

**BRUNSWICK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OFFICIAL MINUTES
GOALS AND BUDGET WORKSHOP
MAY 3, 2021
9:00 A.M.**

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners held a Workshop on the above date at 9:00 a.m., Commissioners' Chambers, David R. Sandifer Administration Building, County Government Center, Bolivia, North Carolina.

PRESENT: Commissioner Randy Thompson, Chairman
Commissioner Mike Forte, Vice-Chairman
Commissioner J. Martin Cooke
Commissioner Pat Sykes
Commissioner Frank Williams

STAFF: Randell Woodruff, County Manager
Bob Shaver, County Attorney
Steve Stone, Deputy County Manager
David Stanley, Deputy County Manager
Julie Miller, Finance Director
Andrea White, Clerk to the Board
Jared Galloway, Deputy Clerk to the Board
Meagan Kascsak, Communications Director
Neal Galloway, MIS

Board Action, containing all items in this set of minutes, is filed within the Clerk to the Board's office.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. ORDER OF BUSINESS

Chairman Thompson gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Thompson asked for any adjustments to the agenda. No adjustments were requested.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sykes and passed unanimously (5 to 0).

County Manager Randell Woodruff provided opening remarks and reviewed the agenda for the day.

The following items were presented and discussed:

- **Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Preliminary Recommended Budget, Fees, and Capital Improvement Plan (Randell Woodruff, County Manager)**

Mr. Woodruff explained that the preliminary budget was a working document, and the Board would have an opportunity to adjust and revise the budget prior to approval.

A brief discussion was held regarding a number of waterline extensions that were put on hold several years ago. Mr. Woodruff informed the Board that the two remaining projects were included on the list for possible funding under the American Recovery Plan. Additional guidance on the plan is forthcoming and it is hoped that the funds can be used to address those projects. The need for continued assessment of additional infrastructure needs throughout the county was also discussed.

Mr. Woodruff gave an overview of the focus of the draft recommended budget. No recommended property tax rate increase was included.

- **Preliminary General Government Recommended Budget (Randell Woodruff, County Manager)**

Received a presentation on the General Government recommended budget. Mr. Woodruff shared the countywide construction permit data and noted that additional adjustments would

need to be made for Code Administration in terms of staffing and other adjustments to ensure the County is able to deal with the spike in construction permits.

During the review of the General Fund recommended budget changes, the following concerns were discussed. No action was taken.

- Ambulance Purchases – status of two previously approved ambulances and remount purchase was requested. Mr. Woodruff indicated that the purchase would be included on the May 17, 2021 agenda for consideration.
- Emergency Medical Services – discussed possibly obtaining Western Shelters for emergency response – Mr. Woodruff indicated that these were on the list for the American Recovery Plan.
- Fire Inspections Drone (fire investigations) – discussed the creation of an inventory list and suggested working with the Sheriff's office to possibly obtain better pricing.
- Building Inspections and Central Permitting – discussed the need for additional Building Inspectors and Fire Investigators. Mr. Woodruff indicated that the recommendation would include one Building Inspector, one Fire Inspector, and two Permit Technicians. He noted that Permit Technicians were recently authorized to earn overtime pay in an effort to keep up with the demand.
- Tourism Development Authority (TDA) – discussed having staff determine if a portion of TDA funds could be used elsewhere, such as maintaining the beaches.
- Wilmington MSA - discussed the possibility of returning to the Wilmington MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area).
- David Stanley provided information on the Healing Place, a non-medically assisted detox facility project for men and women, and Brunswick Christian Recovery Center.
- Brunswick Community College – discussed a request for an additional locker room for the baseball team.
- Classification and Pay Study – discussed the recommended pay study and how it may address any equity issues, employee turnover issues, and a benefit package review.

Chairman Thompson called for 15-minute break at 10:47 p.m.

- **Preliminary General Government Capital Improvement Plan (Randell Woodruff, County Manager)**

Received a presentation on the General Government CIP. Projects to be addressed in FY2022 include the Transfer Station, C&D Landfill Closure and Smithville Park with funding from the Capital Reserve and Pay-Go.

- **Preliminary Enterprise Recommended Budget (Randell Woodruff, County Manager)**

Total Water Fund revenues increased \$5.8 million or 23.9% due to growth and the rate increase effective January 1, 2022.

John Nichols provided information on a proposed expansion of reuse water with adjustments to specifications for use in residential communities.

Total Water fund expenditures are projected to increase 8.8% over FY21.

John Nichols provided information on employee retention and certifications within the Utilities Department.

- **Brunswick County Schools Capital Plan (Dr. Jerry Oates, Superintendent)**

Dr. Oates reviewed the Capital Plan, highlighting the new Early College High School design and collaboration with Brunswick Community College for additional programs, and a \$9 million addition to North Brunswick High School to retain students in the current district funded through the ad valorem reserve contingency.

Discussed the potential need for an additional school in the northern area of the county, as well as an additional exit from Town Creek school property to Governor's Road. The Board requested a letter and/or resolution relating to the need for an additional exit to be submitted for consideration by the RPO (Cape Fear Rural Planning Organization).

Mr. Woodruff returned to the Preliminary Enterprise Recommended Budget presentation to present the Sewer Fund.

Total Sewer Fund revenues increased \$1.2 million or 4.5% due to growth. Total Sewer fund expenditures are projected to decrease 2.5%.

Mr. Woodruff provided information on future water and sewer considerations that were not included in the draft recommended budget to include the lead and copper program expenditure and funding source, the timing of capital projects that may change as a result of the water and sewer master plans, and eligible uses of American Rescue Funds for water and sewer infrastructure and programs.

Mr. Nichols presented information on the lead and copper program and compliance rules.

Mr. Woodruff suggested a possible workshop in the summer to discuss water and sewer issues.

- **Preliminary Enterprise Fund Capital Improvement Plan (Randell Woodruff, County Manager)**

Received a presentation on the Enterprise Fund CIP. Projects to be addressed in the FY22 water fund include the Utility Operations Center expansion and improvements to the Navassa Water System. Projects to be address in the FY22 sewer fund include West Brunswick Wastewater Treatment Facility expansion, Ocean Ridge reclaimed water main, Sea Trail Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements, Trailwood Drive force main replacement, and improvements to the Navassa Sewer System.

- **Rate and Fee Recommendation (Randell Woodruff, County Manager)**

Received a presentation from Mr. Woodruff and Mr. Stanley on General Government fee changes for Solid Waste, Environmental Health, and Health Administration.

Received a presentation from John Nichols on water rate changes to be effective January 1, 2022. Mr. Nichols explained that the current dollar amount for the minimum charge will change to a minimum volume. This change will be most evident for meters that use a minimal amount of water. Wholesale contracts are being negotiated and the minimum volume is referenced. Staff is recommending doing away with 1 ½" meters and adding a 2" meter installation charge where the tap fee is already paid. Mr. Nichols also explained changes to hydrant bulk water sales through a base charge that includes up to 10,000 gallons per month along with a refundable placard deposit.

Received a presentation from Mr. Nichols on the retail and irrigation rate changes to be effective January 1, 2022. The retail water base fee will increase \$4.00 per month. Blocks 1 and 2 will change by one gallon to be in compliance with the State's requirements. The volumetric blocks increase as follows:

- Block 1: from \$2.85 to \$4.15 per 1,000 gallons
- Block 2: from \$3.30 to \$4.80 per 1,000 gallons
- Block 3: from \$3.85 to \$5.70 per 1,000 gallons

An irrigation base service charge of \$5.00 will be implemented for associated costs such as billing, ongoing repair and maintenance, replacement costs. The volumetric blocks increase as follows:

- Block 1: from \$3.30 to \$4.80 per 1,000 gallons
- Block 2: from \$4.30 to \$6.20 per 1,000 gallons
- Block 3: from \$5.70 to \$8.30 per 1,000 gallons

The industrial water base service charge will increase \$4.00 per month for all meter sizes and the industrial rate will increase from \$2.89 to \$4.35 per 1,000 gallons. The wholesale water base service charge will increase \$4.00 per month for all meter sizes and the industrial rate will increase from \$2.89 to \$5.25 per 1,000 gallons.

- **Other Discussion**

No other items were discussed.

- **Next Steps and Closing Remarks (Randell Woodruff, County Manager)**

Mr. Woodruff reviewed the following steps in the budget process:

May 17 at 6:00 p.m. – Presentation of the recommended budget

June 7 at 1:00 p.m. – Budget Workshop, if needed
June 21 at 6:00 p.m. – Public Hearing regarding the Budget, followed by adoption of the Budget Ordinance, Capital Improvement Plan and Fees for FY22

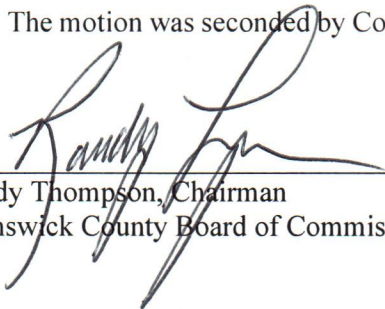
Following a discussion on the date for the Public Hearing, it was the consensus of the Board to move the Public Hearing to June 7, 2021 at the 3:00 p.m. Regular meeting and possibly continuing it until June 21, 2021.

Chairman Thompson reviewed the following directives for the County Manager:

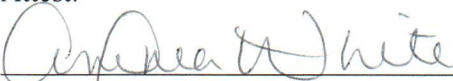
- TDA funding for possible changes from a County perspective
- Building Inspections, Fire Inspections, and Central Permitting
- Remove the request from BCC for the locker room building and notify President Smith that he may present a request to the Board for discussion between now and the budget adoption.
- Western Shelters

III. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Cooke moved to adjourn at 12:12 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and passed unanimously (5 to 0).



Randy Thompson, Chairman
Brunswick County Board of Commissioners

Attest:


Andrea White, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board

