

Scotland County Board of Commissioners Special Meeting May 27, 2020, GoToMeeting Room #376-128-365, Laurinburg, NC

Scotland County Board of Commissioners Special Meeting, May 27, 2020, Edwin Morgan Center 517 Peden Street and GoToMeeting Room #376-128-365, Laurinburg, NC

Commissioners in attendance: Chair Bob Davis, Vice-Chair Carol McCall, Commissioners John Alford, Whit Gibson (electronic), Betty Gholston, and Tim Ivey. Commissioner McPhatter was absent. Staff in attendance: County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Ed Johnston, and Clerk to the Board Jason Robinson.

Call to Order, Invocation, and Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Bob Davis called the special meeting to order, and delivered the invocation. **Motion was made by Commissioner Alford to approve the agenda. Motion was duly seconded by Vice Chair McCall. Vote to approve the agenda: Unanimous.**

Home and Community Care Block Grant and In-Home Aide Contract

County Manager Kevin Patterson began by going over the details of the In-Home Aide contract that the Board had tabled at its May regular meeting because the Board had questions about providers. Mr. Patterson state that he had discussions with Twilla Allen who is the Aging Services Coordinator with the Lumber River Council of Governments about employees. According to Mr. Patterson, Ms. Allen informed him that in 2018 when Bayada received the contract from Interim Health that a lot of employees switched employers in order to stay with the same people. Chairman Davis stated that what bothered him was that Scotland County didn't look like they got all that they could. Mr. Patterson then explained the Level 1, 2, and 3 care for in-home aides and how the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) budget worked, that in some years that level 1 and 2 doesn't have as much expended by level 3 would be over budget and the amounts from level 1 and 2 would be used for the overage in level 3. Chairman Davis stated that he also hated to send money out of Scotland County. Commissioner Ivey stated that there was nothing to stop the Board from awarding the in-home aide contract to Carolina Hearts. County Attorney Johnston stated that he believed there is something to stop the Board. Mr. Johnston stated that he had looked over the contract and that it looked like it was applicable to the statute that required the Board to award the contract to the lowest, responsible bidder. Mr. Johnston stated that geographical location could not be a consideration when dealing with that kind of contract, according to statute. Upon hearing from Mr. Johnston, **motion was made by Commissioner Alford to award the in-home aide contract to Interim Healthcare as the lowest responsible bidder. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Ivey. Vote to award contract to Interim Healthcare: unanimous.** Mr. Patterson also informed the Board that they need to approve the HCCBG as well. **Motion was made by Vice Chair McCall to approve the Home and Community Care Block Grant for 2020-21. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Gholston. Vote to approve: unanimous.**

Scotland County School Budget Presentation

The Board next heard from Superintendent of Scotland County Schools, Dr. Ron Hargrave and Chief Financial Officer Susan Harrison. Dr. Hargrave stated that four years ago he had shared the consolidation plan and 1 to 1 technology initiative and that now that 1 to 1 technology plan is proving to be a success and a great advantage during this time of remote

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learning. Dr. Hargrave also reported that the school system has been averaging the delivery of 6,000 meals per day and that soon they will achieve 300,000 meals that have been delivered. Dr. Hargrave also stated that he is proud of the education that students are receiving and that it will be important over the next several years to further invest in infrastructure such as hotspots. Ms. Harrison then reviewed with the Board the student performance plan. Ms. Harrison also reviewed Scotland County Schools 2020-21 budget request. Chairman Davis asked where the extra \$200,000 over this current year came from? Ms. Harrison responded that if there is not a negotiated agreement between the boards that the schools would get what is prescribed by the funding formula. Commissioner Ivey stated that he had been trying to get the formula for the funding formula for 6 months and that getting the right numbers from the right place is hard. Ms. Harrison stated that the school system has the formula and can get that for Commissioner Ivey. Vice Chair McCall inquired about who does the calculation. Ms. Harrison stated that the school system does the calculation. Commissioner Ivey also inquired if the school system had the anticipated average daily membership (ADM) for next year. Ms. Harrison stated that it is anticipated to be 5,597. Commissioner Ivey asked Mr. Patterson if the \$3.6 million in capital that the County gets back through the lease payment for the debt service. Mr. Patterson stated that was true and that the only purely County dollars is \$10,344,000.

Laurel Hill Community Center Update

The Board next heard from Parks and Recreation Director Bryan Graham. Mr. Graham reviewed with the Board the parks and recreation perspective for Laurel Hill Community Center. Mr. Graham stated that the center needs to be multigenerational but that parks and recreation wants to focus on family and teen programming. Mr. Graham showed the Board some concepts that parks and recreation had been looking at. These concepts are based on a facility similar to Wagram and included: E-sports, indoor rock climbing wall, fitness center (with membership), multifunctional rooms, outdoor pickleball courts, indoor youth camps, annual youth sports, and an indoor walking track. Mr. Graham also informed the Board that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board would like to see in Laurel Hill what is in Wagram currently except with air conditioning. Commissioner Gholston inquired as to the budget for the Laurel Hill Community Center. Mr. Patterson stated that in conversations with engineers that to build a facility similar to Wagram Recreation Center the cost would be \$125 per square foot. This facility would be a 13,000 square foot facility which would cost \$1,750,000. Mr. Graham also stated that the yearly budget for Wagram Recreation Center was \$147,785 with 33% of that total being for staff and fringes and about \$9,000 for utilities. Chairman Davis asked Mr. Graham about the possibility of any grants. Mr. Graham answered that the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) has a grant of up to \$500,000 and Scotland County has not received one of those in a number of years. Commissioner Gholston stated that this would be wonderful but what would the Board do when Laurinburg wants a facility. Chairman Davis then stated that he felt that the County needed to look at corporate sponsorships for getting the money to do a community center. Commissioner Ivey stated that probably would be over \$1 in county money, if that. He did however state that while the building of Laurel Hill's Community Center was going on we should also look at doing air conditioning at Wagram that it might be cheaper. Chairman Davis then stated that he thought the county manager and Mr. Graham should get solid numbers together and go forward. Commissioner Gholston stated that she thought there needed to be a plan for Laurinburg to just get some answers. Commissioner Alford stated that the Board did not wait on Wagram. Vice Chair McCall stated that she felt that the Board needed a short term goal and a vision for

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Laurinburg. Chairman Davis reminded the Board not to forget about Gibson. Mr. Patterson stated that looking in his crystal ball for the next 5 years would like to see a facility in Laurel Hill, something comparable in Laurinburg with an addition to Scotland Place and to have something in Gibson (not run by parks and recreation). Mr. Patterson stated that currently parks and recreation has 6 employees. If in five years those things come to fruition, then parks and recreation would have 11 employees and would add \$400,000 to their budget. Commissioner Alford stated that he felt like something needed to be done in the area of parks and recreation and that no discussion was ever had about spending money on the jail to keep people confined but always a discussion if the Board was trying to do something to keep people out of jail. Commissioner Ivey inquired that he thought there was a plan to use existing staff in parks and recreation. Mr. Patterson stated that it was possible but it would put a strain on programs for seniors and already existing programs. Vice Chair McCall stated that she would like to give a shout out to parks and recreation for all the work with children all the way through senior citizens. **Motion was then made by Vice Chair McCall to instruct the county manager and parks and recreation director to move ahead with developing concept and to come back with a budget for implementation to include site plan and air conditioning for the Wagram Recreation Center. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Alford. Vote to approve: unanimous.**

COVID-19 Response Funds

Mr. Patterson next informed the Board concerning the funds from the federal CARES act. In that act the Federal Government gave North Carolina \$150 million for the 97 counties that did not receive a direct appropriation from the CARES act. The State also has another \$150 million that will probably be divided amongst all 100 counties. Mr. Patterson reported that he had already applied for the money and that a plan had to be in place for the funds by June 1st. There are six categories that the funds can be spent on, all of which are COVID related. Mr. Patterson also stated that he had been talking to the federal folks to try to get some flexibility with the funds so that they could be used for revenue replacement. Mr. Patterson also informed the Board that one aspect that the funds could be used for is economic development but that also has to be COVID related. Mr. Patterson stated that he and Economic Development Director Mark Ward was looking to do some micro loans of up to \$2000 to businesses with 10 or less full time equivalent employees if they have spent money on masks, sanitizer, additional cleaning. The deadline to spend the funds is December 31, 2020. Vice Chair McCall also informed the Board that the schools and the hospital are getting their own pots of money.

Budget Update

The Board heard from County Manager Kevin Patterson concerning an update on the 2020-21 budget. Mr. Patterson informed the Board that the numbers they are seeing today will change but there have been no sweeping changes since the last time they saw budget projections. Mr. Patterson told the Board that the budget last year was \$44,312,000 and this year's budget is \$45,353,000 which is due to the added debt service for the school buildings but this will be coming back as a lease payment from the school. According to Mr. Patterson this is done so as not to jeopardize low wealth funding for the school system. Mr. Patterson also reported that property taxes and unrestricted sales tax is projected to be lower than last year. Mr. Patterson stated that DSS has an increase in their revenue partially due to COVID. Transportation is getting an increase in funding from the State. There is also a reduction in capital from about \$1.6

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million to \$1 million this year. According to Mr. Patterson, the Board has added to fund balance for the last 5 years. Mr. Patterson reviewed revenue numbers for a number of departments. Chairman Davis asked why is there a projected decline in property taxes. Mr. Patterson stated that he had included a .25% decrease in property tax collections mainly because of the possibility of small business closing. Mr. Patterson then reviewed significant expenditure changes (1% COLA for employees, retirement increases from the retirement system, the step plan increase, health insurance increases, etc.). Mr. Patterson also reviewed tax collection rate as well as tax rate. Mr. Patterson stated that he hoped he was overcautious with projecting a 10% reduction in sales tax for the entire year. Right now the State is getting the reports from April for sales tax. Commissioner Ivey inquired about elections equipment and if it was in the budget. Mr. Patterson stated that the funds were included to get the new machines and the County is still waiting on the State for guidelines about what the November elections will look like. Mr. Patterson then reviewed the jail budget and how the fixed line items (inmate meals, inmate medical care) are a majority of that budget. Mr. Patterson then reviewed the education budget that includes the public schools as well as Richmond Community College (RCC). Vice Chair McCall inquired if funding from the State has increased since RCC had achieved full campus designation in Scotland County. Mr. Patterson stated that funding had increased. Chairman Davis inquired if the paving of the library parking lot is included. Mr. Patterson stated that it was not included right now. Discussion then shifted to the Laurel Hill Community Center. Mr. Patterson stated that nothing is currently in the budget. Commissioner Ivey asked about the possibility of using fund balance. Mr. Patterson said that fund balance could be assigned and then not appropriated until it is needed. Discussion followed about how to fund a community center in Laurel Hill.

Public Hearing Date

Mr. Patterson next asked the Board about a date for the public hearing that is required for the budget. Mr. Patterson stated that phase 2 of the state reopening still has a limit of 10 people inside. Discussion followed about virtual versus an in person public hearing. Mr. Patterson stated that he would recommend both an in person public hearing with a virtual component. If in person public hearing would only allow one person in at a time and would require a mask and have this at Scotland Place. Consensus amongst the Board was to follow this recommendation.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Ivey then brought up the audit for 2019 which was late to the Local Government Commission. Commissioner Ivey stated that he was concerned that this same finding had been on the previous year's audit. Mr. Patterson stated that the finance office is far ahead this year for the coming audit and have made changes to better meet the needs of the audit.


Closed Session

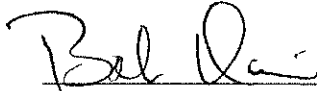
Motion was made by Vice Chair McCall to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, concerning potential litigation. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Ivey. Vote to go into closed session: unanimous. When the Board came out of closed session no business was taken up.

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Adjournment

Having no further business, **Motion was made** by Commissioner Alford to adjourn
and it was **duly seconded** by Commissioner Ivey. **Vote: Unanimous**


J. Jason Robinson
Clerk to the Board


Bob Davis
Chair

(County Seal)

