

**GATES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
May 12, 2014**

The Gates County Board of Commissioners met in an Special Meeting at 5:30 p.m. Monday, May 12, 2014 in the Commissioners Board Room, 202 Court Street, Gatesville. Commissioners Jordan, Owens, Jernigan, Hofler and Felton were present. Also present was Interim County Manager Kenneth Windley.

Chairman Jordan led in prayer and the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Jordan called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes are approved during the 1st monthly meeting; none are available at this time.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Owens made a motion to amend the agenda to address closed session prior to new business. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion, motion carried without opposition.

New Business:

County Manager, Ken Windley, provided the county managers message for the proposed FY14-15 Budget. Mr. Windley highlighted the following areas:

- A proposed 1% COLA is included in the budget for all employees.
- Meter Readers would work for the customer service division
- Building & Grounds staffing is proposed to be changed by removing one part-time person and adding one full-time person
- Emergency Services needs a supervisor position to help manage 911 Communications.
- A Planning Department is proposed to be organized with a staff of one, plus help from Development Services.
- The recent turmoil created by NC Fast has led to a backlog that has stressed many Social Service agencies around the State, including ours. They are expecting more issues and are asking for two additional employees. I am recommending one.
- For the Board of Education I am proposing a 3.75% increase in Current Expense to hire reading teachers or whatever reason The Board of Education feels is most appropriate.
- I am proposing going from \$100,000 in funding to \$200,000 in the Capital Outlay
- Grant funds are available as soon as Commissioners vacate their current meeting room to convert the space into the new 911 Communications Center. This can be accomplished as soon as the Old Courthouse space is available for meetings.
- With the transfer of meter reading to Customer Service this department is reduced to six employees. This department would require some fund balance to be appropriated, primarily to begin rehabilitation of the Gatesville water tank. It will take approximately \$80,000 in 2014-2015 and another \$80,000 or more the following year.
- Nearly \$2 million in grants must be spent in the next two years to complete current projects. A Sewer Management or Operational Plan is currently being developed by the staff to keep the proposed new sewer operation in compliance with NCDENR regulations.

Commissioner Jernigan asked if all proposed changes were listed in the proposed budget and if taxes would increase. Mr. Windley stated that all proposals are represented and taxes will not increase.

Commissioner Hofler asked about getting our old system in compliance with DENR. Mr. Windley stated that the old system would probably, at least temporarily, be shut down and we would just operate the new system. It probably would not be economically feasible to operate 14,000 in one and 50,000 in a second. We would just do the 50,000 for the time being

Commissioner Hofler asked if we would continue to use the old spray field. Mr. Windley responded that we would probably not for the time being, in the future you may need it again but not initially. Commissioner Hofler asked if we were going to go ahead and reseed it and Mr. Windley stated that we would go ahead with reseeding.

Chairman Jordan stated that the Board has before them the 2014-2015 proposed budget, revenues, expenditures, and managers recommendations for review.

Chairman Jordan asked the JARC number. Ms. Pittman stated that it is grant funding for the GITS Program. Everything from the NCDOT Grant down to agency fares, Hertford County is grant numbers provided by Patrice. Commissioner Felton asked what the ROAP is. Mr. Windley said it is the Rural Operating Assistance Program for GITS.

Commissioner Owens asked if everything is working out letting Hertford County use our transportation services. Ms. Pittman stated that she has not heard anything and is assuming that there are no issues.

The Board discussed why GITS is being brought back into the general fund instead of being an enterprise fund. Commissioner Jernigan stated he is pleased about this, he disliked how it was last year, but we tried it to see how it would work out.

Commissioner Jernigan asked if a good bit of review has been taken place on the amount of vehicles that will be replaced in the Sheriff Office. Mr. Windley stated that it would be great to put three vehicles into the yearly rotation but there just wasn't enough money this year. Commissioner Jernigan stated that he had just recalled that there were conversations about trying to get a replacement schedule in place.

Commissioner Felton asked about the appropriation under fund balance appropriation amount from \$10,000 to \$212,000 amount. Ms. Pittman stated the \$212,000 includes \$30,000 from Vidant funds, \$82,000 from tax software that was put in reserve over the last seven years and \$100,000 transfer to the library/historic courthouse restoration fund. Mr. Windley stated that there were funds set aside for courthouse restoration and tax funds. The County has been getting the money from Vidant for the Community Center. We are giving money back to the Community Center for painting in the gym and some of the other areas. The Board discussed the painting that is needed at the Community Center.

Mr. Windley stated that Vidant is not going to extend the contract at the Community Center because they have only been a pass through for handling the revenue for about the past year or so, they have had very little other involvement. The Board discussed issues that have come up along the way with the Vidant agreement. Ms. Pittman stated that the School Board will be taking over the billing and membership fees.

The Board discussed some operations of the Community Center including cameras, safety, equipment assistance, and card reader systems that could be added or improved upon as well as membership drives.

Chairman Jordan asked about the \$15,670,415 total of revenue on the 3rd page the \$14, 582, 415 total expenditures. Ms. Pittman stated that this is a calculation issue that must have occurred when exporting reports. Chairman Jordan asked for an update with accurate numbers, Ms. Pittman will email the corrected update.

Commissioner Hofler asked about the debt service fund on page two. The Board discussed if we need to pay extra on debt service payoff this year or keep the extra money in the budget to be utilized in other areas.

Chairman Jordan asked if there is any idea where we are going to fall with the fund balance this year. Ms. Pittman stated that it is still early and there are budget amendments that still need to take place. The pay and class study was not done earlier in the year as budgeted for so we don't expect to pull from fund balance.

Chairman Jordan asked if there was a reason why funds for the Housing Committee were not appropriated. Ms. Pittman stated that we never received a written request and it just wasn't budgeted but can be added. Chairman Jordan stated that \$4,000 for the Housing Committee could go a long way; Commissioner Jernigan stated that he was thinking more along the lines of \$10,000. Commissioner Owens said that the Committee is reaching out to the community for support as well. Chairman Jordan stated that around \$7,000 has been raised from churches and businesses so it shows that this is something that the community supports and stands behind. Commissioner Felton stated that we lost out on getting some grant money for the project. Commissioner Jernigan asked if all of the grant money has been used. Ms. Pittman stated that all of the money has been used. We did not get the URP grant this year.

Commissioner Felton asked about the 911 system fund. Ms. Pittman stated that it is totaled incorrectly. We have received notification that the funding for that system is going to increase next year.

Chairman Jordan stated that the Board can make a motion to add funding for the Housing Committee. Commissioner Jernigan stated he would like to know where we are going to take it from before he makes the motion. Chairman Jordan stated that there are areas that we can make some adjustments and would look for the staff to make some suggestions.

Commissioner Felton clarified funds on the 911 line item.

Commissioner Hofler asked if the numbers are in order so that we will not be in a deficit on unemployment at the end of next year. Ms. Pittman stated that it is really hard to judge but we feel based on information we have received that we feel we are projecting a number that is pretty close.

Commissioner Hofler asked about insurance costs. Mr. Windley stated retirees are getting health insurance that are not helping them however if we have a retirement supplement, it could go a long way toward helping retirees and it would save the county 2/3 of the cost.

Commissioner Felton stated that Reba Green-Holly has talked with some Board members about an employee that may not be able to stay on the staff. Mr. Windley stated that the person was hired on a part time basis with the state paying half and the County was paying the other half but for the upcoming year it is not looking like the state is going to fund the other half. Since it was in place for a full time position and the state is not going to pay the half to make it full time the county has decided to drop their half in total because it was meant to make a full time position.

Commissioner Owens stated that in looking for dollars, could we take some money from the jail boarding fund. Mr. Windley stated that it is an expense that varies from year to year and is a possibility of an area to take some funds from. Ms. Pittman stated that it is an area that has decreased in the past but really varies with the economic times and crime rates. The Board discussed various funds that you just can't predict such as medical examiners.

Commissioner Jernigan asked what is projected in the fund balance. Ms. Pittman stated that she thinks we are going to be pretty close to breaking even.

Commissioner Hofler asked why there is such a big increase in the professional services under water & sewer. Mr. Windley stated that every few years we have to have a professional study conducted to make sure everything is flowing properly. It evaluates water pressure and various other items.

Commissioner Felton stated that most of the salary lines have jumped up considerably. Mr. Windley stated that there are 6 new positions in the budget and the remainder is a

result of the pay and class study. Four part time positions were cut and six full time positions were added. We still do not have soil & water, GITS, and tax on the new pay plan.

Ms. Pittman stated that part of the change in the development services salary is that Ms. Tripp position will be taken out of finance and split to development services and planning. Mr. Boone that is currently in development services and will be moved over to planning.

Chairman Jordan asked if the Board would like to frame a motion to direct the County Manager and the Finance Director to find between and \$5,000 & \$10,000 in the budget for the Housing Committee. Commissioner Owens stated that he would feel more comfortable if a solid number was set.

Commissioner Jernigan stated that for the purpose of discussion we could take it out of the fund balance. Commissioner Hofler asked about the percentage of our fund balance. Ms. Pittman stated we are at about 26%. Ms. Pittman stated that she would feel more comfortable if we deducted it from the jail line or another line and then took it out of the fund balance later in the year if needed. Mr. Windley stated that he would agree with Ms. Pittman.

Commissioner Felton asked if this money would have been needed if they would have received the grant that was applied for. Chairman Jordan stated that the DSS Director kind of copied the material from the year before and they wanted to see some more specifics and it was a lesson learned. Chairman Jordan stated that the grant would have been a big boost but whatever the Board contributes would be used by the County. Mr. Windley stated that you get extra points for matching funds also which they did not have. Mr. Windley discussed the reasons why they were declined for the Grant.

Commissioner Owens asked if there is a class at COA that we could send Mr. Couch to that would increase our chances of receiving the grant. Mr. Windley stated it is something that we can look into. The Board discussed several things that we can do and put in place to make our chances for receiving the grant in the fall better.

Commissioner Felton asked for clarification that the position in extension will be gone. Mr. Windley stated that as it is written now the money is cut because the state will not provide the funding, if the state provided the funding we could go back and revisit at a later time. The only way the position would remain is if the Board wanted to go back and add a part time salary into the budget.

The Board discussed a few job descriptions that will be going before the Board at the May 19th meeting.

Commissioner Felton said that he would rather see an employee keep her position rather than providing money to the Housing Committee. Chairman Jordan stated he believes it is a situation where the young lady is already looking for a position; we are trying to keep her from leaving not necessarily cutting her. The work the housing committee is doing is very important; we have seniors that are living in conditions that are not safe.

Commissioner Felton made a motion to direct the County Manager and Finance Director to review the appropriates for \$7,500 for the Housing Committee and the cooperative extension position part time at 15 hours per week. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion, motion passed without opposition.

Ms. Pittman stated that the customer service division is seeing a tremendous amount of payments received in the mail. There are days that the ladies spend the whole day opening mail. They are looking at putting a lock box in place where bills would go directly to the lock box, get opened, put in the bank, and then we would get a daily report from the Bank. The one hesitation is that Southern Bank lock box is not in NC. Mr. Windley stated that he had this situation before and they spent 1 year explaining why people were sending money out of the state but then never had to do it again. Commissioner Owens stated that Colony Tire had a lock box that was in Atlanta and now is in Charlotte and they have not had any issues.

Ms. Pittman stated that electronic payment could be an option. So far the information we have received would be that it would take a couple thousand dollars to set up then would be \$.10 per transaction.

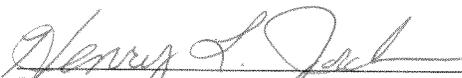
Chairman Jordan asked if another meeting is needed between now and the May 19th meeting.

Chairman Jordan brought the Board up to speed on a letter of support that Sunbury Fields has asked the Board to send to CADA.

Commissioner made a motion for the Chairman to provide a letter of support for Sunbury School to the CADA Board of Directors. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Commissioner Owens made a motion to adjourn the budget work session. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion, motion passed without opposition.


Henry L. Jordan, Chairman


Melissa A. Coe, Interim Clerk

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