

**March 15, 2017**

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session on Wednesday, March 15, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Martin County Governmental Center, 305 East Main Street, Williamston, North Carolina.

**ASSEMBLY**

Chairman Elmo “Butch” Lilley, Vice Chairman Tommy Bowen, Commissioner Ronnie Smith, Commissioner Dempsey Bond, Jr., Commissioner Joe R. Ayers, County Manager David Bone, Clerk to the Board Marion B. Thompson and Finance Officer/Deputy Clerk Cindy Ange.

County Attorney J. Melvin Bowen was not in attendance.

Chairman Lilley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Bond. The invocation was offered by Vice Chairman Bowen.

Chairman Lilley welcomed everyone to the meeting. Elected officials Bear Grass Mayor Charlotte Griffin, Sheriff Dan Gibbs and Register of Deeds Kimberly Griffin were recognized as well.

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

Commissioner Smith made a MOTION to approve the agenda as presented, with a SECOND by Commissioner Bond. The motion was unanimously APPROVED.

**DEPARTMENTAL/ OFFICE HOLDER BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

The Department Heads/Office Holders expressed their thanks and appreciation to the Board of Commissioners for their continual support. The presentations were received in the following order.

**Finance:** Finance Officer Cindy Ange commented the Finance budget request was basically the same as last year, except for a decrease in the line item for the Wellness program due to a change in the health screening vendor and coaching being offered through the State Health Plan. The salary line items were left blank as usual, and would be added as the budget progressed. There was an increase to auditing expense because of the expanding testing on Medicaid eligibility requirements. Finance Officer Ange added data processing upgrades to the MUNIS system software have become a necessary and an unavoidable expense. Plans were to bring the suggestions to the Board for consideration at a later date. With the needed upgrades come several enhancements which could enrich the daily operations of the organization.

**Tax Assessor:** Tax Assessor Elisha Hardison stated the Tax Assessor Office budget requests reflected increases for contracted services, travel (Administration course), equipment maintenance and a 6% increase for a mapping contract, which would provide GIS mobile. A decrease was noted for postage due to the completion of the revaluation. Tax Assessor Hardison requested an additional Assistant or Deputy Tax Assessor position for the GIS, mapping, and tax

assessment duties. Comparison numbers for similar counties were provided regarding Tax Assessor employees, GIS employees, and total parcels maintained.

**Tax Collector:** Tax Collector Christie Blevins reported the budget requests for the Tax Collector's office was straight forward. Increases were noted for office supplies, travel (certification training for three employee), postage, and collections (billing increase – 3,700 delinquent letters mailed).

Commissioner Smith suggested establishing a procedure whereas real property taxes would be required to be paid at the point of sale.

Tax Collector Blevins stated the general statutes would allow and some counties have implemented this type of policy but Martin County has not adopted such a policy. Tax Collector Blevins and County Manager Bone would examine the statute to see what steps needed to be taken to adopt such a policy for Martin County.

**Department of Motor Vehicles-License Plates Agency:** Tax Collector Christie Blevins stated the DMV budget would be about the same as last year, except for an increase in equipment rental.

**Elections:** Elections Director Kristy Modlin stated she planned the budget for Elections on the premise of three (3) elections being held; 2017 Municipal, 2018 1<sup>st</sup> Primary, and a possible 2018 2<sup>nd</sup> Primary, depending on present legislation before the General Assembly. There could be a 2<sup>nd</sup> primary in the coming fiscal year. Additionally, there have been discussions on combining the State Board of Elections and the NC Ethics Commission. Together, it would become an eight member board. Along with the combination, comes the probability of an additional local elections board member. Currently, the Martin County Board of Elections consists of a three (3) member board.

**Register of Deeds:** Register of Deeds Kimberly Griffin stated her budget was basically the same, except for decreases in the following expenses: amended birth certificates, telephone and postage.

**Buildings and Grounds:** Operations Director Justin Harrison presented the budget requests for the buildings and grounds maintained by his department.

Government Building(built 1982): Budget included a decrease to equipment maintenance and repairs and a substantial increase to capital outlay – furniture and equipment greater than \$1,500 for an alarm replacement system. With the construction and relocation of 911 Communications, there would be no one to monitor the courthouse security system. Also included were funds to repair or resurface the pebble stone with concrete in the courtyard of the Governmental Center. Funding was requested for an Utility Task Vehicle (UTV) to be used for maintenance and the landfill, as well.

County Office Building: Monies were requested for continued remodeling.

Old Agriculture Extension Building: Monies were included to improve the conference room lighting.

Health Department Building: Budget would be the same. Plans would be to continue remodeling the Adult and Aging Services Department as included in the allocation for the Health Department Building. Additionally, funds had been budgeted for cosmetics work in the Environmental Resources office.

Farmer's Market: Budget request included funding to convert a grassy area to the east of the Farmer's Market adjacent the Highway Patrol building into an overflow parking area. Funds were budgeted to address drainage/ditch issues along the property line of the Farmer's Market located near Martin Community College, which would help the MCC with its drainage issues, as well.

Moratoc Park: Budget request included funds for demolition of the Old Carolina House and the old building adjacent to the Carolina House. The houses are no longer an asset; instead, have become a safety issue.

Kehukee Park (built mid-'90's): Budget request included funds for two (2) replacement HVAC units, signage in front of the building and for conversion to natural gas lines.

Watts Street Building: Budget included funds to replace a rotten floor in the front office located towards Watts Street.

**Landfill:** Operations Director Justin Harrison stated his budget requests included a reduction in the maintenance and cleaning supplies line item to include the addition of office supplies as a line item. An additional amount was included for equipment and repairs, due to the age of some of the equipment and for service contract agreements. The line item for land maintenance was increased to allow mowing more frequently as mandated by the State and to address washout areas and land erosion issues. Capital outlay funding included (½ ) one half the cost for the UTV previously mentioned under Building and Grounds, and upgrades to the scales, change from analog to digital, as mandated by the State.

**Sheriff/Animal Enforcement Division:** Sheriff Dan Gibbs requested two (2) additional deputies for increased court activity and security monitoring, and in-car cameras.

Monies were requested for Animal Enforcement shelter repairs to address safety issues (some of which are State mandated), as well as to improve the overall aesthetics of the facility.

**Communication/911:** Telecommunications Manager Jason Steward stated the majority of the Communications budget requests remained primarily unchanged. Increases were requested for supplies and equipment, travel (enrichment programs) and office supplies.

Telecommunications Manager Steward stated the 911 budget request remained primarily unchanged but may change going forth as grants and reconsideration funds are used. Adding, the picture would be clearer after construction began on the new 911 center.

**Emergency Management:** As Safety Administrator, Director Jody Griffin requested increases to his budgets to replace/upgrade data equipment for Emergency Management and Inspections, a

van, and renovations and improvements to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Director Griffin stated the funding model for Hazard Mitigation, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Disaster Resiliency reporting for counties and communities was being examined and may change.

**Inspections:** As Code Enforcer for Inspections, Director Griffin stated there were no major increases in the Inspections budget except for the potential upgrades to data equipment.

**Cooperative Extension:** Director Al Cochran stated the budget request for Cooperative Extension included an increase for 4-H program education (to allow funding for camp participant who would not be able to attend otherwise), and partial funding for the part-time Farmers' Market Manager (\$2,000). Previous grant funding has been reduced for the position. A request was included to increase the hours for the part-time Secretary from 18 hours to 20 hours.

**Soil and Water Conservation:** S & W Supervisor Lynn Whitehurst stated his budget request would be the same as last year, due in part to supplies and other operational items being supplied by USDA.

**Social Services:** DSS/Transit Director Susan Davenport commended Administrative Assistant Barbie Bonds for her thoroughness in preparing the complex DSS budget. Adding, all of the line items except one must be filed for reimbursement from the federal or the state. Director Davenport stated the budget contained several increases surrounding mostly necessary equipment, such as tablets and Wi-Fi Hot spots for social workers, and a replacement vehicle (requested permission to trade vehicle with mileage in excess of 200,000 on a new vehicle). Director Davenport stated Child Welfare should be on NC Fast by late 2018, then NC Fast would move on to Adult Services.

Director Davenport thanked the Board for approving the additional position to handle the workload during the upgrades to NC FAST, while adding the department was able to handle the situation without adding the position, and was able to utilize the funding in another area. Director Davenport stated at the time, it appeared the number of applicants serviced had increased dramatically but looking back at the data, the increase was about one percent (1%) overall from 2013 to 2016.

**Transit:** Deputy Transit Director Frank Halsey stated the budget included requests to increase funding for uniforms, components to upgrade a DSS server for use in Transit, drug testing and renovation for the Ray Street property. The County cost for the renovation would be only 10% of the total cost.

**Veterans:** Veterans Director Theodosia Robinson stated her budget was the same except for an increase in travel expense for training to maintain her certification.

**Adult & Aging:** AASD Director Charmaine Hardison was at a seminar, along with other staff members, training to have AASD certified. County Manager Bone reported the budget without changes, except an increase was requested for minor home repairs, such as replacement doors, roof repairs, and accessible ramps, etc. for the adult and aging population.

**Water:** Water District Manager Ed Warren stated there were few changes in the Water Districts budgets. Increases were noted for telephone, testing, postage, and maintenance supplies.

**Commissioners/ County Manager:** County Manager David Bone stated the budget requests for both were basically the same as last year except for the inclusion of funding for flat screened televisions for the Commissioner boardroom, conference room and in the hallway of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The monitor for the 1<sup>st</sup> floor hallway would display information pertinent to Martin County, in a manner similar to the cable channels or hotels.

County Manager Bone thanked the Board for its leadership, vision, and cooperation. Adding, the group has come together as a strong organization with a shared vision for Martin County and for its future. Under the Board of Commissioners' leadership, management has use resources responsibly to bring the vision to a reality. County Manager Bone also thanked the Departments and Office Holders for their continued strong fiduciary responsibility in management and leadership, describing the Staff as a great team, who takes little time to celebrate what Martin County truly has within its workforce. The Staff was commended for doing a great job day in and day out and making all look good.

County Manager Bone stated due to revaluation, staff was still working diligently to compile the most accurate estimate for revenue. Some appeals are still being examined. More information on revenue should be available soon.

As far as expenditure stand, County Manager Bone stated Martin County had a good year last year with saving from joining the State Health Plan. County Manager Bone stated the salary line items were purposely left blank, except for increases requested in certain positions, as more consideration is given to the pay study and estimated revenue.

President Becky Veazey, of the MAPS Group, presented the first pay classification study to the Board at the December 14, 2016 meeting. A follow-up meeting had been scheduled for March 22, 2017, for further review of the pay classification study and to receive questions.

County Manager Bone stated Finance Officer Cindy Ange and he agreed with Ms. Veazey's recommendation for a Human Resources (HR) Director. County Manager Bone added personnel issues have become more complicated with FMLA, FLSA and all different kinds of leave issues. Having an expert in that position will save the County money in the long run. County Manager Bone encouraged the Board to give full consideration to the recommendation for a Human Resources Director.

### **Discussion on Commissioners' Budget Priorities**

The Commissioner's budget discussion on priorities was limited at the meeting. County Manager Bone estimated potential revenue should be available in the next 60 days. The Commissioners' meeting for Departmental Presentation, March 16, 2017 was not necessary.

## **COMMENTS**

In conclusion, the Commissioners thanked the Department Heads, Elected Office Holders, and Staff, for their service, efforts, and commitment to providing the quality of service that is being given, with limited resources.

Commissioner Smith quoted a statement made during a Martin County Cooperative Extension meeting, "Teamwork Divides the Tasks and Multiplies the Success" (author unknown).

Commissioner Smith also noted that the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners has resources available to assist counties in various areas, and encouraged the Department Heads and Office Holders to take advantage of those resources.

Chairman Lilley added Martin County has been blessed to have a group that works together. When a group works together, things will come together, and the County and the organization will be better.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Vice Chairman Bowen made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting, with a SECOND by Commissioner Bond. The motion was unanimously APPROVED, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

---

Elmo "Butch" Lilley, Chairman

---

Marion B. Thompson, NCCCC  
Clerk to the Board