

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

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

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 a Budget Workshop legally scheduled and announced.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

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

**APPOINTEES PRESENT:**

William S. Clark, **County Manager**  
Mike Stephens, **County Attorney**  
Bobbie Faircloth, **Finance Officer**

**APPOINTEE ABSENT:**

June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**

**BUDGET WORKSHOP CALLED to ORDER:**

At 6:30 P.M., Chairman James E. Prevatte called the Budget Workshop to order. Chairman Prevatte asked if anyone had any questions relative to the Budget Message.

**SYNOPSIS of BUDGET MESSAGE:**

William S. Clark, Columbus County Manager, delivered the following synopsis of the 2017-2018 Budget Message.

The General Fund has decreased by approximately \$3 million.

The total budget has decreased approximately \$58,000.

The total budget for next year is \$71,653,679, and that includes the enterprise funds and the General Fund.

Salary adjustments are 3.5%, with a cap of \$2,000, and this will be effective September 21, 2017.

We have some increase in the Local Governmental Employees Retirement System.

There will be some increase in the Health Insurance that we are anticipating in January. The retirees continue to be an issue.

General Insurance went up.

Enterprise Funds - we plan to decrease the solid waste user fee by \$5.00. We plan to increase the water rate from \$23.00 to \$24.00.

We are recommending the same ad valorem tax of \$ .805.

The basic tax collection rate is 97%.

Education - current expense recommended to be increased at 2%, capital outlay no increase.

**QUESTIONS / COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:**

<b>PAGE #</b>	<b>COMMISSIONER</b>	<b>QUESTION</b>
9	Chairman Prevatte	Is there any COLA included? Bobbie: this employee will get a lump sum payment.
17	Chairman Prevatte	What exactly is this? Bobbie: Maintenance, housekeeping and anything dealing with the court facilities.
24	Chairman Prevatte	What is the Professional Services-Attorney \$5,000 and Professional Services \$80,000? Bobbie: the \$5,000 is for indirect costs and the \$80,000 is partly GP.

**TEN (10) MINUTES BREAK TO CALL BOARD MEMBERS:**

A ten (10) minutes break was taken to contact Commissioners Byrd and Burroughs who were not in attendance.

PAGE #	COMMISSIONER	QUESTION
34	Russ	The Sheriff does not have enough vehicles. Sheriff: cars were wrecked, \$250,000 plus, were taken out of service, one (1) totaled in flood.
34	McDowell	If you put all the insurance money together, could you replace many vehicles? Sheriff: not many.
34	Vice Chairman McKenzie	Do you know what the reason is for the veteran people who are leaving? Sheriff: A higher salary. We need incentives similar to what the surrounding counties have to entice people to come on board, and then we need incentives to encourage them to stay on. If we would use steps in lieu of the minimum, mid and maximum grading scale for salaries, they could see progress earlier, and this would provide more incentive for them to continue their employment.
34	Bullard	Who does the evaluations and exit interviews? Sheriff: I do certain ones, and the department heads do the remainder.
36	Vice Chairman McKenzie	Do you have any vacancies? Sheriff: At this time, we have no employee vacancies. The inmate population is down to 159 and our maximum is 197.
39	Russ	I have been told if you had an employee who has worked for 15 years, that employee would have the same salary as a new employee, is that true? Kay: Since we have no steps for the salaries or to utilize as incentives, the only thing I can do is move them to the mid level on the grading scale after they have completed a 90 day probation period.
45	Russ	Bladen and Brunswick Counties are getting grants to add onto their airport. Are we getting grants? Clark: We are getting grants every year, with County matching funds.
47	Bullard	Why are the salaries and wages increased? Clark: We have a new inspector at a higher salary than the previous inspector and we have two (2) assistant inspectors.
49	Chairman Prevatte	Why is there a difference between the requested and recommended salaries? Clark: We did not give them the amount recommended.
53	Chairman Prevatte	There is \$35,876 listed for Salaries and Wages Part Time. Bobbie: This is for two (2) new part-time people and once the waterway project is finished, then this amount will end.
53	Byrd	The \$36,000 for the Beaver Bounty Program is the same as it was last year.

**SHERIFF DEPARTMENT DISCUSSION:**

Chairman Prevatte stated that Commissioners Byrd and Burroughs had arrived and there were three (3) areas relative to the Sheriff’s Department that needed to be discussed with all Board members present, as follows:

1. The number of cars requested and the number approved;
2. Pay scale with no incentives after ninety (90) days; **and**
3. Evaluations and exit interviews.

Sheriff Lewis Hatcher stated the following:

1. There are fifteen (15) cars that have pushed to the side, or have been totaled;
2. I asked for thirteen (13) cars in my budget and was only awarded eight (8);
3. I appreciate what has been done by everyone involved, but there are great risks taken by the law enforcers; **and**
4. We need incentives available to our law enforcers.

William S. Clark, County Manager, stated a review of the salaries and wages needs to be done.

**CONSENSUS:**

After lengthy discussion, a consensus was made to do the following:

1. A review of the salary and wages to be done;
2. \$220,963 To purchase vehicles for the Sheriff’s Department to be taken from Fund Balance; **and**
3. Exit interviews to be done, a copy of the exit interviews to be filed in Human Resources and to be reviewed by the County Manager on a periodic basis.

**FIVE (5) MINUTES RECESS**

**RESUME BUDGET WORKSHOP:**

<b>PAGE #</b>	<b>COMMISSIONER</b>	<b>QUESTION</b>
61	McKenzie	I thought we were through with Home Health. Smith: There is a little bit of work we have to do, the final cost needs to be reported, and we have to keep the records for eleven (11) years.
63	Chairman Prevatte	Why is the Christmas Bonus only \$25.00? Smith: Only this amount is taken from this part and the remaining is taken out of another part.
66	Chairman Prevatte	What does the Contracted Services for \$59,980 entail? Smith: Part of the Medical Director is included, part of the Pharmacist is in there and the Physician Extender II, Nurse Midwife.
67	N/A	Smith: We are experiencing a \$35,000 cut in funds, we have moved one (1) personnel out of this program, and we are closing two (2) off sites, Chadbourn and Bolton.
74	Chairman Prevatte	If an illegal immigrant applies for service, do they receive the service? Smith: it depends on what program they apply for. They need proof of income and how many people live in the house. This is a Federal program that is passed down to the State, and it is a mandated program.

PAGE #	COMMISSIONER	QUESTION
81	McDowell	I need an explanation for the Article 44 Sales and Use Tax \$1,571,460, and the City Schools Capital Outlay. Faircloth: the article 44 Sales and Use Tax - we reserved \$150,000 to Economic Development and the remainder for Capital School Needs. The City Schools Capital Outlay includes the ADM amount.
87	Chairman Prevatte	The Christmas bonus of \$94. Faircloth: their Christmas bonus may be flipped between the areas they work in.
94	Chairman Prevatte	Is the \$1,500 for Contracted Services for cleaning? Harrelson: this money is for anyone who would like to come and teach a class.
100	Burroughs	Why is \$90,557 Retirees Health Insurance under Whiteville Senior Center and not under anyone else? Harrelson: it was easier for payroll to place this insurance under one place and not spread it out over the remaining locations.
101	McDowell	1. Rope Rescue Team - \$10,000 needs to be in the budget; 2. Veterans Memorial Park - \$25,000 is the third payment. Note: Can be paid from this year's budget.
101	Bullard	Columbus County Fire and Rescue Association - \$50,000 (Fund Balance). This needs to be \$125,000 for three (3) years to be drawn from the County as used (Fund Balance).

**SUMMATION of CHANGES RECOMMENDED:**

1. Sheriff Department: Consensus to appropriate \$220,963 for five (5) vehicles to be taken from Fund Balance.
2. Special Appropriations: Add \$10,000 for Rope Rescue Team (Fund Balance); Veterans Memorial Park \$25,000 to be paid from this year's budget; **and** Columbus County Fire and Rescue Association - consensus to increase from \$50,000 to \$125,000 for three (3) years to be drawn from the County (Fund Balance).

**BUDGET WORKSHOP ADJOURNED:**

At 8:52 P.M., Chairman Prevatte stated the Budget Workshop was adjourned. These minutes were recorded by Michael H. Stephens, County Attorney, and typed by June B. Hall, Clerk to the Board.

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
MICHAEL H. STEPHENS, Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_  
JAMES E. PREVATTE, Chairman