

May 9, 2022
Special Joint Session

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in Special Joint Session with the Martin County Board of Education at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 9, 2022 at the Martin County Innovation Campus, 407 E. Boulevard, Williamston, North Carolina.

ASSEMBLY

Chairman Ronnie Smith. Vice Chairman Dempsey Bond Jr., Commissioner Joe R. Ayers, Commissioner Emily Biggs, County Manager U. James Bennett, Clerk to the Board Julia S. Rease, County Attorney Benjamin Eisner, and Finance Officer Cindy Ange were present. Commissioner David “Skip” Gurganus was not present.

Members of the Board of Education who were present included Chairman Van Heath, Vice Chairman Renee Purvis, Gene Scott, Kenneth Harrell, Keisha Mansen, Gail Cargile, Superintendent Dr. David Fonseca, Board Attorney, Secretary to the Board Sherry Scott, and Finance Officer Karen Rogerson. No one was absent.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

BOE Chairman Van Heath Called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Barbara Council led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation was led by BOE Commissioner Kenneth Harrell.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Vice Chairman Bond Jr. made a **Motion**, with a **Second** by Commissioner Biggs to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was **Carried** unanimous.

Renee Purvis made a **Motion**, with a **Second** by Barbara Council to approve the agenda as presented. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

First, Superintendent Dr. David Fonseca began the presentation by referring to the Budget packet and its contents. Dr. Fonseca stated on page three of the Budget packet, there were employment factors, such as increases in salaries and benefits, which greatly affected the school systems budget. Superintendent Fonseca reported retirement rates and insurance costs continued to increase and were projected to reach 24.29 % as applicable for the current budget. Dr. Fonseca reported this was a 22.89 % difference from last year, and 21.68 % difference from three years ago. For health insurance, Dr. Fonseca reported the projected cost was \$7,397.00 for next year, which was the highest cost in the past three years. Superintendent Fonseca noted the budget presented an anticipated mandated 2.5% salary increase or \$15.00 p/hour minimum. Superintendent Fonseca also wished to continue to provide certified staff with an annual local supplement of \$1,400.00 dollars with support of Martin County Board of Commissioners.

Special Needs Expenditures

Next, Martin County Schools Superintendent Fonseca referred to the Special Needs Expenditures subsection of the Budget section. Superintendent Fonseca stated the budget included \$400,000 to supplement the state and federal funding sources received for the Exceptional Children program. Superintendent Fonseca reported the federal IDEA grant mandated districts meet a maintenance of effort in providing local dollars to support the Exceptional Children program to continue receiving federal funds.

Local Budget and Capital Outlay Requests

Lastly, Superintendent Fonseca presented the Local Budget and Capital Outlay Request. Dr. Fonseca reported the Budget for the 2022 - 2023 school year was in the amount of \$7,247,876, in which \$6,287,695 was requested from the Martin County Commissioners. Superintendent Fonseca stated the funding would offset anticipated increases in salaries and benefits, continue to support the new Martin County Schools Innovation Campus, and directly assist students and families who need specialized educational support services. Superintendent Fonseca stated the Capital Outlay Budget was \$1,643,917, in which the Martin County Commissioners were requested to fund \$1,028,653. Superintendent Fonseca stated the funds were needed as very important and needed projects in the areas of instruction, security, technology, safety, and maintenance needs throughout the entire school district.

MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION CAPITAL OUTLAY BUDGET SUMMARY 2022-2022

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>REQUEST</u>
WILLIAMSTON PRIMARY	\$33,097
E.J. HAYES	7,416
SOUTHCREEK ELEMENTARY	7,416
JAMESVILLE ELEMENTARY	17,435
SOUTHREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL	49,432
RODGERS	8,455
RIVERSIDE HIGH	63,699
RIVERSIDE MIDDLE	28,377
TRANSPORTATION	-
MAINTENANCE	177,464
CENTRAL OFFICE	-
INNOVATION CAMPUS	126,450
AUDITORIUM	-
TECHNOLOGY	182,020
AUXILARY SERVICES	-
STUDENT SERVICES	26,035
CHILD NUTRITION	33,773
MAJOR BUILDING ITEMS	820,352
OTHER	35,000
GRAND TOTAL EXPENSE	<u>\$1,643,917</u>

Following Dr. Fonseca's summary, the Commissioners and staff had an opportunity to ask questions concerning the information presented.

Manager Bennett referred to page three of the schools budget documents and asked Dr. Fonseca if the increases in employee pay were for all employees. Finance Officer Karen Rogerson responded that the increase would go towards all staff that were not certified. Finance Officer Rogerson reported that any certified staff such as teachers and or certified instructional support would be on a pay scale provided by the DPI. Manager Bennett asked if there was a low and high range on the pay scale provided by DPI. Finance Officer Rogerson reiterated that the scales came from DPI and there could be different percentages at different levels of experience. Ms. Rogerson reported that she could not recall the actual percentages. Manager Bennett asked if a teacher assistant or all full time equivalent employees would receive the increase that Dr. Fonseca made reference to in the beginning of the meeting and Finance Officer Rogerson agreed.

Commissioner Ayers stated last year there was a discussion regarding the schools budget in which he felt the school could have used COVID monies to pay for certain projects such as air conditioning and heating. Commissioner Ayers stated he asked then how much COVID money was received, anticipated, and the amount that could be spent on projects that the Martin County Board would usually fund. Commissioner Ayers stated these questions were not answered and wanted to know if Ms. Rogerson had answers to these questions. Finance Officer Rogerson stated she did have the specific numbers and could give information on the pots of money. Finance Officer Rogerson reported that the monies were received in different pots, which were the CARES Relief, State Fiscal Recovery, State Covid 19, ESRI, ESRII, and ESRIII Funding. Finance Officer Rogerson stated each pot of money has specific things it can be used for, a separate allotment policy on why they received it, and specific charted accounts for items the monies could be used for. Finance Officer Rogerson reported Ms. Wagner and the leadership teams met to see what could be budgeted with these monies with three questions have to be answered reduction response or for the prevention of Covid. Finance Officer Rogerson stated that there were things referenced by Commissioner Ayers were put into the budget. 16. 7 billion in Covid funds.

Superintendent Fonseca responded to the question as well stating that the monies were announced before rules were given to the school. Dr. Fonseca stated that there were items that were budgeted for before receiving the rules on how to spend the monies and it was very clear that the monies could not be used for certain things such as improvements on the track at Riverside High School and South Creek. Dr. Fonseca reported the roof at the South Creek High School or Riverside High School, but cannot due to the rules that came with the money.

Manager Bennett, Chairman Smith, Commissioner Ayers stated monies could be supplanted to areas that are needing improvements instead of sending the funding back. Finance Officer Rogerson stated last year's funding was budgeted until only a dollar was returned in each funding pot. Finance Officer Rogerson then turned the discussion over to Ms. Wagner to present specific information on the different ESR budgets and items budgeted for the facilities as referenced by Commissioner Ayers.

Ms. Wagner reported \$638,137.54 was budgeted in the ESRII for HVAC system based on quotes received. Ms. Wagner noted a bid process for the purchases would have to be conducted and the prices may change. Ms. Wagner reported an additional \$217,753.36 was budgeted for HVAC systems that were not able to be funded with ESRII funding.

Manager Bennett asked Finance Officer Rogerson if there was a difference of about \$700,000 between last year's budget and the proposed budget being discussed. Finance Officer Rogerson stated that there was an increase in county contribution to \$287,695 and it was a \$700,000 increase if adding the current expenses and capital outlay. Dr. Fonseca agreed with this, but stated the school asked for an increase last year as well. Dr. Fonseca reported if last year's request and this year's request were subtracted, it would demonstrate inflation or the increases in costs. Dr. Fonseca stated the employee increases from last year were added to last year's request of funding from the county. Superintendent Fonseca stated the school was very fortunate to be funded flat last year and they have to take the increases asked for last year and accumulate that into last year's flat budget from last year. Vice Chairman Bond Jr. stated concerns for Martin County schools ranking low amongst other schools in North Carolina. Dr. Fonseca reported the rate increased as Martin County was ranked 98 out of 116 public school systems, whereas three years ago the ranking was 102. Vice Chairman Bond Jr. asked how many students in the public school system were receiving classes from Martin Community College. This data was not present, but Dr. Fonseca stated he would report these numbers and he was not satisfied with the number enrolled. Lastly, Vice Chairman Bond Jr. reported he would like to see an Early College in the county and more public school students at the Martin Community College graduating. Vice Chairman Bond Jr. and Chairman Smith discussed the advantages of students taking early college courses such as saving money and getting a head start in school. Dr. Fonseca referenced NERSVBA and responded the path for an early college for a county that already had an early college was difficult. Dr. Fonseca reported combatting this by focusing on increasing enrollment at Martin Community College. Dr. Fonseca stated the ultimate result was to have more high school children graduate with a license or matriculation that allows them to stay in the region and obtain a good paying job (45,000-65,000 entry level). Dr. Fonseca stated there was an ongoing discussion with the school board to redesign the career and technical education paths as an alternate to having an Early College school in Martin County. Chairman Smith stated that NERSVBA was used interchangeably as a Martin County school due to its history of serving Pitt, Beaufort, Washington, Martin, and Tyrrell, therefore it was not totally a Martin County Early College school. Chairman Smith stated NERSVBA was originally located in Washington County and then moved to Martin County. Dr. Fonseca agreed and stated everyone was on the same page.

Mr. Jim Guard was asked to report on the number of high school students attending Martin Community College. Mr. Guard reported approximately 75 students were taking courses. There was a reboot in the program due to COVID 19 in which a lot of the students "retreated" and focused on their high school classes. Mr. Guard reported the Martin Community College President Wesley Beddard, Martin County Schools Superintendent Dr. David Fonseca, and the Martin County School Board were working together to bring these students back. Mr. Guard stated that it was taking some time to get the students back to the program, but a new summer course was coming online January 19, 2023. Mr. Guard stated the Career Technical Exploration program could be offered to children at the fifth grade level in the next two year cycle plan, which is planned to start in the summer. Mr.

Guard reported this needed to be approved by DPI. Mr. Guard reported a staff member would be needed for this program and the 5th grade teachers could be utilized. Mr. Guard stated there was an 8th grade Career Fair, Community College Fair where eighth graders were targeted to think about career choices, and staff also made a heavy push this year for the 10th grade students because they qualify for CCP as 11th grader. Mr. Guard reported these efforts were to revigorate the initial program and credentialing would be the next project. Lastly, Mr. Guard reported the district received an extra \$29,000 this year to be used specifically for credentialing in different areas so that the course could be credited.

Board of Education Chairman Van Heath called for a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Education. **Motion** to adjourn made by Commissioner Barbara Council with a **Second** by Vice Chair Renee Purvis. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

With no further business to discuss, a **Motion** was made at 7:50 pm by Commissioner Ayers and **Seconded** by Vice Chairman Bond Jr. to adjourn the meeting. The Motion was **Carried** unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 pm

Ronnie Smith, Chairman

Julia S. Rease, Clerk to the Board