



# STOKES COUNTY

Administration

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## Budget Message

Fiscal Year 2020/21

TO: Honorable Stokes County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Jake M. Oakley, County Manager

DATE: May 11, 2020

SUBJECT: **Fiscal Year 2020/21 Recommended Budget**

It is my privilege to present to you the recommended budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year. In accordance with the General Statutes of North Carolina, the budget is **balanced** and prepared under the guidelines of the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act. A copy of this document has been filed with the Clerk to the Board and will be posted on the County's website where it is available to the public for inspection. My 2020-21 recommended budget with a Tax Rate of **\$0.31** per \$100-dollar valuation for General County, **\$0.31** School Current Expense Fund, \$0.04 cents Dedicated Education Fund and \$0.08 cents for all Fire Districts will mark the tenth (10) consecutive year with **No County Property Tax Increase.**

The purpose of the County's annual budget process is to develop a fiscally responsible plan that enables the organization to accomplish the priorities established by the Board of County Commissioners. The priorities in this budget are based on the guidance received through a Budget/Goals Work Session held during the month of March. After reviewing the County's revenue sources and the initial budget requests received from County Departments, we arrived at a General Fund budget deficit of **\$4,145,583** or the equivalent of a **10.34 cent** property tax rate increase over the current budget.

Balancing a budget requires a thorough analysis of the County's revenue stream combined with attempting to meet the requests from each of the County's departments. This budget cycle brought with it an unusual set of circumstances creating extra challenges in establishing a budget due to COVID-19. These challenges included the closure of many local businesses which led to the League of Municipalities recommending a reduction in sales tax estimations for 2020 which created an impossible scenario from a budget standpoint. We were forced to make tough decisions ending in a 3.52% cut from the 19/20 budget. Each department's budget requests were evaluated and the cuts made were based on the department's ability to handle a decrease and still provide necessary services. That being said some departments were cut more than others based on need and services provided. Some were approved, some reduced, and some eliminated, but all of these requests were not taken lightly. I have thought critically about each of the requests, and my conclusions were based on the overall well-being of the citizens of Stokes County.

I would like to thank each of the County employees for their tireless efforts and continuous service that they provide to the citizens of Stokes County. I would also like to thank the Board of Commissioners for providing valuable direction in the development of this recommended budget. I am looking forward to working with each of you to develop a final budget for FY 2020/21 that will meet the service needs and expectations of our citizens and our communities.

Sincerely,

Jake M. Oakley  
County Manager