

**COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
BUDGET WORKSHOP NUMBER FOUR**

**Monday, June 29, 2020  
6:30 P.M.**

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above stated date and at the above stated time in the Dempsey B. Herring Courthouse Annex Building, located at 112 West Smith Street, Whiteville, North Carolina, for the purpose of conducting Budget Workshop #4.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

P. Edwin Russ, **Chairman**  
Jerome McMillian, **Vice Chairman**  
James E. Prevatte  
Giles E. Byrd  
Trent Burroughs,  
Ricky Bullard  
Charles T. McDowell

**APPOINTEES PRESENT:**

Mike Stephens, **County Manager**  
Amanda B. Prince, **County Attorney**  
June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**  
Bobbie Faircloth, **Finance Officer**

**BUDGET WORKSHOP #4 was RESUMED FROM JUNE 16, 2020 and CALLED TO ORDER:**

At 6:30 P.M., Chairman P. Edwin Russ called Budget Workshop #4 to order.

**INVOCATION and PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE:**

The invocation was delivered by Commissioner Charles T. McDowell. Everyone in attendance stood and pledged Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America which was led by Chairman P. Edwin Russ.

**DISCUSSION of COLUMBUS COUNTY FY 2020-2021 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET:** (Pages 117 through 133)

Chairman Russ stated we would review the budget page-by-page, and if anyone has a question, please state the question.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>PAGE</b>	<b>QUESTION - Line Item</b>	<b>ANSWER - BOBBIE/MIKE</b>
Multiple	117	Why the \$5.00 charge for client assistance? -Needs to be looked into. -More clarification needed for our water customers.	
McDowell	118	C/O Other Improvements - What is this for?	They want to implement those meters that you can ride by and read.
Prevatte	120	Retirement Contribution \$12,710 - What is this for?	Retirement for Earl Fowler and Danny.
Byrd	127	Transfer from General Fund - What is this for?	We had to transfer these funds from the General Fund to balance the budget.
McDowell	129	NCDOT Rural Operating Asst PRG - \$211,416	This program has been cut by the State.

**DISCUSSION of REQUEST by SHERIFF GREENE for RIOT GEAR:**

The following topics were discussed relative to the riot gear requested by Sheriff Greene.

1. Support and the lack of support;
2. The wrong message is being portrayed to our citizens;
3. The requested gear is not only for riots, it is for gatherings of our citizens, adults and children, at any given

- place or event;
4. Provides protection for our officers, and a more effective manner to control given situations when needed; **and**
  5. The available avenues of outside help from outside sources when needed.

**REQUESTS MADE for INCLUSIONS in BUDGET BEFORE ADOPTION:**

Chairman Russ requested that each Board member state the requests they made for inclusion in the Columbus County Proposed FY 2020/2021 Operating Budget before adoption on June 30, 2020.

1. **Commissioner McDowell:** stated the following:
  - Put a 4 x 4 truck in the Parks and Recreation budget, got a 250 last year and cannot use; **and**
  - Make sure to put a camera system in the Detention Center.
2. **Commissioner Prevatte:** stated the following:
  - We include the \$120,000 for the camera system in the Detention Center;
  - We increase the maintenance and repair budget at the Sheriff's Department from \$5,000 to \$15,000;
  - We increase the professional liability insurance from \$125 to \$200;
  - We increased the Non-Capital Outlay from \$48,468 to \$50,000;
  - We fund the four (4) Deputy Bailiffs and the one (1) Detention Bailiff;
  - On the vehicle line, eight (8) vehicles are for lease and should be delivered;
  - Purchase six (6) vehicles up to \$47,000 each, one (1) transport van up to \$61,000, the remaining vehicles a mixed type, to be purchased by our Purchasing Department through the State Contract, or at the cheapest place, and location;
  - Commissioner Burroughs has recommended that there were FOB's for each vehicle to eliminate problems that were experienced earlier;
  - There is a 14% increase overall in the Sheriff's budget;
  - I do not favor spending any funds, at this time, for helicopters or riot gear. These could send the wrong message since there are greater needs; **and**
  - The consensus is six (6) to one (1).
3. **Vice Chairman Jerome McMillian:** stated the following:
  - The riot gear the Sheriff is requesting could be used for any crisis that arises in the County that jeopardizes the safety of our citizens with emphasis on our children;
  - The use of the National Guard Defense is not free; **and**
  - The salary increase was my main concern, and I don't understand why we could not agree on 7% which would be a compromise between the 10% and the 3%.
4. **Commissioner Byrd:** I support the three (3%) percent salary increase across-the-board. The consensus was five (5) to two (2).
5. **Commissioner Bullard:** stated the following:
  - We need to allocate money for the riot gear;
  - We need to do something for the schools;
  - I'm asking for \$1 million based on number of students;
  - Commissioner Prevatte recommended \$800,000 for Education in Capital Outlay by student numbers, and the consensus for this item was five (5) to two (2); **and**
  - We received a ½ million dollars increase due to revaluation.
6. **Commissioner Burroughs:** stated the following:
  - My main emphasis is education;
  - I am concerned about the \$5,000,000 with the State Budget shortfall's effect on our County moving forward;
  - Concerned that because of the shortfall that we may not receive Article 44 monies, and if this money is not received, we can't make our school payments;
  - Concerned about our citizens when the direct payments from COVID-19 Relief stops on July 30, 2020;
  - I strongly support education funding and remember that we may have to re-address school needs with a budget amendment later this year; **and**
  - Schools are our most critical needs.
7. **Chairman P. Edwin Russ:** stated the following:
  - I have been talking with Edward Davis who has underwent another rotator cuff surgery;
  - He has received a grant in the amount of \$650,000 for debris cleaning and clearing in the river; **and**
  - Within the grant, he can hire another person as a Soil Analyst, and they can work in the municipalities and

County, as a full-time person.

**CHANGES to COLUMBUS COUNTY PROPOSED FY 2020-2021 OPERATING BUDGET BEFORE ADOPTION on JUNE 30, 2020:**

Bobbie Faircloth, Finance Officer, stated the following changes that needed to be made to the Columbus County Proposed FY 2020-2021 Operating Budget before adoption on June 30, 2020.

1. Add 4 x 4 truck to Parks and Recreation;
2. Add camera system to the Detention Center;
3. Add 4 bailiffs and a Detention Officer;
4. Purchasing six (6) vehicles instead of ten (10), one (1) transport van, and \$15,000 to Repair and Equipment;
5. Add \$50,000 to Non-Capital Outlay
6. Insurance \$125 in there;
7. (\$800,000) To School Systems for Capital Outlay, with emphasis on technology, and being done per student;
8. 3% Salary increase across-the-board;
9. Riot gear will be discussed at a later date;
10. Additional position at the Tax Office; **and**
11. Other positions recommended: Custodian, Maintenance Worker, Animal Control Worker, moving part-time worker in Planning to full time person; part-time worker for the Clerk to the Board.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

At 8:00 P.M., Commissioner Bullard made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Vice Chairman McMillian. The motion unanimously passed.

**APPROVED:**

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**JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board**

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**P. EDWIN RUSS, Chairman**