fire Marshall Charles Newman and Deputy Fire Marshall Tommy Batson appeared before the Board to answer any questions the Board might have regarding the Fire Department Budgets. The only Fire Department that was discussed was the Rocky Point Fire Department. Mr. Newman stated that all but two departments are keeping a budget similar to the current year. Rocky Point Volunteer Fire Department is one that is asking for a \$0.015 increase. The reasons stated for the increase are to keep an employee at the substation; to purchase a new pumper; the old station needs a new septic tank; increase in call volume and the proposed growth at Lanes Ferry. ISO Ratings and Insurance Rates in the Fire Districts were also discussed. After much discussion, Mr. Brown stated that the Board would consider the \$0.015 tax increase for Rocky Point.

Pender EMS/Rescue – At 3:16 Chief Woody Sullivan appeared before the Board to answer any questions the Board might have regarding the Pender EMS and Fire Budgets. Mr. Brown gave a history of Pender EMS as it relates to the Board, merger, and growth. Brief mention was made regarding a requested tax rate increase. This increase would be \$0.01 for EMS Services County wide and an additional \$0.01 for each fire district (Station 14 Sloop Point, Station 16 Hampstead, Station 18 Scotts Hill, and Station 28 Cross Creek, Station 21 Long Creek Grady, and Station 29 Currie area). Discussion ensued regarding revenues and collection rates.

Human Resources – At 3:49 Human Resources Director Denise Mulhollen appeared before the Board to answer any questions the Board might have regarding the Human Resources Budget. Ms. Mulhollen passed around a handout and the Board briefly discussed Healthcare and some possible changes such as the savings by switching to the State Health Plan. Ms. Mulhollen reviewed the different plans offered by the State Health Plan. Ms. Mulhollen also discussed possible changes to the current policy to save money. Mr. Woodruff stated that even if the County were to make changes to the current policy, it would still be providing an above average plan. The Board discussed concerns on all options. Due to time, the Board discussed holding another Budget Work Session and requested Ms. Mulhollen come back with more information at that time.

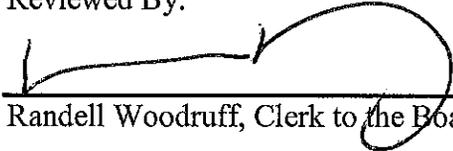
The Budget Work Session adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Melissa Pedersen, Deputy Clerk to the Board

Reviewed By:



Randell Woodruff, Clerk to the Board