Official Minutes
May 14, 2024
Board of Commissioners Meeting

In Attendance:
Randy Church, Chairman
Mike LaBrose, Vice Chairman
Jeff Branch, Commissioner
Robbie Wilkie, Commissioner
Donald Duncan, County Manager
Abigail Rich, County Clerk

Absent:
Donnie Potter, Commissioner

Call to Order:

The County Manager, Donald Duncan, began the budget meeting at 6:01 PM.

Items of Discussion:

The County Manager and County CFO both reviewed the Budget Highlights for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. (Below)

GENERAL FUND

-Tax rate is maintained at 63 cents per $100 of tax value

-Total budget is $100.9 million up from prior year's total of $96.6 with most of the increase going to salaries

-Includes the following staffing changes:

- 4 new staff at EMS to cover Blowing Rock. Cost offset by increased revenues.
- 1 new staff at Emergency Communications
- 1 new staff at Building Inspections. Cost offset by increased revenues
- 7 new staff at DSS for Medicaid Expansion. Cost offset by increased revenues
- Converts 1 part time staff at Veteran's Services to full time.

-Capital Outlay set at $1.3 million. Funded via a new 59-month capital outlay loan.
- Old capital outlay loan will pay off creating capacity to cover the new loan.

-Merit Pool is set at half the normal amount.
- $350,000 total merit pool
- Allows merit one to give a $500 per year raise and merit two to give a $1,000 per year raise.

-Public School and Community College funding is held flat

-Allied Agency funding is held flat and no new agencies are added.
- $25,000 grant pool remains for allied agencies to apply for one time funding

-Revenue Estimates as follows:
- $1 million in property tax growth based on tax department estimates
- 3% growth in sales tax collections
- $500,000 increase in investment earnings, based on history and current interest rates
- $500,000 budgeted for Medicaid Hold Harmless based on anticipated "soft landing" from state, probably one year only.

-Departments were asked to reduce their budgets as much as possible without harming operational ability.
- Over $900,000 in expense reductions were submitted.
- Over $500,000 in increased revenues were identified
- Total benefit to the county's bottom line was almost $1.5 million.

-Fund Balance Appropriation is set at $5.9 million.
- Prior year fund balance appropriation was set at $4.4 million
- Historically the county has not used any fund balance when the appropriation is set at $5.0 million or less.

Other Funds

Three Fire Departments have asked for rate increases

Department	Current Fire Tax	Current Rescue Tax	Current Combined	Requested Fire Rate	Requested Rescue Rate	Requested Combined	Net Increase
Kings Creek	7.50	0.85	8.35	8.50	5.00	13.50	5.15
Sawmills	11.50	2.85	14.35	12.50	3.85	16.35	2.00
Valmead	10.00	2.00	12.00	10.00	5.00	15.00	3.00

- This budget will likely result in the use of some fund balance.

-The Water fund includes a rate increase to offset the impact of increases from its water suppliers.
- It also takes the capital reserve charge up from $1 per month to $2 per month
- Budget includes capital outlay which will be paid for with cash.
- Includes rate increase to pay for the cost of fighting the proposed inter-basin transfer

-The Sales Tax Reinvestment Fund is included with this budget.
- It continues to provide funding as allowed in the agreement between the county and the municipalities.
- Its primary focus continues to be economic development.

-The Opioid Fund is included in this budget and continues its mission to help fight drug addiction

-The school sales tax fund is included in this budget

- Sales taxes allocated to the schools is placed in this fund.
- Debt service for borrowings done in the past for school projects is paid from this fund.
- Funds left over after paying debt service are paid to the school system each month to fund their ongoing facility maintenance.

Discussion Points:

-Call volume and claim amounts with the Veteran's Services Office.
-Staffing of the Blowing Rock EMS Base.
-Building Inspections Apprenticeship Position
-Positions needed in DSS for Medicaid Expansion and after-hours Supervisor.
-Cost of replacing patrol vehicles, departmental vehicles, and QRV's and availability to secure these.
-Amount allocated for Merit I and Merit II for employees.
-Feedback provided by Department Heads concerning success of the Merit pay.
-Medicaid Hold Harmless fund reductions.
-Fire Department tax increase requests.
-Water fees, rates, and IBT request from City of Charlotte.
-Funding for GPS in County Vehicles.

Adjourn:

Vice Chairman LaBrose made the motion to adjourn at 8:08 PM.
The motion carried unanimously.