

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners held a Budget Workshop on Thursday, May 24, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC. The purpose of the budget workshop is to discuss the FY 2018/2019 budget.

Members Present: Martha Hicks, Chair; Blake Vance, Vice-Chair; Faith Lacey; Tim Phillips; Wood Hall Young, Jr.

Members Absent: None

Call To Order

Chair Hicks called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.
Dennis Aldridge led prayer.

FY Budget 2018/2019

Chair Hicks turned the meeting over to Phillip Barrier, County Manager.

First of all we have a new budget ordinance as of today and you are going to see that it went up a little over a million dollars. We are now recognizing the lottery funds that we are asking the state for and that we are going to spend in the budget if that is what the board wants. Blake Vance stated that he would rather not because that is going to throw the budget off for years to come. That is a one time money in and money out thing. That is just my opinion, The other board members agreed. Mr. Barrier pointed out that the "transfer to general fund for employee benefits" has disappeared because that was put in each department's budget and now you also have a transfer to debt service of \$736,539 and that was leaving the tax rate where it was last year.

Mr. Barrier stated that Sheriff Kevin Frye was attending the budget workshop at the request of the Board. Ms. Faith Lacey stated that she felt like there should be a resource officer in each school. Sheriff Frye agreed. He had asked for two resource officers in next year's budget which did not give a resource officer in every school but it does help us tremendously in covering the schools much better. I try to be good steward of the taxpayer's and it is a difficult proposition when you look at providing that level for every school. Banner Elk Police Department has asked for a grant to get a resource officer for Banner Elk Elementary School. Newland would like to try to get a grant for the Newland Elementary school. Sheriff Frye stated that Tim Winters, School Resource Officer tried to visit Crossnore, Avery Middle, Avery High, Grandfather Academy, and Crossnore School, Inc. every day. We get a lot of calls at Grandfather Academy which can either be responded to by a deputy or by the resource officer. In the past two years there have been more assaults at Grandfather Academy than ever been. We are dealing with issues comparable to Charlotte, Winston Salem, Fayetteville because we have a lot of inner city youth that are staying at Grandfather Academy that are very violent and we have to deal with them. With the two new resource officers, this

would allow me to keep resource officers at Avery Middle and Avery High more. It takes two years to get resource officers trained and finding someone that this is their niche is hard.

Chair Hicks stated that the Board talked about metal detectors. Sheriff Frye stated that there are a few problems with that. There has to be someone sitting operating the metal detectors. I don't think that is a feasible solution to the problems. I think more armed resource officers in the schools is what we need. The school system has the right to search anyone at the school but the Sheriff's office does not. Due to the fourth amendment, the Sheriff's office cannot search a student without probable cause but school systems can search for reasonable suspicion but we can be with them when the school system does that.

Chair Hicks asked if all the schools had cameras. Sheriff Frye stated that there is a camera at the front door of every school. The high school cameras allows the Sheriff's Office to pull them up on their phones. This is an internet based camera system which is very expensive. The other cameras are closed circuit.

Sheriff Frye stated that getting the two new resource officers would be a tremendous help.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. questioned the Sheriff if the road deputies were cut how would that affect the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Frye stated that the call volume has gone up drastically in the past ten years. The county that we grew up in is no longer. It is our duty to answer every call. The two new road deputies would help us be proactive in each community with crime prevention programs. We have very little community involvement because we are just running from call to call.

Chair Hicks questioned Sheriff Frye's opinion on Drug Court. Sheriff Frye stated that Drug Court was a very good program.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. stated that he hoped the Sheriff would be housing more of the SMCP's in the upcoming year. Sheriff Frye stated that the average daily inmates were 48 last year which 25 of them were SMCP's. Chair Hicks questioned how much money that we had received from SMCP's. Chair Hicks stated that she asked the Finance Officer to get this information. Nancy Johnson, Finance Officer, stated that she had asked Trina Cook for the information but she had not gotten back with her on this. Chair Hicks questioned how many jailers was required per inmate. Sheriff Frye stated that we are required to have four jailers on shift because of the way the jail is laid out. We usually have five per shift. There are 23 jailers total.

Sheriff Frye stated that the big things in his budget are personnel and vehicles..

Blake Vance stated that he would like to have a better look at where we are at overall on this budget. Mr. Barrier stated that he had already added in the resource officers in the budget ordinance.

Eric Foster, Solid Waste Director, entered the budget workshop to answer questions regarding the solid waste department budget. Mr. Barrier stated that previously the Board had discussed purchasing versus leasing a road tractor. Mr. Vance questioned if anything had been penciled in the budget regarding the road tractor. Mr. Barrier stated no.

Mr. Foster explained that the company he had been in contact with would lease a road tractor for \$2400.00 a month which included tires and maintenance. The only thing we cover is the fuel. In addition to the license there is a charge of 85 cents a mile. We are averaging 55,000 miles. We spend about \$6000 a year on tires, \$1400 on brake work. At the end of the lease the county has the option of receiving a new truck and lease or purchasing the truck. This is about \$70,000-\$80,000 for the truck. Normally all the leases are about the same. Servicing is done about three times a year. This is a 5 or 6 year lease. With any major breakdowns they would bring a truck to replace that truck. If we breakdown on the road they will come and pick it up and they would pick up the tow bill.

Mr. Barrier questioned if we lease a tractor will we take one off the road. Mr. Foster stated that the one with the salvaged tag would be taken off of the road. Mr. Foster stated that he thought with the lease program you don't have to worry about the breakdowns.

Mr. Foster stated that on the trailer it would be \$2000 per month for leasing a walking trailer and 0.06 cents per mile. We are responsible for any damage. It would be better to buy the trailer. A new 2019 trailer with warranty is \$76,050. We get 8-9 years out of them. We have two walking floors and an extra trailer. Two of the trailers are in good shape. Both of them are 2008 trailers.

Mr. Foster stated that previously there were four people at the landfill. It was for C&D coming in as well as the backup truck driver. The spring is when I need someone to fill in. The fact is that you have someone that has to drive the off road truck as well as bury anything that comes in. That person was helping with filling in for absenteeism at the landfill as well as for safety at the landfill. With Mitchell and Yancey they have five or six operators and it is for safety reasons. They could fill in for roll off drivers and truck drivers. This would help with us always being fully staffed.

Mr. Foster updated the Board on the closing of the cell. The engineers gave a six year plan. In the past it was \$100,000 to close phase 1. When I talked to the engineer last year I told him to double the amount. This cell closure would have been 1.2 acres but based off the numbers we don't have to do the full 1.2 acres. We will close whatever the \$200,000 will get us. We can close just part because of airspace and because it goes around the front and ties into the section that is closed.

Consensus by the Board to lease a road tractor. Consensus to hold off on the roll off truck at \$150,000. Consensus to bump up the walking trailer to \$80,000. Consensus to give solid waste a full time position.

Mr. Barrier directed the Board to capital items in the budget. We talked about a storage building for the senior center previously. Discussion regarding the storage building.
Consensus to add \$2500 for a storage building for the senior center.

Discussion regarding capital items for EMS.

Consensus to leave the mechanical vests in the EMS budget. Consensus to do a remount ambulance instead of a new unit. Consensus to cut the ventilators to one.

Recess

Chair Hicks called for a brief recess.

Chair Hicks declared the meeting to be back in session after a brief recess.

Discussion regarding cell phones and tablets for the Department of Social Services. Commissioner Vance stated that cell phones are valuable and there are some county employees that need a cell phone but it is not the responsibility of the county to provide every county employee a cell phone and we are headed in that direction. Chair Hicks agreed. **Consensus by the Board for the DSS cell phones to be regular phones instead of smart phones.**

Discussion regarding cell phones for the Sheriff's office . Cell phones have increased since last year. Every deputy does not need a smart phone. **Consensus by the Board to drop the Sheriff's Office cellphone budget down to \$20,000.**

Discussion regarding the Avery County School budget. Mr. Barrier stated that he cut the operational budget 2.8% over last year. I have only budgeted \$4,511,522 and they asked for \$140,500 over last year in the operational budget. The Board asked the County Manager to try to get in touch with Jeff Jaynes, Finance officer for Avery County Schools.

Recess

Chair Hicks called for a brief recess.

Chair Hicks declared the meeting back in session after a brief recess.

Discussion regarding Mayland Community College. Mayland asked for an increase in their overall budget of \$42,000. Consensus to leave the Mayland budget at the amount that it was last year.

Chair Hicks asked the finance officer to print out a new budget with all the changes before the next budget meeting.

Recess

Chair Hicks called for a brief recess.

Chair Hicks declared the meeting to be back in session after a brief recess.

The Board went through each department's budget line item by line item.

Blake Vance stated that he had issues with individuals getting double digit increases when the employees get barely cost of living adjustments. It should be looked at across the board at the department heads. This is what the study said but it is not really good practice. The County Manager will have David Hill look at the department head salaries again.

Recess

Chair Hicks called for a brief recess.

Chair Hicks declared the meeting to be back in session after a brief recess.

The Board went over the capital items for each department again.

Consensus by the Board to add the sidewalk at the Administration Building back to the budget at \$24,000.

Consensus to decrease the \$8400 down to \$6500 in the Public Buildings and Grounds Budget for the bed for the truck chassis.

Consensus to cut the Dodge Durango vehicles and purchase four trucks for the Sheriff's Office.

The next budget meeting is Tuesday, May 27, 2018 at 8:30 a.m.

Adjourn

Chair Hicks adjourned the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Martha Hicks, Chair
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk