

PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
April 17, 2017

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a budget work session on Monday, April 17, 2017 in the Community Room at the W.C. Witherspoon Memorial Library.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cecil Perry, Chairman
Dr. William R. Sterritt, Vice-Chairman
Lloyd E. Griffin, III
Jeff Dixon
Joseph S. Winslow, Jr.
Frankie Meads
Bettie Parker (left at 3:35 PM)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Rodney Bunch, County Manager
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney
Sheri Small, Finance Officer
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The work session was called to order at 3:00 PM by Chairman Cecil Perry.

1. BUDGET WORK SESSION:

Chairman Perry called on Jackie King, Librarian to present the library's proposed budget for 2017-18. He thanked Ms. King and her Board for their outstanding service to the community. Ms. King introduced Mr. Charles Jordan, Chairman of the Library Board.

Mr. Jordan thanked the Board for allowing him to come before them to make a presentation. He explained that Pasquotank County does not have branches to its library as many other counties do. He said the bookmobile serves as the branches. He noted that the library needs a smaller more cost-effective Bookmobile/Technology Center to replace the 1985, 33-foot Thomas Bus it currently owns. He noted that the average lifespan of a bookmobile is 15-20 years and the current one is 31 years old. More than \$16,000 has been spent on repairs since it was donated to the County in 2009. Another problem they are facing is the lack of available parts. He said it emits harmful diesel exhaust in the bookmobile's office and the children's department whenever it is started. He said the current bookmobile has been out of service ten times from July to December, 2016.

Mr. Jordan said a new bookmobile/technology center would allow them to provide innovative services and technology classes throughout the county. The new bookmobile will be much smaller and will have much more technology in it. Therefore, they would not need to put as many books in it.

The bookmobile provides visits and outreach to thirteen daycare centers, two elementary schools, one private school, nine homebound citizens, churches and community sponsored events. It visited 2,999 people in 2016. There are 443 card holders

Mr. Jordan stated that the Librarian investigated several foundation grants to help defray the cost, but her efforts were not successful. He said she investigated two companies that manufacture specialty vehicles and/or bookmobiles. The companies were Faber Specialty Vehicles, located in Columbus, Ohio, and Matthew Specialty Vehicles, located in Greensboro, NC. Faber Specialty cost ranged from \$140,000 on up. Matthew Specialty Vehicles price ranges are \$95,000 to \$200,000 for a 1000 series, \$105,000 to \$220,000 for a 2000 series, and \$55,000 to \$75,000 for a 500 series. He said the Librarian and the library board chairperson chose Matthew Specialty Vehicles because their prices are more economical and they are located in North Carolina, should they have any future maintenance issues.

Mr. Jordan said the new vehicle will allow them to provide the services they have been providing previously, as well as teach technology classes throughout the community, offer Microsoft Office, one-on-one technology training, homework help, assist in filling out job applications and free applications for Federal Student Aid, print documents and much more. The Series 500 will

cost approximately \$68,000. No CDL will be required. Therefore, all full time licensed staff can drive it. It will be equipped with three computer desks and shelving for books. He noted that it will take 90 to 180 days after placing the order to receive a new bookmobile/technology center. He said they have found that it will be better to have a gasoline power bookmobile, which is \$2,000 less. The money saved can be used to wrap the vehicle.

Mr. Jordan reported that the library currently has \$86,350 in their fund balance. \$30,000 is allotted for this fiscal year, which will leave a balance of \$56,350 for next fiscal year. Commissioner Griffin asked if this type of vehicle is available through State contract. Mr. Jordan said they have not checked. Finance Director Small said there are some cargo vans available on State contract, but she does not know how comparable they are. She said you would also have to look at the cost of customizing the inside. Commissioner Griffin also questioned why they chose to go with a gasoline fueled vehicle. Mr. Bunch noted that EMS is moving toward gasoline and he suggested they might want to do the same. Commissioner Griffin said his final question is have they considered leasing. Mr. Jordan said they have not.

Vice-Chairman Sterritt asked how many books the bookmobile carries. Ms. King said the current bookmobile carries approximately 1,000 books. He asked if patrons will be able to go inside the new vehicle and browse. Ms. King answered yes they can and they can also use the computers and print. She said the only difference is there will be approximately 500 books. He said he would compare the need for a bookmobile in the same vein that he would compare the need for a firetruck. He said both are vital. He asked how much the Weeksville firetruck cost. Ms. Small responded \$260,000.

Commissioner Dixon asked if bookmobile is included in their proposed budget request. Ms. Small said it is. She noted that they are requesting to use about \$50,000 of their fund balance.

Commissioner Meads noted that our school system is trying to get away from books and yet we are still carrying books in the library. He asked if as many people are using the library as they did years ago before computers. Ms. King said the library provides services the traditional way, as well as new ways. She explained that now one book has to be bought in several ways; regular print, e-book, large print and CD. Commissioner Sterritt explained that clientele out in the rural areas probably do not own a computer. He said they probably prefer a book. Chairman Perry said the schools are technology prepared and a lot of people are not. Commissioner Parker said we will need a dual system for many years to come, because some constituents do not have the technology that is fast changing. Chairman Perry said it is very important for us to become a progressive community and he feels the Board should support them as much as they can.

The Board agreed on the importance of a bookmobile in our county and said they will consider it in their budget, but cannot make any promises at this time. County Manager Bunch cautioned the Board that this is the first budget request they have reviewed.

The Board took a short recess prior to reviewing other county department budgets.

County Manager Bunch informed the Board that the proposed budget includes a \$500 increase across the board to all salaries, which is the same as last year. He said he has received no feedback from the State Health Plan about increases, but they have said that the basic plan will increase \$25 per employee. Therefore, a 5% increase has been included in the proposed budget. Ms. Small added that retirement will increase by ¼ percent across the board.

Ms. Small and Mr. Bunch reviewed the proposed budgets for several departments. Ms. Small said she is not proposing a raise for the governing board. The County Manager's budget shows a slight decrease. Personnel/Payroll remains relatively flat. The Finance Department's biggest change is due to Deloris Hague's retirement. She said she plans to keep her on board for a while to train her replacement. Data Processing remains relatively flat. The Tax Administration budget decreased due to the retirement of Jean Brothers. They do not plan to fill the position. Ms. Brothers' responsibility will be shared amongst other employees. There will be some pay grade changes for the employees who are taking on those responsibilities. The County Attorney's budget is increased due to salaries and insurance, as well as new furniture for their recently remodeled office. The Register of Deeds office decreased slightly due to a retired individual coming off the County's regular insurance at age 65. The retiree will now receive supplemental insurance.

Mr. Bunch stated that the Building Inspector's budget is increased due to hiring a new inspector. He hopes to hire someone with Level III certificates or is in a position to be able to obtain them in the near future so they can work to become the Chief Building Inspector. He said the sooner the better. Paul Kahl will become fulltime Fire Marshal. He noted that their budget also includes a new vehicle. He explained that a vehicle was in last year's budget but it was never purchased. The Planning Department budget has increased due to travel. He said he is suggesting we send our Planning Director to the County Administration Course. He feels she is a very good candidate. He stated that he calls on her for many special projects and she can be used even more for that type of thing. The GIS Department is basically flat except for salaries and health insurance. The Cooperative Extension office budget decreased slightly due to the retirement of Tom Campbell and the difference in the salary of the individual who took his place. Lastly, the Soil & Water Conservation budget remains flat.

Ms. Small said she has not received anything from the State regarding sales tax and Patrice Stewart will not have any type of evaluation numbers for her until the first week of May. She stated that the school system will be presenting their proposed budget request on Monday, April 24th.

Motion was made by Lloyd Griffin, seconded by Jeff Dixon to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD