

*Scotland County Board of Commissioners reconvened meeting/budget work session
June 22, 2016, Emergency Operations Center, 1403 West Boulevard, Laurinburg, NC*

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Commissioners in attendance: Chair Carol McCall, Vice Chair Whit Gibson and Commissioners John Alford, Bob Davis, Betty Blue Gholston and Guy McCook. Commissioners not in attendance: Commissioner Clarence McPhatter. Staff in attendance: County Manager Kevin Patterson, Finance Officer Beth Hobbs, County Attorney Ed Johnston and Clerk to the Board Ann Kurtzman.

At 1 p.m. Chair McCall reconvened the meeting.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Gibson and duly seconded by Commissioner McCook to approve the June 22, 2016, agenda as presented. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Budget Amendment

Motion was made by Commissioner McCook and duly seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve the transfer of \$3,130 (includes \$313 local match) from Adult Day Care Transportation to Scotland County Area Transit System (SCATS) for the 2017 Home and Community Care Block Grant budget. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

City of Laurinburg availability fees request

Mr. Patterson said the County would receive \$195,000 if City of Laurinburg residents paid an additional \$30 availability fee as requested by Laurinburg City Council. A waiver of residential and bulky item loads would total \$255,000. The City would address reducing residential solid waste fees by \$2.50 monthly at its July meeting and decrease the monthly bill by \$2.50, which is \$30 over a year, if the availability fee increase to City residents is approved. If the County waives the fees on MSW only the difference would be \$26,000 without bulky items.

Mr. Patterson said the demolition tipping fee waiver has not been used by the City recently. The City instead conducts demolitions with burn practice and the small amount of waste that is left goes to the landfill.

Mr. Patterson said if the City took all its waste to Robeson County the County would lose about \$500,000 but there also would be a reduction in fees at Uwharrie, which means the loss would be an estimated \$190,000. The County Manager said if the City takes its business to Robeson then Scotland County could make changes in its solid waste operations by eliminating receipt of leaf and limb from any hauler and only accept residential leaf and limb. Mr. Patterson said heavy equipment operators at the landfill could be shared with Public Buildings for greater flexibility. The County Manager said 60 percent of MSW and more than 70 percent leaf and limb comes from the City. The City currently pays \$221,000 for its green box trash.

Commissioner Davis suggested the City pick up the difference between the 195,000 and \$221,000. Mr. Patterson said the County could credit the City \$195,000 toward its MSW and anything over that would be billed to the City.

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Mr. Patterson said if the City reduces its monthly bill by \$2.50 for households, it would be a wash, but it would hurt apartment complexes since the payment would be \$30 per unit. Chair McCall said it's important that City residents be made aware that the availability fee increase, if approved, originates from a request from the City and not the County.

The Board of Commissioners by consensus directed the County Manager to discuss the mechanics of the proposal with the City Manager ahead of the June 27 public hearing, which would be the application of a credit with the City paying the excess, or any other option that would not cost the County and would be mutually beneficial.

The Commissioners agreed that the City must reduce its rate by an equal amount to City residents in order for the proposal to work.

FY 2017 budget discussion

Mr. Patterson presented 2015 revenues minus expenditures by department. Mr. Patterson said the FY 2016 budget was conservative, 99 percent of which will be spent. The County Manager said if the Board chooses to be a little less conservative and reduce the tax rate by one cent, it would not jeopardize the upcoming budget. If the County would like to be a little less conservative than that and reduce the tax rate by two cents, that would work if fund balance is not used. Mr. Patterson said since the County would be looking at some large financing, the LGC wants to know the tax rate is stable. A \$1.02 tax rate would be viewed by the LGC as fairly stable, but there would be a little less left over at the end of the year.

Commissioner McCook suggested that the tax rate be reduced by one cent in FY 2017 and the Commissioners look to reduce the tax rate by an additional one cent in FY 2018.

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and duly seconded by Commissioner Gholston to set a goal of a \$1.02 tax rate with the approval of the FY 2017 budget. Vote: In Favor: Chair McCall, Vice Chair Gibson and Commissioners Davis, Gholston and McCook. Opposed: Commissioner Alford.

Commissioner Alford said he would prefer a 1.5 cent reduction in the tax rate for FY 2017.

(A break was called and the meeting resumed at 2:35 p.m.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Commissioner Davis to go into Closed Session in accordance with N.C. General Statute §143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of business in the area served by this body. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

OPEN SESSION RESUMED

Motion was made by Commissioner McCook and duly seconded by Vice Chair Gibson authorizing the County Manager to accept the Cascades property. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

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Commissioner comments

Commissioner McCook updated the Board on the activities of Mayor Matt Block to reinvigorate talks on construction of a recreation center since the Mayor now represents the City on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Commissioner McCook said construction of a recreation center is part of the Morgan Complex Master Plan. The Mayor intends to investigate funding possibilities.

Commissioner Davis suggested the County “put more teeth” in the ordinance that addresses removal of abandoned mobile homes. Commissioner Davis said there are numerous abandoned mobile homes, particularly along major thoroughfares in the County.

The County Manager provided an update on the LGC conference call where a private/public partnership with the schools was discussed. Mr. Patterson said the debt section of the LGC considers a public-private partnership risky. The LGC indicated support is possible if the County shows that a public-private partnership is the best option. Mr. Patterson said he has asked First Tryon for a scope of work, fee structure and not-to-exceed amount for a financial model on new school construction.

Commissioner Alford said seven Scotland County residents who received homes under the scattered housing program now have complaints about the workmanship of the homes. Commissioner Alford suggested that if the program continues that the County provide recipients with information that if there are complaints, they must be put in writing and forwarded to the County Manager or the LRCOG Housing Coordinator.

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Commissioner McCook to recess to 7 p.m. Monday, June 27, at the Emergency Operations Center. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk to the Board

Carol McCall
Chair