

Scotland County Board of Commissioners reconvened meeting May 17, 2023, Edwin Morgan Center 517 Peden Street, Laurinburg, NC

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Commissioners in attendance: Chair Tim Ivey, Vice Chair Darrel “BJ” Gibson, Commissioners John Alford, Bo Frizzell, Whit Gibson, Darwin Williams (left at 11:25). Commissioners not in attendance: Clarence McPhatter II. Staff in attendance: County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Ed Johnston, Public Safety Director Robert Sampson, Clerk to the Board Jason Robinson, Community Relations Specialist and Deputy Clerk Adam Peele.

Call to Order, Invocation, and Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Ivey called the reconvened meeting to order and asked Commissioner Whit Gibson to deliver the invocation. Chairman Ivey asked for a motion to approve the agenda. **Motion was made by Vice Chair Gibson to approve the agenda. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Darwin Williams. Vote to approve the agenda: Unanimous.**

Scotland County Schools Budget

The Board first heard from Interim Superintendent, Mr. Robert Logan. Mr. Logan introduced two board of education members, Mr. Rick Singletary and Ms. Vicki Jackson. He also introduced staff and the budget consultant, Mr. Aaron Beaulieu, of the school board. Mr. Logan stated that he had been on both sides of this process as he has been a superintendent in three districts, and a county commissioner in Chatham County. Mr. Logan outlined the budget challenges for the school system and highlighted central office and administrative staff cuts that have been made. Mr. Logan also stated that in the past funds have been poorly managed, as an example the fund balance has gone from \$2.5 million to about \$500,000. Mr. Logan then reviewed the reason this has happened. Commissioner Williams asked about ESSR funds. Mr. Logan stated that those funds, while needed, are earmarked for certain projects and items. Commissioner Whit Gibson asked if ESSR funds could have been used for employees. Mr. Logan stated that they could not be used for employees who weren't working and everyone was kept on the payroll through COVID. Commissioner Alford asked if employees could have gotten unemployment benefits and the schools made up the difference. Discussion followed about this scenario. Mr. Logan then outlined what will be done in the future in the budgetary process. Mr. Logan also reviewed the different sources of funding for the schools from federal, state and local. Commissioner Whit Gibson then asked about if there were services that the ESSR funds provided that the schools would like to keep. Mr. Logan stated that nurses in every school, mental health workers, social workers were all areas that the schools would like to keep that were provided by ESSR funds. Mr. Logan then mentioned that the school district isn't getting to utilize the full \$10 million local appropriation but only about \$7.9 million because \$2.1 million is used for debt service. Chairman Ivey stated that in 2018, it was promised by the school board that the debt service would pay for itself because of savings that would be realized. (*Commissioner Alford left at 10:25*). Discussion followed about areas that should have had savings but that haven't been realized. Mr. Beaulieu stated that in the last 2-3 years there has not been much school financial management and stated that the savings from the consolidation is minimal. Mr. Logan then reviewed the items that the school board is asking for more funding.

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Chairman Ivey asked how much was the total amount and Mr. Logan stated that it was \$330,000. Discussion then followed about the projects that have been done.

EMS Schedule Change

The Board next heard from Public Safety Director Robert Sampson. Mr. Sampson stated that EMS is looking to change the work schedule. Currently, the staff is working a modified 24/48, this schedule was done when EMS was first established with 2 ambulances. In 1996, there were about 4,000 calls for service for EMS. Now, there are 7,200 calls just on 911 calls. According to Mr. Sampson, this is being done because of recruitment because EMS is having a hard time getting people even though EMS is working with the high school and their EMT program, there are just not enough people in the County. Mr. Sampson presented the Board with a proposed schedule that would allow people to have a better work/life balance. This process would be a three year process through 2026. Mr. Sampson stated that they are not asking for any additional funds, just asking to convert two part time employees to full time next year and two more in 2024-25. Mr. Sampson also stated that EMS is asking for a dedicated training officer for EMS and 911 Communications. Discussion followed about overtime, salary, and equipment.

2023-24 Budget

The Board next heard from Mr. Patterson concerning the 2023-24 fiscal year budget. Mr. Patterson stated that he had a call from the rescue squad. One of the trucks is in the garage for an indefinite amount of time and the other truck caught on fire. That truck is repaired and is back on the road. The truck that is ordered we have no idea when it will be available. Mr. Sampson explained why the truck is not available. Mr. Patterson said that another truck has been found on the lot and can be delivered by the end of next week. This could be purchased for \$200,000. The City of Laurinburg has agreed to pay \$100,000 if the County agree to pay the other \$100,000. **Motion was made by Commissioner Frizzell to approve the purchase of the new truck for the rescue squad. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Whit Gibson and the vote to approve was unanimous.** Mr. Patterson then reported to the Board that the human resources department has been working on bidding out the health insurance. According to Mr. Patterson, the County accepted quotes for health insurance and received 4 bids on the same plans. The current supplier is MedCost through the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) had an 8.4% renewal, NCHIP had a 5.1% increase in current expenses, FCC had a .47% decrease from the current expenses, and Mark III had a 1.84% decrease from the current expenses. According to Mr. Patterson, the recommendation is to go with Mark III. Human Resources Director Susan Sanders explained the plans and the differences between the 4 proposals. The Board also heard from David Costa with NCHIP and Jack Ficklin with FCC. Vice-Chair Gibson asked Mr. Ficklin about the network with FCC. Mr. Ficklin stated that there hasn't been a complaint about the network. Ms. Sanders stated that she felt the technology would be better with Mark III because it would be a seamless integration into our financial software. Discussion followed about the proposals. **Motion was made by Commissioner Frizzell to award the health insurance to FCC. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Whit Gibson and the vote was unanimous.** Mr. Patterson then reviewed the additional personnel included and the overall 2023-24 budget. Mr. Patterson then highlighted individual departments. In elections, there is a primary next year that will need to be paid for as well as a possible second primary. In the tax department, the pictometry eagle view is included. In the sheriff's office, 10 cars and one additional officer is included. Also within the sheriff's

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office, in the jail the cost of meals is going up 25%, there is a replacement of the generator and coolers. The generator and the coolers are being paid by the inmate trust fund, which must benefit the inmates. There were no significant changes in any of the other departments. Both inspections and parks and recreation have new fee schedules that are recommended (*Commissioner Alford returned at 12:05 pm*). Bryan Graham, parks and recreation director next spoke to the Board about the proposed fee structure for the parks and recreation department. Mr. Graham stated that right now not all parks are uniform in what they charge for reservations for shelters. Mr. Graham stated that he would like to see a fee of \$100 per day at every park for reserving shelters. Discussion followed about parks and recreation fees and the possibility of doing a fee just for out of county residents or companies. No action was taken at this time. Mr. Patterson continued with changes for DSS which included the largest change which was foster care. Vice Chair Gibson asked about how many cars were asked for by DSS. Mr. Patterson stated that he couldn't remember but there were 2 included in the budget and 1 in the health department. Mr. Patterson also stated that medicaid expansion was not included in the DSS budget. Discussion followed about cars at DSS. Mr. Patterson then addressed education and stated that the amount for the schools was based on what the liaison committee decided which was \$10,000,000 current expense and \$300,000 for capital. Discussion followed concerning education funding. *Consensus of the Board was to remain with current funding levels for the school system.* Mr. Patterson then updated the Board concerning the utility funds. Mr. Patterson stated that the County is looking at a \$3 per ton tipping fee increase for the City of Laurinburg. In the water districts, the City of Laurinburg increased their water rates by 25% and the County usually matches their out of city rate.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Frizzell asked for a status update and time frame on the North Turnpike water project. Mr. Patterson stated that he had made contact with some engineering firms about the extension. Commissioner Frizzell stated that he had spoken with the engineer that had designed the initial system in the 1990's and that he had left a message and sent an email and hadn't had a return call or email. Discussion followed concerning the extension of the water system to North Turnpike Road. Vice Chair Gibson stated that a community build at Dragon Park could galvanize support and that he would like to look into giving paid volunteer time for County employees. Vice Chair Gibson also stated that the community was hurting because of the loss of 2 young men. Chairman Ivey reminded the Board of the reveal party at Dragon Park on June 9th and about the NACO annual conference in Austin, Texas in July and the NCACC annual conference in Raleigh in August.

Closed Session

Chairman Ivey next said that the Board needed to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, and NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee. **Motion was made by Vice Chair Gibson to go into closed session for the specified reasons. Motion was duly**

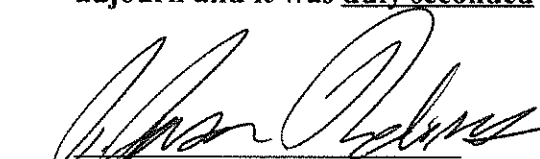
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seconded by Commissioner Whit Gibson and the vote to go into closed session was unanimous.

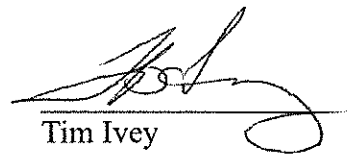
Upon coming out of closed session, Chairman Ivey announced that the county manager had resigned effective immediately and that all county property is being collected at this time. Chairman Ivey also stated that someone would need to be appointed temporarily to act with the authority of the county manager until a more interim solution is identified. Vice Chair Gibson asked if there should be a motion to accept the resignation of County Manager Kevin Patterson. County Attorney Ed Johnston stated that the Board probably should take an action to accept the resignation even though there was nothing formally received. **Motion was made by Vice Chair Gibson to accept the resignation of the county manager. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Frizzell and the vote was unanimous.** Chairman Ivey then asked for an appointment of a temporary acting county manager. **Motion was made by Commissioner Alford to appoint Chairman Ivey until a more permanent interim county manager can be identified. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Frizzell.** Chairman Ivey then stated that he would be the temporary acting county manager with no additional pay and for as short of a time as possible. **A roll call vote was then conducted with Commissioner Alford voting aye, Commissioner Whit Gibson voting aye, Commissioner Frizzell voting aye, and Vice Chair BJ Gibson voting aye, with Chairman Ivey being excused from the vote.**

Adjournment

Having no further business, **Motion was made by Commissioner Whit Gibson to adjourn and it was duly seconded by Vice Chair Gibson. Vote: Unanimous**


Jason Robinson
Clerk to the Board




Tim Ivey
Chair

(County Seal)