

June 4, 2015 Budget Meeting (County Department Presentations)

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m. for a special budget session in the 1909 Randolph County Historic Courthouse Meeting Room, 145 Worth Street, Asheboro, NC. Commissioners Frye, Kemp, Lanier, Allen, and Haywood were present. County department heads were given the opportunity to present their budget requests.

Human Resources

Jill Williams, Human Resources Director, presented recommendations for a competitive compensation plan for County employees. Ms. Williams said that 628 of the 798 positions in the classification pay plan require advanced education, certification, and experience. She stated that the biggest challenges were to recruit, retain, and promote the right people. With turnover currently trending at 12.5%, it is slightly above the average industry turnover of 10%. Ms. Williams said it has been estimated that the loss of productivity when an employee leaves equates to an approximate cost of \$10,000. She suggested that a 2% salary increase for all employees could help reduce turnover and retain employees. She also mentioned that the State had proposed a 2% increase for their employees and she hoped to be able to match that since the state is one of the biggest competitors for County employees. Ms. Williams also spoke about the one-time merit bonus and wanted the Commissioners to consider a merit increase not included in the proposed budget to reward and retain high performing employees.

Ms. Williams said that in April 2012, the pay plan was reviewed and updated to put it in line with other public and private sector ranges. She stated that it is best practice to review it every 3-5 years. With the help of the Piedmont Triad Regional Council, the pay plan will be reviewed in the 2015-16 year.

In the final portion of her presentation, Ms. Williams shared statistics from the School of Government about benefits in other NC counties. In regards to a 401(k) matches, 34 of 51 counties responding said that they match 3% or higher. In 60% of counties, dental insurance was cost shared or paid in full by the county for their employees.

Administration

Will Massie, Assistant County Manager/Finance Officer, said that Administration had a few changes in the proposed budget from the prior year. Unemployment insurance has been lower this year. The Grant Administration position and all associated costs have been eliminated. He requested a Finance Program Accountant position be added.

Veterans Services

Terry VanVliet, Veterans Services Director, said she is satisfied with the proposed budget. She thanked the Commissioners for keeping a Veterans Service office in the county.

Information Technology (IT)

Michael Rowland, IT Director, said the 2015-16 IT budget has increased this year due to rising maintenance and compliance costs. Software maintenance has increased on most of the enterprise software. This includes the software used by Tax, Finance, HR, Central Permitting, Emergency Services, and the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Rowland said that compliance costs included

in the budget are for a risk assessment requested by the auditors and a security assessment required in order to meet new payment card industry rules.

Mr. Rowland said the 2015-16 budget will continue the implementation of the technology maintenance plan. The second year of the technology maintenance plan calls for updating the oldest server, network, database, and phone equipment and software. The cost he presented for the second year of the technology maintenance plan was a total of \$241,000. The details were as follows: \$49,000 for the SQL database software maintenance, \$46,000 for the network equipment upgrades, \$64,000 for the server hardware replacements, and \$82,000 for phone replacements.

Mr. Rowland stated that the technology maintenance plan has been critical to maintaining the reliability and effectiveness of the County technology infrastructure. He saw the next challenge as having the necessary personnel required to complete the numerous planned maintenance projects. The proposed budget submitted included an additional position that will be used to assist with the maintenance and support of the enterprise software. He said this proposed position will provide much needed backup and relief with software maintenance. The request for an Infrastructure Specialist, however, was not funded in the proposed budget. He felt that, due to current workloads, an additional Infrastructure Specialist was needed for the timely implementation of the technology maintenance plan without adversely affecting current helpdesk response times.

Tax

Debra Hill, Tax Assessor, said the proposed budget had very little change from last year. Some costs were shifted to where they will be needed this year. She was satisfied with the proposed budget.

Elections

Melissa Johnson, Elections Director, stated that they are preparing for a potential of five elections this year; an Asheboro primary, presidential preference, municipal election, a first primary in April/May, and a second primary in June/July. A bond referendum would increase costs to the County if approved by the State. With the new voter id law, one additional poll worker will be necessary at each precinct. She said the proposed budget also had \$25,000 to purchase new tabulators. Ms. Johnson reported that the Board of Elections is trying to locate new polling places.

Commissioner Frye and Haywood asked what will be done in the future to keep voting lines short and wait times minimal. Ms. Johnson explained that the back log of voters at the last election, especially in the Trinity area, was due to multiple factors; precincts were merged, ballots had no straight party voting, and a long list of candidates required some voters to take 30 minutes to vote. She said that in the future there will be additional voting booths and poll staff at busier locations to minimize wait time.

Register of Deeds

Krista Lowe, Register of Deeds, was pleased with the proposed budget. Commissioner Kemp inquired if there had been any effect to the Register of Deeds office because of the changes to the

marriage law. Ms. Lowe stated that changes have not affected her office.

Public Buildings (Maintenance)

James Chriscoe, Maintenance Director, is pleased with the proposed budget. He stated that he is asking for one full-time and one part-time employee to assist with maintaining the growing number of buildings in the county.

Sheriff's Department

Jane Leonard, Business Manager, said the Sheriff is satisfied with the proposed budget.

Emergency Services

Donovan Davis, Emergency Services Director, thanked the Commissioners for all of their support given to his department. He is satisfied with the proposed budget but did ask the Commissioners to reconsider adding an annual expense of \$40,000 for an Emergency Reverse Calling System Service to replace a system that is not operational. This service would allow 9-1-1, law enforcement, fire, public health, and emergency management staff to contact citizens and businesses in specific geographical areas to warn them about a real-time emergency situation and to provide them with recommendations of what to do.

Building Inspections

David Bryant, Building Inspections Supervisor, said he was happy with the proposed budget. He said that the three trucks included in the proposed budget will replace three with high mileage. Two of those used trucks will remain in use by the Maintenance Department and Planning and Zoning.

Adult Day Reporting Center

Pam Smith, Adult Day Reporting Center Director, was pleased with the budget. She asked the Board to allow a participant in the program to speak. Kimberly Dunn, a pretrial release program participant, spoke about how the program had changed her life and helped her overcome large obstacles that she had faced.

Juvenile Day Reporting Center

Megan McKinnon, Juvenile Day Reporting Director, was happy with her department's proposed budget.

Planning and Zoning

Jay Dale, Planning and Zoning Director, had no special requests. He was satisfied with the proposed budget.

Cooperative Extension

Jonathan Black, Interim Cooperative Extension Director, said he was happy with the proposed budget. He explained that responsibilities were shifted to current employees as people had left the Cooperative Extension.

Public Works

Paxton Arthurs, Public Works Director, said the Public Works budget was less this year due

to the scrap tire program having a lower cost than expected and having one less employee. Commissioner Allen asked about fuel in his budget and whether or not the increasing price would affect it. Mr. Arthurs said he kept the price from last year's budget.

Public Health

MiMi Cooper, Public Health Director, was happy with the budget. She asked the Commissioners to fund two positions that were already in the classification pay plan for her department but had not been funded since the decline in the economy. The positions she requested are an Environmental Health Specialist to grade food establishments and a Public Health Nurse to help treat communicable diseases. This request totaled \$101,651 which was not in the proposed budget. Commissioner Haywood stated that the Board of Health had agreed that there was a genuine need for these two positions.

Social Services (DSS)

Beth Duncan, Social Services Director, spoke regarding the obstacles her agency had to overcome; significant caseload growth which far exceeded comparable staffing increases in Food and Nutrition Services and Medicaid, the implementation of the Affordable Care Act which generated a huge volume of new applications through the Healthcare.gov marketplace, a statewide backlog of cases because of the transition to the Affordable Care Act, the United States Department of Agriculture imposed two important deadlines of February 10 and March 31, 2014, to complete a statewide backlog of cases, Turbo Tax added Food and Nutrition and Medicaid applications to their software which produced inaccurate information to tax filers and an unexpected and additional workload on local staff, and staff members attending training to learn and implement the use of the new state automation. Ms. Duncan stated that Randolph County was not adequately staffed to effectively manage these pressures which contributed to an 18% turnover rate.

Ms. Duncan expressed her gratitude for the additional staff that were approved in January. She noted that it normally takes about 12 months before any new hires are fully proficient in program policy and can sustain a reasonable level of independent work. With the increase of staff, supervisors have more employees. She said the Income Maintenance Administrator and the Social Work Program Administrator have more employees and workload than one person should supervise. For effective administration in both divisions, there should be two supervisors in each area instead of just one. She urged the Board to approve an increase of \$40,043.00 in the County budget to fund these two positions.

In conclusion, she spoke of a letter from North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services which said "counties must appropriate funding to secure adequate resources to meet all program performance standards." For all the reasons Ms. Duncan mentioned, is why she requested the two new positions that are included in the proposed budget.

Chairman Frye questioned Ms. Duncan about the recent visit by the DHHS Secretary and the purpose for her visit. Ms. Duncan stated that Dr. Wos wanted to see how the agency was operating to overcome the challenges presented during the year. Ms. Duncan felt the visit went well for everyone.

Chairman Frye asked if the problems have been resolved with Medicaid payments to providers. Ms. Duncan said that Randolph County has done everything that could be done. Chairman Frye said the State blamed the County for the delay saying that claims were not being processed. Ms. Duncan agreed that this could have happened because of the lack of needed staff but also because of the implementation of new software by the State that had issues when it was released.

Commissioner Lanier spoke about the two positions that were requested and how important they would be to the agency. He felt that these two positions would get the staffing needs where they should be.

Child Support Enforcement

Damon Brown, Child Support Enforcement Director, was pleased with the proposed budget.

Public Library

Ross Holt, Public Library Director, said he was happy with the proposed budget. He talked briefly about the Library now handling the administrative functions for the Historic Landmark Preservation Commission (HLPC) with the assistance of the Planning Department. A “Certificate of Appropriateness” was issued by the Commission to add handrails to the steps at the Historic Courthouse. The rails have been added and he wanted Paxton Arthurs and James Chriscoe to know how great they looked and that they blended so well.

Soil and Water

Craig Frazier, Soil and Water District Supervisor, was happy with the proposed budget. He mentioned that an employee would be leaving the Soil and Water Department. The position will be advertised and Mr. Frazier hoped that they would not need to ask for more money.

Discussion

Chairman Frye reviewed the requests that were outside of the proposed agenda mentioning Ms. William’s suggested increase to the 401(k) plan, the Emergency Services reverse calling system and the Public Health positions. He said the budget would need to be increased by \$141, 651 if the reverse calling system and the Public Health positions were approved.

Adjournment

At 7:32 pm., on motion of Allen, seconded by Lanier, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Darrell L. Frye, Chairman

Phil Kemp

Arnold Lanier

Stan Haywood

David Allen

Dana Crisco, Deputy Clerk to the Board