

**May 26, 2020**

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Called Session on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. NC Telecenter, 415 East Blvd., Williamston, North Carolina.

## **ASSEMBLY**

Those in attendance were Chairman Tommy Bowen, Vice Chairman Dempsey Bond, Jr., Commissioner Elmo “Butch” Lilley, Commissioner Ronnie Smith, County Manager David Bone, Clerk to the Board Jessica Godard, Finance Officer/Deputy Clerk Cindy Ange, County Attorney Richard James, Sheriff Tim Manning, and Chief Deputy Drew Robinson. Commissioner Joe R. Ayers arrived at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Bowen called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Vice Chairman Bond led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Smith provided the invocation.

## **AGENDA APPROVAL**

Commissioner Smith made a MOTION to approve the agenda as revised, with a SECOND by Vice Chairman Bond. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

## **Coronavirus Relief Fund Discussion**

County Manager Bone explained the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was signed into law on March 27, 2020. This law directed \$150 billion to states and territories via the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to be used for expenses related to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. NC received a total of \$4.066 billion, but approximately \$481M went directly to local governments with populations greater than 500,000.

Session Law 2020-4 placed \$300 million in a local government CRF reserve fund and appropriated \$150 million of those funds to be distributed to counties across NC who were not eligible for direct funding. The allocation percentages are determined in S.L. 2020-4. The allocation includes:

- Base allocation of \$250,000, and
- Additional pro-rata allocation based on county population according to 2019 Vintage Year Census Bureau estimates (leaving out Guilford, Mecklenburg, and Wake as they received funds directly from U.S. Treasury).

Martin County was set to receive \$615,106 (Finance Director Cindy Ange confirmed that was received by Martin County on May 26, 2020). The county was required submit a spending plan to the state by June 1, 2020. The state asked for these federal dollars to be used **before** FEMA dollars – the CRF funds required no local match, but the FEMA funds did. The states provides the FEMA match.

County Manager Bone stated eligible spending must be directly related to expenditures incurred to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds must be used for expenditures incurred between

March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020. Money from the Coronavirus Relief Fund could not be used for revenue replacement purposes. The broad categories of eligible funding included:

- Medical expenses including the COVID-19 related expenses of public hospitals and clinics, establishment of temporary medical facilities, COVID-19 testing, and public telemedicine capabilities.
- Public health expenses such as the acquisition of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies, disinfection of public areas and other facilities such as nursing homes, and expenses for public safety measures, including expenses for quarantining.
- Payroll expenses for public safety or healthcare employees whose services are substantially dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 emergency.
- Expenses of actions that facilitate compliance with COVID-19 related public health measures such as teleworking, distance learning, food delivery paid sick and family and medical leave for public employees, expenses for maintaining prisons, and expenses for protecting the homeless population.
- Expenses associated with the provision of economic support in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Municipalities would not be receiving funds from the state. As part of a county's plan, a county could include a strategy for sharing the funds with municipalities. The county would bear the liability to ensure funds were used properly.

Some of the priorities county staff had identified for this funding involved:

- 1) Reimbursement for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies;
- 2) Reimbursement for personnel costs related to COVID-19 response;
- 3) Technology to maintain continuity of operations – i.e., laptops for critical personnel to work from home; and
- 4) Tablets for to assist with telemedicine efforts between first responders and hospitals.

These priorities were included in the draft CRF plan. The draft plan also considered the needs of Martin-Tyrrell-Washington Health Department, Bertie-Martin Regional Jail and all municipalities in Martin County.

There was discussion regarding the upcoming hurricane season and the need to separate people should a shelter be needed. County Manager Bone stated part of the funding for MTW included supplies for mobile testing sites, which could be used in various scenarios. Commissioner Smith inquired about future needs. While thanking Sheriff Manning for his officers providing service at the entrances of the courthouse, Commissioner Smith expressed concerns about staffing those areas after the SROs returned to their assigned schools. Commissioner Smith mentioned the idea of possibly hiring security guards in the future to staff the courthouse entrances.

County Manager Bone informed the Board of Commissioners that plans had to be submitted by June 1, 2020, but could be amended at a later date if needed. County Manager Bone also informed the Board of Commissioners that Martin County Schools and MTW had their own funding stream sources.

Commissioner Lilley made a MOTION to approve the Martin County Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) plan as presented, with a SECOND from Vice Chairman Bond. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

## **RECESS**

At approximately 5:23 p.m., Vice Chairman Bond made a MOTION to recess until 5:45 p.m., with a SECOND from Commissioner Smith.

At 5:45 p.m., the Board came out of recess.

## **2020-2021 Martin County Budget Workshop**

The 2020-21 Draft Budget was presented on May 13, 2020. The draft budget was well received. The Board of Commissioners requested a Budget Work Session to further discuss the budget in greater detail after having time to review the budget closely. County Manager Bone stated it would be ideal to have the draft budget finalized so that a final proposed budget could be presented to the Board of Commissioners at the budget public hearing and regular meeting scheduled for June 10, 2020.

Vice Chairman Bond stated county staff had done a great job with preparing the budget, stating everything stayed “status quo”, and there was no increase in the tax rate. Vice Chairman Bond felt the budget should be adopted, as it was. County Manager Bone reminded the Board the budget could not be adopted now, there must be a public hearing first, which was scheduled for June 10, 2020. If the Board felt it was appropriate, the budget could be adopted at that meeting.

Vice Chairman Bond made a MOTION to proceed with the draft proposed budget (no changes) and submit it as the Manager’s proposed budget at the June 10, 2020 meeting and public hearing. Commissioner Lilley SECONDED. The Board APPROVED that motion unanimously.

Commissioner Smith commended staff on the budget preparation project. Commissioner Lilley commended County Manager Bone because he worked with all departments and listened to the needs, while developing a budget satisfactory to the Board. County Manager recommended discussions between the Board of Education and the Board of Commissioners regarding their use of fund balance. The timing was not ideal, as the Board of Education would be searching for a permanent new Superintendent.

No further discussion or comments were offered regarding the budget.

## **CLOSED SESSION - Attorney/Client Privilege**

At 5:52 p.m., Vice Chairman Bond made a MOTION to enter a Closed Session pursuant to NC G. S. § G. S. 143-318.11(a) (3) – Attorney/Client Privilege, with a SECOND from Commissioner Smith. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

At 6:11 p.m., Commissioner Smith made a MOTION to come out of Closed Session, with a SECOND from Vice Chairman Bond. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

## **DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Ayers did not arrive until 6:00 p.m., which was after the budget discussion. He stated there were things he wanted to discuss regarding cuts, based on the draft budget from May 13, 2020. County Manager Bone stated there were no recommended changes from the other Commissioners. Commissioner Lilley stated there was still time for changes. Commissioner Ayers stated he would call County Manager Bone the next day to discuss his concerns.

County Manager Bone reminded the Board of the next regular meeting and budget public hearing scheduled for June 10, 2020 and the meeting for year-end Budget Amendments scheduled for June 24, 2020.

Commissioner Smith spoke about the NACo and NCACC Conferences being cancelled for in-person meetings, but reminded the Board about the virtual meetings that would be held.

Regarding funding for SROs, that funding should continue. That would have been the only reason to delay adopting the budget until the end of June 2020. Therefore, County Manager Bone stated it would be appropriate to proceed with adopting the budget at the June 10, 2020 meeting should the Board choose to do so.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Commissioner Lilley made a MOTION to adjourn at 6:21 p.m., with a SECOND by Commissioner Ayers. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously (5-0). The next scheduled meeting would be Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, 305 East Main Street, Williamston, NC 27892.

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Tommy Bowen, Chairman

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Jessica Godard, NCCCC  
Clerk to the Board