MINUTES
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF EDGECOMBE COUNTY
JUNE 6, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.
IN THE COMMISSIONERS' ROOM, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING
TARBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

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1. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN LEONARD WIGGINS AT 7:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Leonard Wiggins, Chairman, Mr. Jonathan Felton, Vice-Chairman, Mr. Donald Boswell, Mrs. Viola Harris, Mr. William Wooten and Mrs. Evelyn Powell.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rev. E. Wayne Hines.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Eric Evans, County Manager, Mr. Mahlon DeLoatch, County Attorney and Ms. Frangie Mungo, Clerk to the Board.

2. **PRAYER.**
Prayer was provided by Mrs. Harris.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL.**
Mr. Felton moved to approve the April 18, 2016, May 2, 2016, May 16, 2016 and May 23, 2016 meetings as presented. Mr. Wooten seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

4. **PUBLIC HEARING:**
1. **Mr. Wiggins called a public hearing to order to receive citizen comments or questions relative to the proposed Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Edgecombe County Budget.**

Mr. DeLoatch read the notice as published.

Mr. Evans read his budget message as follows:

Submitted herein is the Edgecombe County recommended Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-2017. The Budget is balanced in its entirety, as required by the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act. In crafting this budget, I worked with all of our department heads and my finance team with the following goals in mind: hold expenditures flat and make cuts where possible; budget for delayed capital improvements that can no longer be deferred; provide a cost of living increase for employees if possible; and avoid the need for a tax increase at all costs.

The County's proposed General Fund budget for FY 16-17 totals $59,634,211 which is a 1.3% increase from current year's original operating budget of $58,840,360. The proposed ad valorem tax rate for the FY 16-17 is 95 cents per $100 value, which is no change from the current year. One cent generates approximately $298,000. The proposed budget includes a fund balance appropriation of $5,095,645, of that amount $300,000 is from restricted fund balance for revaluation services, leaving a $4,795,645 appropriation from general fund. The current year's fund balance appropriation is $5,339,390.

Highlights of Key Budget Drives

Revenues
We expect ad valorem tax revenue to remain relatively flat with less than a 2% projected increase. This increase is mainly attributed to a slightly improved collection rate as well as improved collection of personal property taxes with the NC Tax and Tag system. We also anticipate sales tax revenues to increase marginally, primarily due to the State's new sales tax distribution plan. The additional $700,000 we anticipate in sales tax revenue is restricted to use for schools, community colleges, and economic development.

Personnel
In an effort to minimize the erosion of the competitiveness of our salaries, a 1% cost of living increase for all county employees is included. Though this is less than the average inflation rate, our hope is that at least small, annual increases will prevent larger, one-time pay adjustments. The cost of this COLA is approximately $200,000 including benefits.

The overall cost of employee health insurance increased by 6.1%. The increased cost for employees is covered in this proposed budget. The increase for dependents will be passed along

for spouse & family coverage. We were facing a 15% increase if we had made no changes to the health plan. To cut that increase, we will raise the out-of-pocket costs to employees by increasing co-pays and deductibles, which brought a savings of over $400,000.

Being that we are self-insured, our premium costs are directly tied to the cost of claims. In order to manage the ever-increasing cost of our health insurance moving forward, we are planning to roll out new components to our employee wellness initiative. We will continue to provide health screenings for all individuals covered by our health insurance. Individuals who choose not to participate in the assessment will pay $50 per month towards the cost of their insurance, an increase from $30. In the FY 17-18 plan year, we propose adding a health coaching component, which will be required for all participants in the high risk categories, but available to all employees. We are proposing to continue to deposit $150 for each employee in a healthcare Flexible Spending Account (FSA) for this upcoming year. The following year, we plan to use that as an incentive to make improvements in key health benchmarks. In addition, this year we are offering the option of a Health Savings Account (HSA). This plan will give participants $750 contributed by the County into an account that may roll over and accumulate in exchange for higher deductibles and no co-pays.

Capital Outlay
This budget includes capital outlay expenditures in the amount of $1,137,850. The majority of the capital outlay request is for previously deferred facility maintenance and renovation needs and critical fleet replacement. No projects were proposed by outside agencies that would require capital investments from the County.

Solid Waste
In an effort to maintain Solid Waste as a self-sufficient, enterprise service, we are proposing to increase the tipping fee to cover rising costs associated with operating the landfill, including the increased cost for fees and transportation of municipal solid waste to the regional landfill. The proposed tipping fee is $49.50 for Municipal Solid Waste and $42.00 for Construction & Demolition, which is a $1 increase from the current year.

Water & Sewer
An independent study done by the NC Rural Water Association indicated that our water and sewer rates are too low considering the costs of operation and debt service. However, we do understand the financial strain a rate increase would pose on many of our customers. Therefore, we have worked hard to maintain lean, and efficient operations in our Water and Sewer department, and only pursued system renovation or expansion projects that can be heavily supplemented with grant funds.

We do expect an increase in water and sewer rates from our two suppliers, Tarboro and Rocky Mount, of at least 10%. However, we believe that our current rates can withstand this increase, and we can absorb the cost of operation & maintenance of the system. Therefore, no water and sewer rate changes are proposed in this budget. In the event that rate increases from our two suppliers are more than expected, there is a likelihood we will need to reconsider our rates before the adoption of this budget or after the fiscal year begins.

Outside Agencies
We did receive a number of requests from outside agencies for funding from the County. Most of these were from organizations we have funded in the past, and some of those based on ongoing agreements. My recommendation is to not fund any new outside agencies, and those we do fund to be at the same level as the current fiscal year, unless otherwise dictated by a standing agreement. There are some exceptions.

The recommended budget does include an additional appropriation of $547,088 to Edgecombe County Public Schools to raise their teacher supplements by two percentage points; from 5% to 7%. Also, I recommend increasing the appropriation to Edgecombe Community College by $56,000 to cover additional costs to operate the Biotech Training Facility. Finally, I have included the appropriation of $3,000 for the County to join the NC Highway 17 Association. I believe us joining the eight other counties and 15 other municipality members working towards the improvement of US 17 and US 64 from Raleigh to Norfolk will be conducive to economic development for our County.

Two of the County's fire districts have requested an increase in their fire tax, which is recommended in this budget. South Edgecombe Fire Department has requested a 3 cents increase, from 5.5 to 8.5, and Pintain Fire Department has requested a 1.3/4 cent, from 7 to

8.3/4. Both fire departments are requesting these changes to improve fire protection for their districts, which will in turn improve the fire rating for those within their districts.

Conclusion
In preparing this budget, I feel that we have met our goals by holding expenditures flat and making cuts where possible; budgeting for necessary capital improvements; providing a cost of living increase for employees; and avoiding a tax increase. Though we are appropriating a significant amount from fund balance, that appropriation is necessary to achieve the above mentioned goals. We will continue to monitor the budget closely throughout the year, save where we can and spend only when necessary. I believe this budget, along with the recommended financial policies, will lead us to a more secure fund balance level, and improved financial standing for our organization. I believe it also prepares us for the likelihood that property values will drop pending the completion of our revaluation process.

Therefore, I respectfully submit this proposed budget for Fiscal Year 16-17, for public comment.

Mr. Wiggins called for public comment.

Rev. Roosevelt Higgs, Speed, NC, came forth stating that he presented information to the Board of Commissioners in April which ranked Edgecombe County Public Schools 99th in the State. He requested that the Board do a study and offer it to the school system and see if they will be willing to consider some additional funding so that they can extend the school day and maybe look at year-round school. Rev. Higgs stated that it makes no sense to keep spending money and keep coming up with 99% and not feel condemned about it. He stated that data shows that it has been this way for the past five to six years and it is time for someone to take a serious look at what is going on and put the necessary resources there to improve the education in Edgecombe County.

Mr. John Farrelly, ECPS Superintendent, 1403 E. Canal Street, Tarboro, NC, thanked the Board of Commissioners for the partnership they have with the Board of Education. He stated that he was very proud of the work the Commissioners have done regarding the de-merger issue and the challenges before the Board. He stated that at the last meeting with Mr. Boswell, Mr. Felton, Mr. Wiggins and Mr. Evans he could have not been more proud to be a citizen of Edgecombe County as to how the Board represented the children and the community in doing the right thing. He told the Board that he would appreciate any consideration regarding the teacher's supplement and any percentage gain, which is about competition.

Senator Ericka Smith-Ingram commended the Board on getting the budget done. She thanked the Board and Mr. Evans for all the hard work as they worked on the Nash Rocky Mount Schools and Edgecombe County Schools issue. Senator Smith-Ingram stated that she spoke with Representative Shelly Willingham, who is working with Representative Collins. She stated they do anticipate that the Bill will go forward and mirror what the Commissioners worked hard and compromised on. She stated that is the status in which it will move forward, but when it comes to the Senate, it will either be an up or down vote. She stated that she and Senator Angela Bryant want to make sure they represent what the Board wants, since they are the leadership on the local level.

There being no further comments the public hearing was adjourned.

Mr. Wiggins stated that comments will be taken into consideration and the Board will set a date at this meeting to adopt the budget.

5. <u>SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS</u>:

A. <u>Mrs. Susan Freeman, Director of Tarboro\Edgecombe Chamber of Commerce and the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) was present to give a TDA update.</u>

Mr. Rusty Holderness, Chairman of the Tourism Development Authority, came forward to provide the Board with a brief update on how and what they are doing. Mr. Holderness thanked the Board for creating the TDA. He stated that tourism is no more than economic development. He stated that they spent the first year of existence thinking and talking and trying to figure out how they wanted to go forward. During the first year the biggest obstacle was the mindset of hiring and housing a person without over spending their funds. Mr. Holderness stated that they

got together with the Tarboro Edgecombe County Chamber and created a Chamber Tourism Development Authority, which has been very effective. They are very concerned about spending money wisely. He stated that they are currently trying to get their web presence right to effectively market and increase traffic into the County.

Mrs. Susan Freeman, Director of the Chamber and TDA, stated that tourism is an economic tool. In 2015 $21 billion came through North Carolina through tourism spending and 50 million people across the United States came through North Carolina, with 30% looking for reunions. She stated that her office has put together approximately 800 packets within the last month for people looking for reunions. She stated that they have produced a Call to Action on-line piece on the website which can be downloaded and they have distributed to 7,000 packets into the State's visiting centers, and produced 5000 one piece handouts on what is going on in the County. Mrs. Freeman stated that they have partnered with the I-95 Visitors Center and in April and May, they had a display there about events across the County. The Chamber is open seven days a week now. She stating that they are adding all the events that occur in Edgecombe County to the Visit North Carolina website.

B. **Mr. Marc Finlayson, Executive Director of the Highway 17 Association, was present to discuss the Highway 17 project.**

Mr. Finlayson provided:

- **Highway 17 Association accomplishments to date.**
- **Construction progress.**
- **Project status report for US 17 and US 64 corridors.**
- **Mission and Vision statement.**
- **New logo.**
- **History of the organization:**
  - **Created originally in 1975 and formalized in 2006.**
  - **Chartered with a three year commitment to see if they could make any progress.**
  - **Overtime have had support from 12 of the 13 US-17 corridor counties, 15 municipalities.**
  - **Goal is to fully improve US 17 from South Carolina to Virginia and to fully fund every unfunded section of the highway that is listed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).**
  - **Since started in their formal way there has been about $1 billion in investment in the US 17 projects, of which $360 million plus is unfunded on the STIP so they were able to apply new money to the projects.**
  - **Eleven sections have been open to traffic and two major projects now under construction.**
  - **The heart of this effort is economic development. Infrastructure is needed to attract businesses and industries to our communities.**

C. **Rev. Roosevelt Higgs was present to talk about the NRMS system issue.**

Rev. Higgs stated that in 1992 he was occupied watching Edgecombe County and Tarboro City go through their merger. He stated that he did not understand how a county can sit back and allow its resources to go somewhere else. He stated that he saw in the newspaper that Rev. Gilliard was running for the House and his platform is the issue with the county line merger because it would take teachers out of the system, take federal dollars, and change the athletic ranking for Nash County. If that is a plus for Nash County, it would have to be a plus for Edgecombe County. Rev. Higgs stated that he did not understand why the current Superintendent can stand before the County Commissioners and not advocate for the kids in Edgecombe County, and how the Commissioners can advocate for one group of students in Edgecombe County over another group of students. He stated that he is speaking on behalf of the Edgecombe County Coalition for the Advancement of All Students and they feel strongly that if a child lives in the boundaries of Edgecombe County they should all be given the same opportunity to academic and athletic opportunities. He stated that he was very instrumental with the commissioners district concept, but the district concept was never designed for someone living in Rocky Mount to only be interested in Rocky Mount. The district concept for Edgecombe County Commissioners sole purpose was to keep any group or any individual from coming from the same territory. If you live in Rocky Mount you should be just as concerned about that kid living in Conetoe and Speed as you do those who live in Rocky Mount.

He stated that he admired Mr. Wiggins stating that he has done a lot for Edgecombe County and Rocky Mount, on which he has supported some of Mr. Wiggins' decisions. Rev. Higgs stated that he will not allow the decision on the merger to define the legacy, but felt that it was one of the "baddest" decisions that took place in 1992 and the County is suffering today because of that hoped that he would exert his leadership and try to correct this matter before leaving the Board.

6. PUBLIC PETITIONS.

Mr. Wiggins called for public petitions.

Mr. Carlton Atkins, Fishing Creek Road, expressed his concerns regarding a letter he received from SuddenLink regarding charging a $1 per month fee for mail in payments. He stated that there are a lot of people in the County, in particular elderly people, who do not have the internet or computers. He stated that the County authorizes the franchise for SuddenLink and wanted to know if something could be done about the fee.

After discussion and agreement from the Board, Mr. Wiggins asked Mr. Evans to write a letter and voice the Board's concern and opposition on the $1 fee.

Mr. George Suggs and Ms. Evelyn Boone, 242 Norfleet Drive, Tarboro, NC, rental of County owned property. Came forth regarding issues that have come up about their horses being on the property. Ms. Boone called and asked about renting County owned property for ten years because she was going to purchase a house near the property and she asked if they could have horses on the property and she was told yes. She stated that she was not going to buy the house if horses were not allowed on the property. She stated that after she purchased the property she was told that horses could not be on the land because of some rule back in 1970 that was overlooked.

Mr. Evans stated that this property was acquired by the County through the buyout program associated with Hurricane Floyd. There are restricted covenants that come along with buyout programs. He stated that having horses, as long as the fence does not impede the flow of water, is allowable. Mr. Evans stated that about a week ago it was brought to our attention that this particular subdivision has restricted covenants that prohibit livestock to be kept in that subdivision and that is why they were notified. He stated to Mr. Suggs not to do anything now, because staff is going to do more research and see if there is any way around that.

Mr. Wiggins stated that staff will do everything they can to try and resolve the problem.

Rev. Roosevelt Higgs, Speed, NC, came forward stating that when the County bought the land they had a choice on whether to rent it or let it grow back up to its natural habitation. He stated that he received a call from the Mayor of Speed telling him of a different situation where someone wanted to lease property for horses and the lot had already grown up with large timber on it and that persons plan was to bulldoze the property. He stated that Mr. Suggs' situation is different. The lot he leases has never grown up and is located next to his house. He stated that there is a difference for someone to have a lot with horses next to their home than a horse club having horses in the area and they do not live there.

Mr. Curmilus Dancy, 127 Midway Lane, Tarboro, NC, commended the Board for how they voted down the recommendation from Nash County Commissioners, but was disappointed, because he felt the Board should have done anything because it was a bunch of bullying going on and Nash did not want Rocky Mount at the table. He stated that he knew the history and Nash County wanted to shut down Rocky Mount City Council. He stated that back in 1992 the schools in Rocky Mount were solely built by the citizens of Rocky Mount and citizens of Nash and Edgecombe. He stated that Edgecombe should not have done anything and let them do what they wanted to do because the school systems were working just fine and will continue working fine. Mr. Dancy stated that he did not understand why anybody in Edgecombe County would agree with Nash County.

Mr. Felton stated that he felt Mr. Dancy was talking directly to him. He stated that he, along with Mr. Wiggins and Mr. Boswell worked hard to get the situation where it is now. He stated that he felt that the Board had seven points of contention and the only two that did not involve money were the two he felt like the Board could live with.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Approval of budget amendments.
Mrs. Harris moved to approve the budget amendments as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

B. Approval of authorizing the Fire Marshall's Office to issue the necessary permits to the Town of Tarboro and Town of Macclesfield to have fireworks displays in town on July 4, 2016 at 9:00 p.m. for the Town of Tarboro and July 3, 2016 at 9:00 p.m. for the Town of Macclesfield.
Mrs. Powell moved to authorize the issuance of fireworks display permits as presented. Mr. Felton seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

C. Approval of First Baptist Church Day Proclamation.
Mr. Boswell moved to adopt First Baptist Church Day Proclamation and to proclaim September 18, 2016 as First Baptist Church Day in Edgecombe County in celebration of its 150th anniversary. Mr. Felton seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

D. Approval of Contract Amendment #2 for New Hope Infrastructure Project.
Mr. Evans presented for the Board's consideration contract amendment 32 with Stanford Contractors, Inc. for the construction of the sewer collection system in the New Hope Church Road and Dunbar Road area. The changes are the result of deletions and additions to components of the prescribed work. This change order will result in a net increase of $35,825.05, changing the total contract price to $2,121,543.44 also proposed in this change order is the addition of 300 days to the time for substantial completion and final payment. This is due to adverse weather conditions, and unexpectedly high ground water levels which significantly slowed down construction.

Mrs. Powell move to approve contract amendment #2 as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

E. Approval of Grant Agreement for Emergency Services.
Mr. Evans stated that Edgecombe County has been awarded $192,000 by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, Emergency Management Division for the installation of a standby generator to provide alternative power to the Edgecombe County Emergency Operations Center. This grant is comprised of both federal (75%) and non-federal (25%) matching funds, which is provided by the State. The planned use of this grant is to purchase and install the standby generator at the County Administration Building and to relocate the Emergency Operations Center from the Sheriff's office to the Administration Building. This will allow for better continuity of operations for the Emergency Services department and the County administrative staff and will also eliminate the need to tie up critical space at the Sheriff's Office during an emergency.

Mrs. Boswell moved to accept the grant award by adopting the project ordinance and budget amendment, and authorize the County Manager to execute the grant agreement. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

8. APPOINTMENTS.
A. Edgecombe Community College Board of Trustees.
Mr. Felton moved to appoint Mr. Carl Warren. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

B. Sharpsburg Planning Board.
Mr. Boswell moved to re-appoint Mr. Phillip Joyner. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

9. CONTRACTS FOR REVIEW AND/OR APPROVAL.
Mr. Felton moved to approve the contracts as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

10. AFTERLISTS AND RELEASES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.
Mrs. Harris moved to approve the afterlists and releases as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

11. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS FOR REVIEW. ***Received***

A. Water Services.
B. Veterans Service.
C. PreTrial Release Program.
D. Financial Summary Report.
E. Maintenance.

12. MANAGER'S REPORT. ***Received***
A. Economic/Workforce Indicators.
B. Overhead Fee for Tag and Tax System.
C. MOVE Rocky Mount project.
D. NCACC Membership Benefits 2016-2017.

13. COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.
Mrs. Powell moved to designate Mrs. Harris as the voting delegate for the July 22-25, 2016 NACo Annual Conference. Mr. Felton seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

14. ATTORNEY'S REPORT.

15. CLOSED SESSION.
A. Mr. Wooten moved to go into closed session to discuss economic development. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Wooten moved to go out of closed session and resume the regular meeting. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

16. MR. BOSWELL MOVED TO RECESS THE MEETING UNTIL JUNE 20, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M. IN ORDER TO ADOPT THE FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017 EDGECOMBE COUNTY BUDGET. MR. WOOTEN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

Adopted July 5, 2016.

Frangie Mungo

Frangie Mungo, Clerk to the Board