

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
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COUNTY OF STOKES)
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OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS
STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA
TUESDAY MAY 21, 2019

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Budget Work Session in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administration Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Tuesday May 21, 2019 at 6:00 pm with the following members present:

Chairman Andy Nickeslton
Vice Chairman Jimmy Walker
Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall
Commissioner Rick Morris
Commissioner Jamie Yontz

County Personnel in Attendance:
County Manager Jake M. Oakley
Assistant County Manager/Clerk to the Board Shannon Shaver
Finance Director Julia Edwards
EMS Director Brandon Gentry
Public Works Director Mark Delehant

Chairman Nickelston called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Mendenhall delivered the invocation.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT-GOVERNING BODY-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Nickelston invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Nickelston entertained a motion to approve or amend the May 21st Agenda.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to approve the agenda as presented.

Commissioner Yontz seconded.

Chairman Nickelston opened the floor for any discussion/comments/questions.

With no discussion the agenda was approved unanimously.

(Attachments presented during the meeting will be attached at the conclusion of the minutes or available upon request from the Clerk to the Board.)

Department Head Budget Discussion

EMS

EMS Director Brandon Gentry provided information regarding the EMS 2019-20 Fiscal Year Budget Request. He presented the Board with some information including a county comparison showing where they are losing most of their employees to. He stated that Davie County is the top county which employees are going to; this due to the 24/72 work schedule. He gave the Board information on the status of the current units. He noted the main request is for 24/72 and this is what the employees are asking for. He also noted that he has asked for a 6th unit in the budget due to the increase of call volume. He noted that this unit would be for the Walnut Cove area which is also the area that needs a new station due to the demand in that area, and that they strive to provide the best service to everyone across the county. He stated that with an older population in our county the increase in call volume continues to rise.

The Board discussed the options for salary including 24/72, and 24/48 with true time and a half. The current rate for overtime is half time.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- The turnover within the EMS Department has always been an issue and we may always be somewhat of a training ground.
- I am not a strong supporter of 24/72.
- I of course have not been there or done this type of work.
- What else is out there that we might consider to recruit and retain good staff?
- Turnover can be expensive.
- If we could put the money on the front side and prevent turnover is a good thing.
- I am a large supporter of a merit increase for employees.

EMS Director Brandon Gentry responded:

- A true merit increase would be a good start.
- They have a complex job that requires a high skill level.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- If given the choice would you prefer the 6th unit or bringing the BLS in house?
- Good service costs money.
- I would think we cannot afford to do both.
- We are a training ground because we haven't taken any steps not to be.
- Hopefully the salary study will help with this but we can take some steps in this budget to correct some of the issues.
- Also staffing could continue to be a problem.
- We can't seem to keep the people to run 5 units.
- There are lots of risks with having new people.
- There is no substitute for having experienced people.
- There are additional risks associated with this.
- Bad things can happen.
- I would feel more comfortable with adding the 6th truck and getting that up and running before we do anything else.

EMS Director Brandon Gentry responded:

- The 6th unit is needed the most right now.
- The BLS unit has potential to make good revenue which could offset some of the other costs.
- I believe staffing for BLS would be fine due to the volume of EMT applications we receive.
- My main staffing issue is keeping solo Paramedics.
- This will continue to be an issue due to a new mandate for paramedics being required to have a 2-year degree in addition to their paramedic.
- BLS will generate another unit and if this is not in use and is needed for a call it can be used.
- We use LifeStar now to reduce the call volume and that is working well.
- We are in need of a new EMS Station in Walnut Cove, due to the old station will not house the new larger ambulances.

County Manager Oakley noted that the current location of the station does not have any room for expansion.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Years ago Mr. Petree had interest in an EMS Station in Pine Hall.
- Would this be something that would be helpful?

EMS Director Brandon Gentry responded:

- I spoke with former EMS Director Greg Collins about the possible station in Pine Hall and he even mentioned the possibility of moving the location closer to Dillard Road and serving some of the Sandy Ridge and Lawsonville areas as well if this were to happen.
- It would be something to consider.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- The additional unit requires a new station and there is land available in the Walnut Cove area.

Commissioner Yontz commented:

- Staffing for BLS is a valid concern, but I also like to make smart business decisions for the county.
- It looks like it would take about 4 years to pay this off and the revenue would be about \$70,000 to \$80,000 per year.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Encouraged by the fact that EMS was fully staffed for a week recently since that has not happened in a while.
- This is a step in the right direction and that means you must be doing something right.
- We can never outbid some of the counties around us but we can make people feel good about being here so you must be doing some of this.
- I am not saying we are not going to do anything.
- I am complimenting you for a job well done.
- We do keep good equipment.
- I feel this is something that has always set us a step above some counties.

EMS Director Brandon Gentry responded:

- We always been provided good equipment.
- The ambulance rotation is getting better.
- They do not recommend remounting to a gas chassis.
- The ambulances are not cheap and they are not getting any cheaper.
- I know the request is large and I just want to provide the best service possible to the citizens.
- I appreciate the consideration of the requests.

Commissioner Yontz commented:

- Could we use new Enterprise Fleet Management program as an option to provide the lighter duty units?

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County Manager Oakley responded:

- At this time Enterprise cannot provide ambulances but they are looking into it.

Chairman Nickelston noted that the Board appreciated Mr. Gentry coming and speaking with the Board and that the Board would do the best to provide everything possible but that it would have to be done in a fair and equitable way.

Public Works

Public Works Director Mark Delehant provided information regarding the Public Works 2019-20 Fiscal Year Budget Request.

Public Works Director Mark Delehant noted that he did not have any additional information to provide to the Board and that all of his information was included within the budget, and that he would be glad to answer any questions or provide any information. He noted that he believed the demo of the prison site, roof replacement on the jail, fuel depot, controls and boiler replacement for the administration building, and the water project in the Meadows community might be of particular interest.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- I have heard some people express an interest in keeping the old prison as a historical landmark.

Public Works Director Mark Delehant responded:

- The quote in the budget is for completely taking down the prison site.
- The old prison site would be demoed down to level ground.
- The site is in various stages of decay and has become what I believe to be a liability.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- I campaigned on putting a strategic plan together for the area in Meadows and the demo of the old prison site would be a part of that.
- I place a lot of value on this area.
- This would be step one.
- It would be logical for us to look at doing this.

Finance Director Julia Edwards commented:

- The funds to do this would come from capital reserve for the demo.

The Board was in agreement at this time on the demo of the old prison.

County Manager Oakley commented:

- There is a request for a storage facility in the budget and that if that is approved it would be nice to have it complete before the old prison is demoed in order to have a place for all of the things that are currently stored at the old prison site to be kept.

County Manager Oakley and Public Works Director Mark Delehant presented information to the Board concerning the Green Box Sites and the number of advantages to restructuring the sites.

Appendix H. in the budget was discussed in detail by the Board.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- How important do you think this it to do?

Public Works Director Mark Delehant responded:

- I think it is very important and probably should have already been done.
- It is a safety issue.
- You could look at doing one site this year and the other next year if you don't think they can both be budgeted this year.
- I would recommend that you do the Walnut Cove site first since that area is the most congested.

County Manager Oakley commented:

- I really see the water project as an important piece to the budget and being able to attract businesses to the Meadows area.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- I am very cautious on the water line project.
- We need to look at the feasibility on this project and some real thought needs to go in to this.

Public Works Director Mark Delehant discussed the need for a new Scale House at the landfill, and that the money previously set aside for a scale needs to be used or go towards financing.

County Manager Oakley noted that he would like to see the comprehensive building study completed so that we will know what needs to be done with all the county owned property.

Chairman Nickelston noted that this budget has a lot of worthwhile projects with some needs and some wants and that his goal is to do the things needed to move the county forward while providing the most benefit to the citizens.

Chairman Nickelston expressed his gratitude to Public Works Director Mark Delehant for being present at the meeting tonight.

(Chairman Nickelston called for a brief recess at 7:50 pm)

(Chairman Nickelston called the meeting back to order at 8:00 pm)

Budget Open Discussion

Commissioner Yontz commented:

- We of course need to look at the capital projects and make some decisions on those.
- I think we need to decide what we are going to do about the salary study and the requests in the budget as far as are we going to wait to for the salary study or do some of these now.

Chairman Nickelston commented:

- I am in the opinion of waiting for the salary study to be completed and see where we stand after that.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- I don't think we should give a blanket answer to salaries of letting the salary study handle everything.
- They have gone through the trouble of putting these in and we should answer them on every single one.
- I prefer to examine what we were given and give a yes or no answer.
- Is one department out of whack with others as far as department heads?
- If there are any questionable ones, then the salary study will address those.
- I am not sure the salary study will look at adding personnel or new positions.
- I as well as others campaigned on right sizing the organization.

Commissioner Yontz commented:

- Do we need to look at all 42 or the 17 recommended?

Commissioner Morris commented:

- I would say only the 17 that are being recommended.
- Once salary study gets implemented it is phased in over time.
- If something needs fixing now this is a long time to wait.
- First of all, a reclassification is only done when a job description is changed.
- We don't reclassify someone just to give a pay raise.
- I would want to be sure these are all justified.
- One main thing I want to see is with the department heads and determine if they are out of whack with others that they should be in line with.
- It is probably good to do some of this now.
- I think the employees are glad we are finally getting this salary study done since we haven't had one in 20 years.

Finance Director Julia Edwards commented:

- All of the salary information is in attachment 3 of the budget.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Reclassification is a sensitive subject.
- I don't want to micromanage and I am not sure where my comfort level is on telling our County Manager how to staff.
- He is front line on this as well as our Department Heads.
- I know I have to as a Commissioner decide where these fit into the budget and what we can afford.
- It is hard for me to make the call on this when I don't know all the needs in every department.
- I don't feel I can second guess these if he took a look at these and feels they are warranted even in the cases where they did not request such as with the department heads and he is recommending.
- We are so blessed with the caliber of employees we have and a lot of counties couldn't get by with the lean staff that we have and I know in many cases we have people doing multiple jobs.

County Manager Oakley commented:

- There would be no one any better to make this decision than the company that you are getting ready to hire in performing the salary study.
- I do think you have some discrepancies in the grade levels of the department heads in comparison with the same department heads in other counties.
- The last thing I want is for anyone to be overlooked.
- I just want the Board to consider how much they want to rely on the salary study with some of these positions.

Commissioner Yontz commented:

- Some of the new positions are going to be very easy to decide on as there are certain positions that have to be added such as at the jail and the trades building at FTCC as these are new buildings that require additional staff.

Chairman Nickelston commented:

- I am putting it in the County Manager's hands to make recommendations on staffing and reclassifications.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- This helps us to come to a final decision on the budget as this greatly impacts the final budget.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- I want to see us give merit increases.
- I want to see them get evaluations that mean something and see this tied to a merit program.

Finance Director Julia Edwards commented:

- We tried a merit system years ago and it did not work.
- If you have a department like mine with three people in it that are working hard and you can only give it to one person it just creates issues and causes hard feelings.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- A merit system is not equal to everyone in the system.
- It is worth doing if we put some money into it.

Chairman Nickelston discussed adding additional budget work sessions to complete the budget if needed.

Adjournment

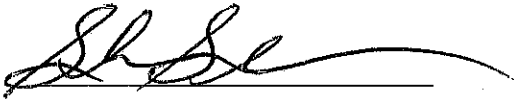
With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Nickelston entertained a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to adjourn.

Commissioner Yontz seconded.

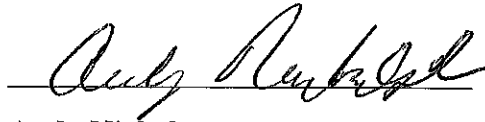
Chairman Nickelston opened the floor for any discussion/questions/comments.

With no further discussion the Budget Work Session was adjourned at 9:27 pm.



Shannon Shaver

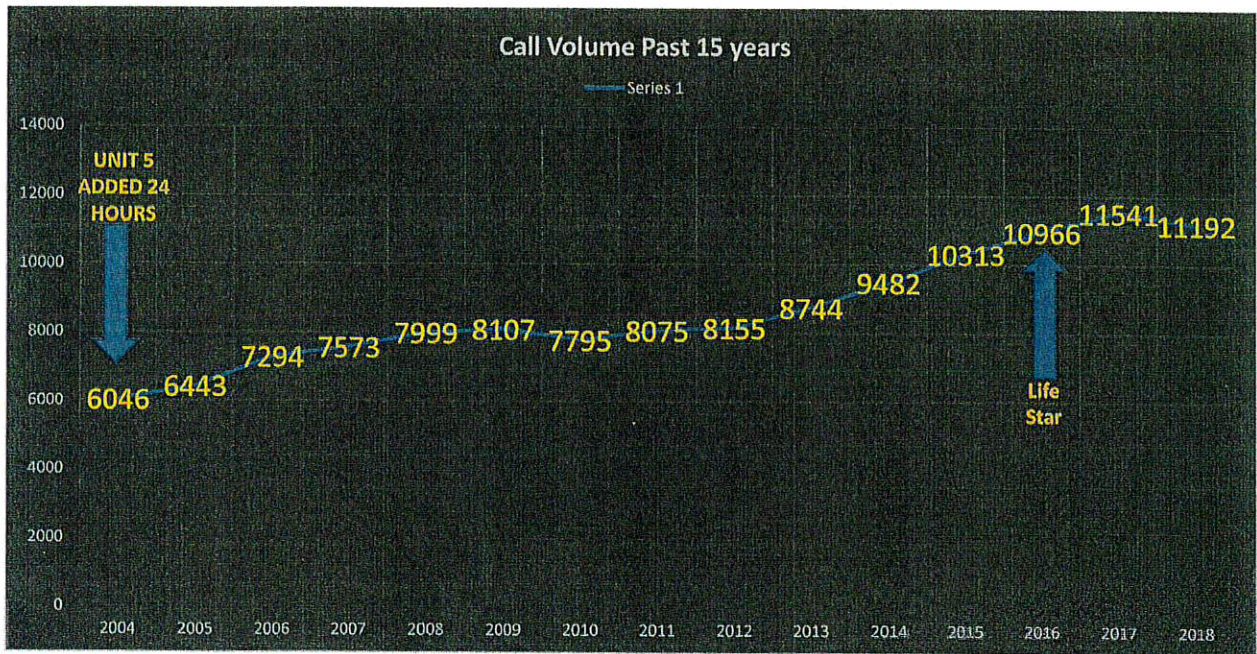
Clerk to the Board



Andy Nickelston

Chairman

**ATTACHMENTS PRESENTED
DURING THE MEETING**



Additional Ambulance (Unit 6)

The reason for this request is the increasing call volume we continue to see within our service. Over the last several years we have been requesting assistance from surrounding counties to respond to emergency calls. This is due to the fact that we don't have enough ALS units. We are seeing an increase of 500-1000 calls each year. This leaves the county without available units. This will help provide and maintain the excellent service we have been providing for the last 46 years.

2018 out of county Transports

Forsyth EMS

	Standby	Transport
January	14	1
February	9	0
March	7	0
April	10	2
May	8	0
June	16	1
July	6	0
August	7	1
September	6	0
October	5	1
November	6	1
December	6	0
Total	100	7

Surry EMS

	Standby	Transport
January	7	2
February	2	0
March	1	0
April	5	0
May	0	0
June	6	1
July	1	0
August	3	0
September	6	1
October	5	0
November	2	0
December	0	0
Total	38	4

Rockingham EMS

	Standby	Transport
January	9	1
February	5	0
March	14	0
April	10	1
May	3	0
June	9	0
July	4	0
August	10	0
September	4	0
October	9	0
November	4	0
December	5	1
Total	86	3

Total # of Standbys:	224
Total # of Transports	14

Total Revenue Lost:	\$ 8,820.00
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2019 Out of County Transports

Forsyth EMS

	Standby	Transport
19-Jan	4	0
19-Feb	10	4
19-Mar	10	5
19-Apr	6	2
19-May	6	1
19-Jun		
19-Jul		
19-Aug		
19-Sep		
19-Oct		
19-Nov		
19-Dec		
Total	36	12

Surry EMS

	Standby	Transport
19-Jan	1	0
19-Feb	5	2
19-Mar	5	0
19-Apr	0	0
19-May	0	0
19-Jun		
19-Jul		
19-Aug		
19-Sep		
19-Oct		
19-Nov		
19-Dec		
Total	11	2

Rockingham EMS

	Standby	Transport
19-Jan	1	0
19-Feb	8	0
19-Mar	7	3
19-Apr	2	0
19-May	6	0
19-Jun		
19-Jul		
19-Aug		
19-Sep		
19-Oct		
19-Nov		
19-Dec		
Total	24	3

Total # of Standbys:	71
Total # of Transports	17

Total Revenue Lost:	\$ 10,710.00
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2019 County Comparisons

County	Population	Call Volume	Starting Salary	Units on Road	Shift Structure
Davie	42,013	8,100	\$37,730 + overtime	5 units	24/72
Forsyth	371,511	38,900	\$36,826 + overtime	16 units	12hr
Surry	72,113	14,000	\$33,564 +halftime	7 units and 2 QRV	24/72
Yadkin	37,532	5,200	\$34,469 +overtime	5 units	24/48
WFU Baptist Hospital	N/A	AirCare/ER	\$46,000 + overtime		12hr
Stokes	46,097	11,192	\$36,335+halftime	5	24/48

Stokes CO EMS
Ambulance Report

5/1/2019 Actual mileage 5/17/19

Unit 1		CHEVY 4500 2012	Horton	Never remounted		2014 BOX	New Motor	
Unit 2	3200	2019 Ford F-450 4x4	AEV	Never remounted		2019 BOX		
Unit 3	159,080	2015 Ford F-450 4x4	Horton	Never remounted		2015 BOX		
Unit 4	76,292	2017 Ford F-450 4x4	Horton	Never remounted		2017 BOX		
Unit 5	100	2019 Ford F-450 4x4	AEV	Never remounted		2019 BOX		
Unit 6	200,609	CHEVY 4500 2011	Horton	REMOUNTED TWICE		2005 BOX		
Unit 7	262,677	CHEVY 4500 2011	Horton	REMOUNTED TWICE		2006 BOX		
Unit 8	246,110	CHEVY 4500 2014	Horton	Never remounted		2014 BOX	New Motor/Trans	
Unit 9	269,765	CHEVY 4500 2011	Horton	REMOUNTED TWICE		2005 BOX		
Unit 10	287,579	CHEVY 4500 2011	Horton	REMOUNTED TWICE		2005 BOX		
LIFEONE	16,015	FORD F-250 2019	Reading Box	New 2019		2011 BOX		
200	8,500	2018 F-250 4x4		New 2018				
206	53,000	2016 Chevy 2500 4x4		New 2016				
EXPLORER	155,000	FORD EXPLORER 2019		USED 2011			replacing 7/19	
Expidetion	365,000	Expidetion 1997					replacing 7/19	
Old unit 8	195,000	2009 E450	Horton	Remounted twice			Traded 5/19	