

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
MAY 15, 2023**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a Budget Work Session on Monday, May 15, 2023, in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Jordan, Chairman
Barry Overman, Vice-Chairman
Lloyd E. Griffin, III
Sean Lavin
Jonathan Meads
Sam Davis
Clifford Shaw

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Sparty Hammett, County Manager
John Shannon, Assistant County Manager
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney
Mike Barclift, Management Fellow
Sheri Small, Finance Officer
Aaron Wallio, Major
Danny Fogg, Chief Deputy
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM by Chairman Charles Jordan.

1. BUDGET PRESENTATION:

County Manager Sparty Hammett said he and Finance Director Sheri Small will be reviewing the General Fund, Special Appropriations, and Special Revenues.

Mr. Hammett provided the following comparative information:

Debt Per Capita - June 30, 2022			
	Debt	2022	
County	June 30, 2022	Population	Debt per Capita
Pasquotank	\$27,483,861	40,938	\$671
Beaufort	\$48,015,387	44,272	\$1,085
Camden	\$18,503,474	11,088	\$1,669
Chowan	\$7,114,000	13,940	\$510
Currituck	\$30,175,000	31,015	\$973
Dare	\$141,875,833	37,956	\$3,738
Perquimans	\$9,562,259	13,210	\$724
Comparison			
County Average	\$42,540,992	25,247	\$1,450
Albemarle District Jail shared debt was adjusted			

Mr. Hammett said when you look at Pasquotank County compared to the comparison county's debt capita we are at \$671 per person, which is less than half of surrounding counties. Only Chowan is lower. Camden and Currituck are both planning a school and Chowan is planning a Reserve Osmosis Treatment Plant. When compared to surrounding counties, Pasquotank County's tax rate is 18.6 cents lower than comparison average and 4.5 cents lower than the state average. The state average for taxable property per capita is \$131,137. Pasquotank County is ranked #86 at \$83,638. The next time the map book comes out it will include the new numbers that reflect our revaluation, and that number should then become \$108,513, which will take us from 86 to the high 50s.

Ms. Small reviewed the General Fund Revenues and Expenditures as of April 30, 2023.
Mr. Hammett provided the following FY2023-24 Budget Overview:

- **The Balanced No Tax Increase General Fund Budget includes:**
 - All the FY2023-24 Budget Priorities discussed at the Retreat.
 - All the Operating and Capital Funding requested by ECPPS.
 - All the Operating and Capital Funding requested by COA.
 - Building Permit Fee increases; Building Permit Fees have not been increased since 1996.

- **Major sources of additional revenue include:**
 - Ad Valorem Tax - \$700,000 (based on increased valuation).
 - Interest Earnings - \$475,000.
 - Sales Tax \$348,000 (3% increase; State projects 4% to 5%).
 - Building Permit Fees - \$150,000.
 - Motor Vehicle Tax - \$100,000 (based on increased valuation).

2023-24 Budget Highlights

- **Former Elizabeth City Middle School Gym Costs**
 - The renovated gym will be ready for Parks and Recreation use in FY2023-24. Operational costs include staffing and lease payments.
 - Capital costs include the parking lot, furnishings, and equipment.
- **Employee Retirement**
 - Approximately \$120,000 Annual Cost Increase (1% increase for Law Enforcement and .75% for other employees).
- **Cost of Living Increase – 5%**
 - Implementation of the Compensation Study in Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (Enterprise Funds) and Fiscal Year 2020-21 (General Fund) made salary ranges competitive.
 - Cost of Living increases help maintain competitiveness.
- **401(k) – Up to 5% Match**
 - Proposed budget continues the 401(k) match to make the County’s benefit package competitive.
 - Other local jurisdictions offer a 5% 401(k) to all employees: Elizabeth City; Camden County; and Currituck County.
- **Salary Study Increases**
 - The NCACC conducts an annual Salary Survey (latest FY2021-22); 86 of 100 counties reported salary data for Commissioners.
 - The average pay for Commissioners was \$12,414 versus \$7,200 for Pasquotank (\$5,214 less); last pay increase was 2005.
 - The average pay for Commission Chairman was \$14,600 versus \$8,400 for Pasquotank (\$6,200 less).
 - Budget includes pay increases to the state averages; which parallels the Compensation Study increases for employees.
 - Staff recommends COLA increases when employees receive.
- **Pay for Extended Out-of-County Meetings**
 - Commissioners would receive additional pay of \$150 per day for any meeting or day for travel to/from meeting, lasting more than four hours and out of the County (90 mile radius of the Courthouse). This would parallel the Camden County policy.
- **Law Enforcement Salaries are Increasing**
 - Law Enforcement salaries are increasing statewide and locally.
 - Elizabeth City Police Officers recently received a \$6,500/year increase and Camden County Deputies received a 14% increase.
 - The Sheriff’s Office is currently fully staffed, but pay is below average. The County has to be proactive to avoid becoming a training ground for other law enforcement agencies.
- **Compensation Study Increases in Budget**
 - All sworn positions from Deputy to Sergeant will receive a two Pay Grade increase.
 - Lieutenants and above will receive a three to four Pay Grade increase.
 - All positions will also receive the 5% COLA.
- **Sheriff’s Office - 2 Patrol Deputies**
 - A split Patrol shift will be implemented to provide more coverage during peak hours (2:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.).
- **Sheriff’s Office – Additional Funding for Training**
 - The increased level of funding for training continues - \$40,000.

- **Animal Services Study – Impact on Budget**
 - Initiated an Animal Shelter Operational Study, and after initial research, quickly changed to an Animal Services Operational Study (to include Animal Control and Central Communications). Study will be completed by June 30th.
- **Animal Services – \$100,000 Increased Funding**
 - \$260,000 is provided for Animal Shelter Services - \$230,000 allocated to the SPCA (\$70,000 increase) and \$30,000 to Animal Control Contract Services. County would begin implementing Trap Neuter Vaccinate Release (TNVR) program for cats and Low/No Cost Spay Neuter for citizens to reduce the growing number of feral/stray cats and associated Shelter overcrowding.
- **Volunteer Fire Departments – Per Call Stipends Increase**
 - Funding is increased from \$10 to \$15 for Per Call Stipends, which have proven to be very successful.
- **Volunteer Fire Departments - Three Fire Trucks**
 - Nixonton’s delayed Fire Truck is budgeted. Budgeted for two Fire Trucks as a placeholder – Providence (2025 replacement) and Newland (2026 replacement). Prices are escalating on a monthly basis and delivery time is averaging 2-years due to supply chain issues.
 - We will receive delivery of the Providence and Newland trucks in Fiscal Year 2024-25.
 - The next Fire Truck Replacement date is 2033.
- **Volunteer Fire Departments - Annual Volunteer Banquet**
 - An allocation of \$1,000 is continued for each of the four VFDs.
- **Central Communications/911 – 4 Positions - Emergency Communications Specialists**
 - Positions are needed due to increased call volume; adding the positions will reduce the dependency on part-time staff.
- **Finance Officer – Dual Funding for 6 months**
 - Finance Officer Position will be posted September 1, 2023, with January 1, 2024, as the target start date.
 - Finance Officer position is increased to Pay Grade 50 (\$87,105 to \$124,172).
- **Department of Social Services – 5 Medicaid Eligibility Specialist Positions**
 - Positions are needed to implement Medicaid Expansion.
- **County Manager’s Office/Utilities - NCACC Management Fellow**
 - Mike Barclift has committed to the second year of the program. NCACC pays \$25,000 of the cost of salary and benefits; remaining costs split between the General Fund and Utilities.

Finance Officer Sheri Small reviewed the proposed special appropriations, which remain flat.

Motion was made by Sean Lavin, seconded by Sam Davis to move the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget as presented by the County Manager to the June 5, 2023 Board meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hammett said he will do the reading of the budget and call for a Public Hearing at the June 5, 2023 meeting, and hold the Public Hearing on June 20, 2023.

There being no further business to come before the Board;

Motion was made by Sam Davis, seconded by Sean Lavin to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 3:20PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD