

June 12, 2023
Special Call

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Call Meeting on Monday, June 12, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Boardroom at the Martin County Governmental Center, 305 East Main Street, Williamston, North Carolina.

ASSEMBLY

Present: Chairman Ronnie Smith, Vice Chairman Dempsey Bond Jr., Commissioner Joe R. Ayers, Commissioner Emily Biggs, Commissioner David “Skip” Gurganus, County Manager U. James Bennett, Clerk to the Board Julia S. Rease, County Attorney Benjamin Eisner, and Finance Officer Cindy Ange were in attendance at the meeting.

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Commissioner Biggs led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Gurganus provided the invocation. Chairman Smith extended a welcome.

FY 2022-2023 BUDGET PRESENTATION DISCUSSION

Chairman Smith stated that the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 Budget and Budget Message was presented to the Board on May 31, 2023. It was stated that another meeting would take place on June 12, 2023 to allow Board members more time to review and discuss the proposed budget.

Manager Bennett reported that Danny Griffin, a former employee and volunteer, was able to close an account that had been delinquent for some time. Mr. Griffin was able to retrieve 60,000 from a “dead” account that had back taxes. It was reported that there were three more properties to retrieve funds from. Manager Bennett stated that the budget was presented with a balanced budget of \$35,113,627.00. Manager Bennett stated he failed to mention a few notable items in the budget presentation that took place in the previous week. Those items were:

A proposed increase in Trash Pickup Services from \$182.00 annually to \$195.00 annually. The county was predicted to lose around \$100,000 without the proposed increase. Green or Life (GFL) was contacted by Manager Bennett about their rate increase of about 6.4% and the rate was negotiated down to 4.5%. Manager Bennett stated that this would save the County \$43,000 a year and the last increase for trash pickup service was in 2020-2021.

There was a \$747,000 difference between the Fiscal Year Budgets of 22-23 and 23-24. The \$747,000 difference was reflected a proposed 2% cola increase, 1% increase in the County contribution towards 401- K, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) of about \$150,000, and \$2 million in grants. Manager Bennett stated that the budget was constructed and balanced without any tax increases.

Manager Bennett stated that he spoke with each Board member following the initial budget presentation, to answer any questions that may have had from the previous meeting on May 31, 2023.

Chairman Smith asked each member by roll call order to share any questions they had regarding the budget.

Vice Chairman Bond Jr. did not have any questions.

Commissioner Ayers did not have any questions.

Commissioner Biggs did not have any questions.

Commissioner Gurganus stated that he received a call from Manager Bennett and his questions regarding the budget were answered. Commissioner Gurganus expressed appreciation for extra time being given to review the budget packet and all involved with the construction of it. Commissioner Gurganus stated that there were some things that were still unclear regarding the budget and budget process. Commissioner Gurganus showed his interest and determination to continue learning about the different aspects of the budget.

Chairman Smith commented on his experience with budgets and expressed appreciation towards those who worked on the budget. Chairman Smith stated the County was in the best position since his 21 years of experience. Chairman Smith noted that the budget included raises for employees, cola increases, and departmental needs. It was reported that everyone didn't get exactly what they wanted, but they were able to get what was needed.

Commissioner Gurganus added that he was unaware of the salaries in Martin County and gave Manager Bennett credit for looking into the salaries to make increases. Commissioner Gurganus spoke about the importance of bridging the gap in salaries, compensating employees that have been loyal to the County, and preventing a training ground atmosphere. It was noted that all employees may have not been able to receive a raise at this time, but a valiant effort was made.

There were no further questions.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gurganus made the **Motion** to adjourn and was **Seconded** by Commissioner Biggs. The Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

Ronnie Smith, Chairman
Martin County Board of Commissioners

Julia S. Rease, Clerk to the Board