

April 13, 2022
Regular Session

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Superior Courtroom at the Martin County Governmental Center, 305 East Main Street, Williamston, North Carolina.

ASSEMBLY

Present in the Boardroom: 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 Rease, Attorney Benjamin Eisner Finance Officer Cindy Ange,.

Others present: G.K. Butterfield, NC Representative Shelly Willingham, Mayor Craig Tucker of Jamesville, Jamesville Commissioner Willis Williams, Mayor Joyce Whichard Brown of Williamston, Mayor Charlotte Griffin of Bear Grass, Mayor Jerry McCrary of Parmele, Mayor Tina Brown of Robersonville, Robersonville Commissioner Ben Jones, and a host of elected officials and members of the community.

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order around 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Biggs led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Pastor June Haislip of Oak City Baptist Church provided the invocation. Chairman Smith extended a welcome to all.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Bond Jr. made a **Motion** to approve the agenda as revised to move the G.K. Butterfield Presentation of \$3.4 million as the first Item, with a **Second** by Commissioner Gurganus. The motion was **Carried** unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments submitted to the Clerk or online. Chairman Smith opened the meeting for the public to make comments during the meeting.

Presentation of \$3.4 Million from G.K. Butterfield

NC Congressman G.K. Butterfield, previous Martin County Superior Court Judge, informed the Board and the public of Congressional Directed Funding (CDF), which was called earmarking. NC Congressman Butterfield reported that earmarking had a bad reputation and was discontinued after projects were incomplete after receiving these funds. NC Congressman reported that the Congressional Directing Funds were created to reinvent earmarking with more structure to make sure that the funding was used for well thought out projects and that the process was fair.

NC Congressman Butterfield reported that he was presenting \$3.4 Million in Congressional Directed Funding to Martin County for Water Infrastructure. Congressman Butterfield reported that Martin County leaders requested \$3.437 million for a Regional Water project and the project was selected as one of the 10-12 projects chosen by Congressman Butterfield for funding. NC Congressman Butterfield explained that the Federal Budget is funded \$6 trillion a year, in which two thirds of that money, is funded towards Entitlement/ Mandatory Spending (Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, Veterans Funds, etc.) which does not require a vote. One – third (\$1.7 trillion)

of the \$6 trillion is funded towards Discretionary Funding, which does require a vote every year. If Entitlement funding is increased, the discretionary funds decrease. NC Congressman G.K. Butterfield reported half of the Discretionary funding would be given to the Pentagon for military spending. Congressman Butterfield stated the remaining monies of the \$6 trillion would be used as interest towards debt. NC Congressman Butterfield reported half of the Discretionary funding would go towards the Senate and the remaining funding would be given to Congress. NC Congressman Butterfield reported that the Congress, would then decide how to spend these monies in their districts. NC Congressman Butterfield then reiterated that Martin County was one of the 10-12 projects chosen to receive funding.

At 7:20 pm the meeting was paused for a break. At 7:25pm the meeting resumed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Ayers and Commissioner Gurganus reported that the minutes for March 16, 2022 needed to be pulled to add a discussion to the East End School Surplus Property motion. County Clerk asked both Commissioner Ayers and Gurganus to make contact and or come to the office to make corrections.

Commissioner Gurganus made the **Motion** to approve the consent agenda with March 16, 2022 minutes pulled for corrections, and a **Second** by Vice Chairman Bond Jr. The motion was **Carried** unanimously.

1. **Minutes** – March 9, 2022 Regular and Closed Session
 – March 16, 2022 Special and Closed Session (Pulled for corrections)
2. **Financial Report** for March 2022
3. **Tax Assessor – Tax Refund Requests – March 2022** - Available next month
4. **Tax Assessor – Tax Relief Orders – March 2022** – Available next month
5. **Tax Collector’s Report – March 2022**

Category	March 2022 - Month	YTD - March 2022
20	\$40,350.93	\$116,430.36
25	<u>\$6,934.96</u>	<u>\$12,437.47</u>
Total	\$47,285.89	\$128,867.83
30	<u>\$221.04</u>	<u>\$364.99</u>
Total	\$47,506.93	\$129,232.82

6. Board Appointments/Reappointments

Home & Community Care Block Grant Appointments/Reappointments of Lead Agency

Section V-A.1 of the Development of the County Funding Plan for the Home & Community Care Block Grant states that it is the responsibility of the County Board of Commissioners to annually designate an agency or office within the county with the lead responsibility for planning and coordination of the County funding Plan.

Section V-A.2 lists the appointment of a committee to serve as a Block Grant Advisory Committee to the lead agency for planning and coordination in the development of the County Funding Plan as a responsibility of the County Commissioners.

Ms. Tina Brown was recommended to fulfill the term of Ms. Lula Council. Ms. Vickey Manning and Mr. Joseph Williams were recommended for reappointment. All terms will end on April 11, 2023.

The Board **Approved** the above appointment/reappointment as part of the consent agenda.

7. Public School Building Capital Funds

NC G. S. Chapter 18C provides that a portion of the NC's lottery proceeds are allocated to each county within the Public School Building Capital Fund (PSBCF) based on average daily membership (ADM) in accordance with N C G. S. 115C-546.2. The Public School Building Capital Fund is housed in the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and is comprised of two sources of revenue: a set-aside from the corporate income tax, known as the ADM fund, which was allotted based on average daily membership (ADM) in each county; and a percentage of the net proceeds from the N.C. Education lottery.

Monies in the Fund are used to pay for public school construction projects and to retire indebtedness incurred for school construction projects. PSBCF also may contain some residual corporate income tax distributions.

The attached application requests funds from lottery proceeds to assist in making the debt and interest payment on Riverside Middle School. Approximately \$15 million was used to build Riverside Middle School in 2013. The annual debt payment is approximately \$1 million. \$285,758.00 is included in the PSBCF request for the debt payment. The remainder, \$21,758, is for one-half of the interest we are required to pay due to the federal government sequestration.

A County Board of Commissioners and Board of Education must jointly apply to the NC Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) on a project-by-project basis to access the monies in the Fund. The Board of Commissioners is asked to approve the application / request for funds from the Public School Building Capital Fund (PSBCF).

The Board **Approved** the above item as part of the consent agenda.

8. Clerk Report included for informational purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEE(S)

DSS Administrator Barbie Casper introduced Mr. Preston Craddock, Mr. Kendral Rascoe, Ms. Katherine Rascoe, and Ms. Melody Speller as new employees for the Department of Social Services. Ms. Kelly Roebuck was not in attendance, but she was introduced as a new Social Worker. Mr. Craddock will begin as the new Adult Protective Services Supervisor, Mr. Kendral Rascoe will begin as a new Income Maintenance Caseworker, Ms. Katherine Rascoe will start as a new Social Worker, and Ms. Melody Speller will begin as the new Public Information Assistant for Martin County DSS. All new employees were welcomed and thanked for choosing Martin County to serve.

PRESENTATIONS

Cooperative Extension Small Farms Week Poster Contest Winners

Interim Cooperative Extension Director Lisa Smith introduced the winners of the Small Farms Week Poster Contest Winners as Morgan Wells, Carsyn Hudson, Deondre Bell, Tyshia Goddard, Lauren Daniels, and Annaleigh Garcia.

Interim Cooperative Extension Director Lisa Smith reported Small Farms Week was celebrated March 21-25, 2022. The event is held each spring, and it is intended to highlight the achievements of small farmers in North Carolina. Each of the 100 counties and the Cherokee Reservation are invited to participate. A North Carolina Small farmer of the Year is named each year at a ceremony held on the campus of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Small Farms week is a NC Cooperative Extension sponsored program. This year, the youth of Martin County were invited to create posters showing their interpretation of small farms. The contest was a success and the NC Cooperative Service in Martin County plans to make the contest an annual event.

The winners present took a picture with their awards and were congratulated on their success.

Wright Flight Update

Wright Flight Director Mitch Manning stated Wright Flight of North Carolina [a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization found on the web at <http://wrightflight-nc.org/>] uses the Wright brothers' example of setting goals and achieving them through hard work and discipline as a model for today's children. The Wright Flight program accomplishes this by using the motivational power of aviation to help kids do better in school, highlighting the importance of education. Wright Flight of Martin County began its efforts in 2014. A group of interested citizens (including members of the Martin County Airport Commission) incorporated as a nonprofit to administer the program in Martin County. The Wright Flight program started in 2015 as a pilot program with 5th graders at East End Elementary and Edna Andrews Elementary. The program was expanded to all 5th graders in Martin County in 2016.

Wright Flight Director Mitch Manning informed everyone on the Wright Flight Field Day on April 14, 2022 from 9:00pm- 12:00pm. Director Manning reported the event would take place at the Martin County Airport and food would be provided.

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution by Governing Body of Applicant – American Rescue Plan Action

Manager Bennett explained that The Federal Clean Water Act Amendments of 1987 and the North Carolina Water Infrastructure Act of 2005 (NCGS 159G) have authorized the making of loans and grants to aid eligible units of government in financing the cost of construction and studies of (state whether a wastewater treatment works, wastewater collection system, stream restoration, stormwater treatment, other “green” project, drinking water treatment works, and/or drinking water distribution system). Manager Bennett reported Martin County has need for and intends to construct a drinking water distribution system project described as 2022 District 1 and 2 Water System Improvements, and Martin County has requested State grant assistance for the project. Manager Bennett reported that this funds would also help assist with Automatic Meter Readers

Project Manager Derrick Smith of the Wooten Company stated the application being sought is separate from the funds presented by Congressman G.K. Butterfield. Wooten Project Manager

Smith stated these funds would provide rehabilitation in both Water Districts I and Water District II.

The resolutions are as follows:

RESOLUTION BY GOVERNING BODY OF APPLICANT

WHEREAS, Session Law 2020-79 was signed into law on July 1, 2020 to improve viability of the water and wastewater systems of certain units of local government; the Viable Utility Reserve was established in the Water Infrastructure fund to be used for grants to include the study of rates, asset inventory and assessment and/or merger and regionalization options; the State Water Infrastructure Authority and the Local Government Commission have developed criteria to assess local government units and identify distressed units, and

WHEREAS, Martin County has been designated as a distressed unit and intends to conduct a drinking water construction project, and

WHEREAS, Martin County has need for state grant assistance for the project.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF MARTIN COUNTY:

Martin County, the **Applicant**, will complete the viable utility requirements in §159G-45(b) by:

1. Conducting an asset assessment and rate study. (Recently completed asset assessment or rate studies may be sufficient to meet this requirement.)
2. Participate in a training and educational program.
3. Develop a short-term and long-term action plan considering all of the following:
 - a. Infrastructure repair, maintenance, and management.
 - b. Continuing education of the governing board and system operating staff.
 - c. Long-term financial management plan.

Martin County, the **Applicant**, acknowledges that the State Water Infrastructure Authority and Local Government Commission can impose specific conditions on grants from the Viable Utility Reserve.

That the **Applicant** will provide adequate access to staff, documents, equipment, and other resources pertinent to complete the project, and upon completion of the project provide good faith effort to implement the short-term and long-term plan to achieve viable utility infrastructure measures.

That J. James Bennett, County Manager, the **Authorized Official**, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized to execute and file an application on behalf of the **Applicant** with the State of North Carolina for a (grant) to aid in the completion of the project described above.

That the **Authorized Official**, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized and directed to furnish such information as the appropriate State agency may request in connection with such application or the project: to make the assurances as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required in connection with the application.

That the **Applicant** has substantially complied or will substantially comply with all Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances applicable to the project and to Federal and State grants pertaining thereto.

Adopted this the ____ day of _____, 2022 at the Martin County Board of Commissioners Meeting in Williamston, North Carolina.

(Signature of Chief Executive Officer)

Ronnie Smith, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners

RESOLUTION BY GOVERNING BODY OF APPLICANT

WHEREAS, The Federal Clean Water Act Amendments of 1987 and the North Carolina Water Infrastructure Act of 2005 (NCGS 159G) have authorized the making of loans and grants to aid eligible units of government in financing the cost of construction and studies of (state whether a wastewater treatment works, wastewater collection system, stream restoration, stormwater treatment, other “green” project, drinking water treatment works, and/or drinking water distribution system), and

WHEREAS, Martin County has need for and intends to construct a drinking water distribution system project described as 2022 District 1 and 2 Water System Improvements, and

WHEREAS, Martin County intends to request State grant assistance for the project,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF MARTIN COUNTY:

That Martin County, the **Applicant**, will arrange financing for all remaining costs of the project, if approved for a State loan and/or grant award.

That the **Applicant** will adopt and place into effect on or before completion of the project a schedule of fees and charges and other available funds which will provide adequate funds for proper operation, maintenance, and administration of the system and the repayment of all principal and interest on the debt.

That the governing body of the **Applicant** agrees to include in the loan agreement a provision authorizing the State Treasurer, upon failure of Martin County to make scheduled repayment of the loan, to withhold from Martin County any State funds that would otherwise be distributed to the local government unit in an amount sufficient to pay all sums then due and payable to the State as a repayment of the loan.

That the **Applicant** will provide for efficient operation and maintenance of the project on completion of construction thereof.

That U. James Bennett, County Manager, the **Authorized Official**, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized to execute and file an application on behalf of the **Applicant** with the State of North Carolina for a loan and/or grant to aid in the study of or construction of the project described above.

That the **Authorized Official**, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized and directed to furnish such information as the appropriate State agency may request in connection with such application or the project: to make the assurances as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required in connection with the application.

That the **Applicant** has substantially complied or will substantially comply with all Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances applicable to the project and to Federal and State grants and loans pertaining thereto.

Adopted this the ___ day of _____, 2022 at the Martin County Board of Commissioners Meeting in Williamston, North Carolina.

(Signature of Chief Executive Officer)

Ronnie Smith, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners

Title of Chief Executive Officer

Motion to adopt Resolutions for ARPA funding by Commissioner Biggs, with a **Second** by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

Broadband Update

At the January 13, 2021 Board of Commissioners' meeting, it was decided the Board would have work sessions as needed to work through the process of trying to establish new broadband services for the unserved population in Martin County. Commissioners Emily Biggs and Commissioner David "Skip" Gurganus were to give an update.

Commissioner Biggs stated the county had been and was continuously looking for an appropriate Broadband provider that could cover the whole county, in a reasonable time, with reasonable monthly costs. Commissioner Gurganus stated Charter Spectrum received a National Incentive and would be able to supply fiber directly to homes. Commissioner Gurganus stated that under Governor Roy Coopers order, counties needed to consolidate when requesting funding to receive more funding.

NEW BUSINESS

Martin County Regional Water & Sewer Authority Amendment One to the Agreement for Operation, Maintenance and Management Services

The Martin County Regional Water and Sewer Authority requested an alignment between the contract year with Veolia and the MCRWASA fiscal year. Veolia is presenting an amendment to the current contract which will lengthen the term by 4 months to June 31st, 2026 instead of February 28th, 2026. This would remedy the issue that MCRWASA Board of Directors has raised. It was recommended that if the terms are agreeable, the MCRWASA Board of Directors approve the Amendment at the next meeting, which is set for April 28th, 2022. Upon approval, the document will require the signature of the Board Chairman.

Motion to Support the changes to the Martin County Regional Water & Sewer Authority, Amendment One to the Agreement for Operation, Maintenance, and Management Services made by Commissioner Ayers with a **Second** by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

Martin County Budget Schedule FY 22-23

Every December, the Martin County Board of Commissioners approves the Martin County Meeting Schedule that contains the dates for the regular board meetings in the upcoming year as well as Budget meetings/presentations for departments and various outside agencies. In December 2021, the County Holiday Schedule was approved. The Budget meeting/presentation schedule was not presented at that time. The Budget meeting/ presentation schedule was been created to be presented to the Board.

MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'			
			April 5, 2022
2022 Budget Schedule			
	February 1, 2022		Budget Sheets to Department Heads
	February 25, 2022		Departmental Budget Requests Due
			Manager Meetings with Department Heads
	March 29, 2022	7p.m.	Departmental Budget Presentations
	March 30, 2022	7p.m.	Departmental Budget Presentations (if needed)
	March 11, 2022		Agency Budget Requests Due
	April 6, 2022	7 p.m.	Agency Budget Presentations/Budget Workshop
	May 9, 2022 (Tentative)	6 p.m.	Joint Budget Meeting with Board of Education (Dinner)
	May 18, 2022		Budget Workshop (s) (After Receipt of Bd of Ed Budget)
	May 26, 2022		Budget PH Notice (Ad to paper before noon May 25, 2022)
	May 26, 2022		Budget Ready for Public Inspection
	June 8, 2022	7p.m.	Budget Public Hearing
	June 8, 2022	7p.m.	Adopt Budget
	June 22, 2022	7 p.m.	Budget Amendments

Motion to approve the FY 2022-2023 Budget Schedule by Commissioner Biggs, with a **Second** by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

Budget Amendment(s)

Budget Amendment #22

The Martin County Sheriff’s office has had two vehicle accidents this fiscal year for a total of \$8,379 in insurance proceeds. These funds will be used to repair the effected vehicles. We also received \$1,250 insurance proceeds for the damage of the fence at the transit building.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-22

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Martin County, North Carolina, that the following amendments be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

Section 1. To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows.

	Increase	Decrease
Public Safety		
Sheriff	\$ 8,379	
General Government		
Structural Maint	\$ 1,250	

This will result in an increase of \$9,629 in the expenditures of the General Fund. To provide an increase in the revenues for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

Restricted Intergovernmental	\$ 9,629
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Section 2. Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board and to the Finance Officer for their direction.

Motion by Vice Chairman Bond Jr. and **Seconded** by Commissioner Gurganus to adopt the above budget ordinance amendment this 13th day of April 2022.

Budget Amendment #23

The Martin County Sheriff's office has had two vehicle accidents this fiscal year for a total of \$8,379 in insurance proceeds. These funds will be used to repair the effected vehicles. We also received \$1,250 insurance proceeds for the damage of the fence at the transit building.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-23

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Martin County, North Carolina, that the following amendments be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

Section 1. To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows.

	Increase	Decrease
Public Safety		
Sheriff	\$ 13,121	

This will result in an increase of \$13,131 in the expenditures of the General Fund. To provide an increase in the revenues for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

Restricted Intergovernmental	\$ 13,121
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Section 2. Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board and to the Finance Officer for their direction.

Motion by Commissioner Gurganus and **Seconded** by Commissioner Ayers to adopt the above budget ordinance amendment this 13th day of April 2022. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION (S) - NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (3) Attorney/Client Privilege, NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (4) Contracts and Agreements, NC G.S. §143-318.11 (a) (6) Personnel

Around 8:42 p.m., Commissioner Gurganus made a **Motion** to enter Closed Sessions NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (3) Attorney/Client Privilege, NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (4) Contracts and Agreements, NC G.S. §143-318.11 (a) (6) Personnel with a **Second** from Commissioner Gurganus. Motion **Carried** unanimously (5-0).

At 9:26 p.m., Vice Chairman Bond Jr. made a **Motion** to go out of Closed Sessions NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (3) Attorney/Client Privilege, NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (4) Contracts and Agreements, NC G.S. §143-318.11 (a) (6) Personnel, with a **Second** from Commissioner Biggs. Motion was **Carried** unanimously (5-0).

OPEN SESSION

Martin County Tax Assessor Position

Commissioner Gurganus made the **Motion** to hire Ms. Melissa Phillips as the Martin County Tax Assessor and for Ms. Melissa Phillips to complete an unexpired term to end in July 2023 with reappointment for 2 year term, with a **Second** by Vice Chairman Bond Jr. Motion was **Carried** unanimously (5-0).

BOARD REPORTS / COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Manager's Report

Open Meetings

Manager Bennett stated that there was some discussion on Open Meetings. Manager Bennett stated that the COVID 19 cases had slowed down. Manager Bennett also spoke with Code Enforcement Officer Jody Griffin regarding the capacity in the Commissioners Boardroom and was told the capacity was 49. HR Donna Zube inquired with different counties about their meeting methods amidst the Covid 19 Pandemic. HR Donna Zube reported speaking with surrounding counties such as Washington and Beaufort Counties. HR Zube stated that Washington County had partial or hybrid board meetings wherein 15 people were allowed in the boardroom at a time. Human Resources Officer Zube stated if a person left after making a presentation, another person was allowed into the meeting. HR Zube reported Beaufort County did not have open meetings, but there was some discussion to do so. Manager Bennett reported that capacity for the Martin County boardroom was 49. This subject matter would require more research and would be brought back to the board at a future meeting.

Jamesville Community

Manager Bennett stated residents of Jamesville, Piney Woods, and Dardens were at the meeting as well as Jamesville Mayor Craig Tucker. The members spoke on the issues in the Jamesville, Pineywoods, and Dardens areas. Jamesville Mayor Craig Tucker reported being in agreement that this was a necessary project and looked forward with working with the county to provide a necessary solution best for everyone.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:35 p.m., Commissioner Gurganus made a **Motion** to adjourn the meeting, with a **Second** from Commissioner Biggs. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

The next regular meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, May 11, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Superior Courtroom.

Ronnie Smith, Chairman
Martin County Board of Commission

Julia S. Rease
Deputy Clerk to the Board