BRUNSWICK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OFFICIAL MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
BUDGET WORKSHOP
MAY 6, 2024
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:	Steve Stone County Manager Bryan Batton, County Attorney David Stanley, Deputy County Manager Haynes Brigman, Deputy County Manager Aaron Smith, Finance Director Daralyn Spivey, Clerk to the Board LeAnn Weigand, Deputy Clerk/Executive Assistant Meagan Kascsak, Communications Director Currie Elkins/Jason Barnes, IT

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.

Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Sykes seconded the motion with all in favor (5 to 0).

The following items were presented and discussed:

- **Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Preliminary Recommended Balanced Budget, Fees, and Capital Improvement Plan**

  Mr. Stone explained that the preliminary budget was a working document, the Board would have an opportunity to adjust and revise prior to approval, discussed the current County demographics, construction, permits, and the expected increase in tax values/revenues.

  Mr. Stone recommended in this draft a revenue neutral rate of 0.337 for FY25.

- **Preliminary General Government Recommended Budget**

  General Government: The draft total general government departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $19.1M with increases to include Communications, Tax Administration, Legal, and the Board of Elections.

Central Services: The draft total Central Services departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $31.3M with increases for IT, Fleet Services, and Operation Services.

Public Safety: The draft total Public Safety departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $75.6M for the Sheriff's Office, Detention Center, Central Communications, Public Defender's Office. Emergency Management Services, Emergency Medical Services, Rescue Squads for Bald Head Island Public Safety, Building Inspections/Central Permitting, and Fire Inspections.

Transportation: The draft total Transportation departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $161K with no proposed changes.

Environmental Protection: The draft total Environmental Protection departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $26.4M. For Solid Waste increases in curbside for garbage collection of 23 cents per can for CPI and growth countywide, construction/demolition contract hauling due to rate increases, needed improvements to the old transfer station, Forestry, and increases to support state contracted services.

Economic Development: The draft total Economic Development departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $10.8M. Planning Department increases include additional personnel, offset by a decrease in Contract Services for a Unified Development Ordinance rewrite, funding for Brunswick BID. Other Economic Development include no proposed changes to Occupancy Tax funding, retainer for Contract Services, shoreline protection, economic development incentives and year 2 of the 4-year commitment to Boiling Spring Lakes offset by a transfer from Capital Reserves.

Public Housing: The draft total Public Housing departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $133K holding consistent with operations from last year.

Health Services: The draft total Health Services departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $7M with funding to Trillium for substance abuse and mental health, The Healing Place with a reimbursement of 40%, Christian Recovery Centers, Inc. for substance abuse treatment programs and a reimbursement rate of 40%, Family Health increase for additional personnel, Community Paramedicine with reimbursement of $197K, with additional personnel for WIC, and replacement vehicles for Environmental Health.

Social Services: The draft total Social Services departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $11.1M with an increase in personnel, replacement vehicles, increases in required reimbursable programs, increases in non-reimbursable programs, decrease in Crisis Intervention, LIEAP programs, increase in funding for Brunswick Partnership for Housing homeless coalition, support for contracted services to Brunswick Family Assistance, Hope Harbor Home, Coastal Horizons and Providence Home.

Human Services: The draft total Health Services departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $38.7M. For Veterans Services an increase in personnel and a total of $3.6M for Brunswick Senior Resources.

Education: The draft total Education departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $64.1M with an increase Brunswick County Schools funding agreement of 3.6%, Brunswick Community College increases for major capital outlay repair/maintenance, a fleet maintenance van and Brunswick Foundation Guarantee Scholarship Program.

Culture & Recreation: The draft total Culture and Recreation departmental budget for FY25 is recommended to be $6.9M. For the Library an increase in personnel and books. For Parks and Recreation an increase in personnel, one replacement vehicle, and other ancillary equipment.

Chairman Thompson called for a recess for lunch at 12:11 p.m.

Chairman Thompson called the meeting back to order at 12:45 p.m.

Emergency Medical Services: Lyle Johnston, Director, presented the proposed Community Paramedicine Plan to improve the health of the community and the need for additional personnel using Opioid Settlement funding to supplement the program.

Board of Elections: Sara Lavere, Director, presented the requested additional staff for the Board of Elections. Vice – Chairman Forte made the motion to change the one part time position requested to one (1) full-time position. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion and passed unanimously (5 to 0).

Utilities: Bob Tweedy and John Nichols presented the fee increases to be adjusted annually.

Debt Service: The draft line item for Debt Service is $17.5M. Debt Service Policy is 10-13% of total expenditures. Fiscal Year 2025 recommendation is 6.1%, well below the required policy threshold.

Expenditures: The draft total Expenditures for FY25 including salaries (with overtime), fringe benefits, operating costs, capital outlay and debt service is at $286.6M.

Transfer to Other Funds: Recommended for FY25 is $10.1M statutory and contract required to schools.

Budgetary Uses: Holden Beach funded debt service agreement of $1.3M.

Employee Retention and Recruitment: Budgeted 2.0% merit (up to 3.25%) and a 3.25% COLA increase with the County currently employing 1,386 people.

Preliminary General Fund CIP for FY 25:
Environmental Protection: $11,329,653 - Landfill Closure
Public Safety: $7,000,520 Animal Protective Services
General Government: $70,182,059 HHS/EMS Building
Education Capital Improvement Plan: $10,050,750

Chairman Thompson called for a recess for the regularly scheduled Board of Commissioners Meeting at 2:44 p.m.

Chairman Thompson reconvened the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Water Fund – Revenue: The draft total Water Fund departmental budget for FY25 revenue is recommended to be $46.6M with an increase due to growth, with a conservative rate of return on investments, and conservative budget recommendation for taps/ connections.

Water Fund – Expenditures: The draft total Water Fund departmental budget for FY25, the recommended expenditures are $47.9M with substantial increases in costs for supplies and materials, increased personnel, RO coming online, assuming Southport and Shallotte's water supply and ancillary equipment.

Wastewater Fund – Revenue: The draft total Water Fund departmental budget for FY25 the recommended revenue is $37.6M with an increase due to growth in the County, an improved but conservative rate on return on investments with a conservative budget recommendation for tap connections.

Wastewater Fund – Expenditure: The draft total Water Fund departmental budget for FY25 is recommended expenditures are $37.7M with increases of staff, and the purchase of both replacement and additional vehicles.

Preliminary Water CIP: $13,346,163
Preliminary Wastewater CIP $69,677,487

Mr. Stone presented a balanced budget and reviewed the following steps in the budget process:

May 20 at 6:00 p.m. – Presentation of the recommended budget
June 3, at 1:00 p.m. – Board Budget Workshop, if needed
June 3, at 3:00 p.m. – Public Hearing regarding the Budget
June 17 at 6:00 p.m. – Adoption of the Budget Ordinance, Capital Improvement Plan/Fees for FY25

III. <u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

Commissioner Sykes moved to adjourn at 4:50 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and passed unanimously (5 to 0).

Randy Thompson, Chairman
Brunswick County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Daralyn Spivey, NCCCC/CMC
Clerk to the Board

BRUNSWICK COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA