

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**OF EDGECOMBE COUNTY**  
**JUNE 5, 2017 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, Mr. William Wooten, Mrs. Viola Harris and Mrs. Evelyn Powell.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Rev. E. Wayne Hines.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mr. Eric Evans, County Manager, Mr. Michael Peters, County Attorney and Ms. Frankie Mungo, Clerk to the Board.

**2. PRAYER.**

Mrs. Harris provided the prayer.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL.**

Mr. Felton moved to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2017 (Retreat), April 24, 2017 (Joint meeting with the ECPS Board of Education), May 1, 2017 (Regular Meeting), May 18, 2017 (Budget Meeting), May 24, 2017 (Ethics Training). Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

**4. PUBLIC HEARING:**

Mr. Wiggins called a public hearing to order to receive citizen comments or questions relative to the proposed Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Edgecombe County Budget.

Mr. Peters read the public notice.

**Mr. Evans read the following budget message:**

*“Submitted herein is the Edgecombe County recommended Budget for Fiscal Year (FY)2017-2018. The Budget is balanced in its entirety, as required by the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act. This revised budget message reflects the minor changes made as a result of your discussion at the Budget Work Session held on May 18, 2017.*

*As was discussed at the meeting, we approached the preparation of this budget with the following goals in mind: overcoming the revenue deficit created by our recent property revaluation; reducing the budget for capital improvements from the current year’s appropriation of nearly \$1.2 million while still addressing our most pressing capital needs; providing a cost of living increase for employees if possible; reviewing every line item to find even the smallest opportunities to make cuts; and avoiding the need for a tax increase at all costs.*

*The County’s proposed General Fund budget for FY 17-18 totals \$59,315,097 which is a 1% decrease from current year’s original operating budget of \$59,634,211. The proposed ad valorem tax rate for the FY 17-18 is 95 cents per \$100 value, which is no change from the current year. One cent generates approximately \$310,000. The proposed budget includes a fund*

balance appropriation of \$2,562,775 from general fund. The current year's fund balance appropriation is \$4,795,645.

## KEY BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

### Revenues

The most significant factor driving projected revenues for next year has been the revaluation of real property. Our real property values decreased by just under 5%. That along with a \$10 million impact on values created by damages from Hurricane Matthew, we expect approximately \$850,000 to be lost in property tax revenues for next year. We have however seen our collection rate increase slightly, from 94.56% to 95.2%, thanks to the hard work from our Tax Administrator, Ms. Tarasa Lewis, and her staff. Also, sales tax redistribution funds (Article 44-524) designated for public schools, community colleges, and economic development, which just started this year, has turned out to be more than the \$700,000 we originally anticipated. It is currently on pace to total \$960,000 by year end and will be reoccurring.

### Personnel

A cost of living increase for all county employees is included in this proposed budget. Per your direction following discussion at the Budget Work Session, the COLA will be calculated at 1% for all employees at \$50,000 base salary and higher; and with those below \$50,000 being given a flat \$500 annual increase. The cost of this COLA is approximately \$250,000, including benefits.

The cost of employee health insurance will remain level as we will receive no premium increase. This was a welcome reprieve from the constant rise in costs over the last several years. With premiums remaining flat, we are able to avoid having to change the benefits plan or pass premium costs on to employees. We will also continue to offer 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.

Being that we are self-insured, our premiums are directly tied to the cost of our claims. In order to manage the ever-increasing cost of our health insurance moving forward, we will continue to provide health screenings for all individuals covered by our plan. Individuals who choose not to participate in the assessment will pay \$50 per month towards the cost of their insurance. We will also continue the health coaching component of our wellness program, which is required for all participants in the high and moderate risk categories, but available to all employees.

As planned, we will discontinue the deposit of \$150 for each employee in a healthcare Flexible Spending Account (FSA) this upcoming year. We will replace it with an incentive program where employees can receive \$250 if they meet or make improvements in key health benchmarks.

### Capital Outlay

This budget includes capital outlay expenditures in the amount of \$682,334; down from \$1,137,850 in the current year. In an effort to cut the budget, we are having to defer some much-needed, but non-critical, facility renovations and equipment replacement. With the proposed appropriation, we will be able to address those that are the most pressing and can no longer wait another budget year. No projects were proposed by outside agencies that would require additional 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 \$51.00 for Municipal Solid Waste and \$43.00 for Construction & Demolition, which is a \$1.50 increase from the current year.*

#### *Water & Sewer*

*After reevaluating the additional debt being taken on within our system, the ever-increasing costs of operations, and the need to plan for the long-term financial viability of our system, it is necessary that we raise our rates. To do that with a minimal increase to customers, I am proposing the increase to be on the availability fee only. I recommend the availability fee to increase by \$5 per service, going from \$25 to \$30.*

#### *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. The only outside agency I recommend which we are not currently funding is \$5,000 for Conetoe Family Life Center. For all the other outside agencies we currently fund, the proposed budget will fund them at the same level as the current fiscal year, unless otherwise dictated by a standing agreement. There are three exceptions.*

*We have appropriated in the current year's budget \$162,000 to Eastpointe, our Regional Managed Care Organization for behavioral health services. Eastpointe has announced its planned merger with Cardinal Innovations. The CEO of Cardinal informed me that they do not require contributions from its County members. Therefore, this is an ideal opportunity to redirect that money into other areas, and I propose to cut that from the budget.*

*The Carolinas Gateway Partnership is requesting its local government partners to contribute to a new incentive pool they call "Twin Counties First". This pool would be used to leverage state incentives and grants. This would be applied along with private incentive funds. The request is for \$100,000 from each of the two counties, \$25,000 each from Rocky Mount and Tarboro, and \$10,000 from Nashville. I recommend, and this budget includes, funding this initiative. If approved, we will appropriate and hold the funds until we hear of the decision of the other partners. Based on the additional Article 44-524 sales tax redistribution allocation we are receiving, as mentioned earlier, this cost can be covered by that revenue.*

*Article 44-524 restricts that sales tax revenue to economic development, public education, and community colleges. Of the \$960,000 we will receive, \$547,000 and \$56,000 is the additional appropriation to Edgecombe County Public Schools and Edgecombe Community College, respectively, in the current year's budget. I propose to keep that in FY 2018. From this revenue stream, I also plan to cover the \$250,000 debt service for the land we are about to purchase at Kingsboro, as well as the additional funding to the Carolinas Gateway Partnership.*

*In this budget, I also propose that we maintain the revised budget appropriation to Edgecombe County Rescue Squad at \$1,200,000.*

#### *Recreation*

*Many of you have expressed an interest in doing more with recreation within the County. Having a comprehensive, county-wide recreation program and the facilities to support it would be an expensive endeavor, and out of our financial reach at this time. However, small investments that are strategically applied to worthwhile recreational efforts could go a long way. Therefore, this budget includes \$10,000 to offer mini-grants of up to \$2,000 each, to community-based*

organizations that provide recreational facilities and/or activities. If approved, I will draft proposed guidelines and recommend a review committee structure for your approval.

#### Conclusion

*In preparing this budget, I feel that we have met our goals of overcoming the revenue deficit created by revaluation; reducing the budget for capital improvements from the current year's appropriation while still addressing our most pressing capital needs; providing a cost of living increase for employees; reviewing every line item to find even the smallest opportunities to make cuts, and avoiding the need for 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 with economic growth on our horizon, we will see our tax base grow, and we'll be in a better position to minimize the burden born by our tax payers. But until then, we'll continue to tighten our belt, as this budget shows, and roll up our sleeves and provide the best service we can to the citizens of Edgecombe County.*

*I respectfully submit this proposed budget for Fiscal Year 17-18. I recommend that once you close out the public hearing for the budget that you approve as presented and adopt the enclosed budget ordinance."*

**Mr. Wiggins called for public comment. There being none the public hearing was adjourned.**

**Mr. Wooten moved to approve the fiscal year 2017-2018 budget ordinance as presented. Mr. Felton seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.**

#### **5. SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS:**

**A. Karen Lachapelle, Health Director, was present to introduce Interns from the Robertson Scholar Program.**

**Mrs. Lachapelle introduced Dr. Billy Leland who came forth to give a brief history of the Robertson Scholar Program. He stated that they started by asking several people in the area if they would be willing to serve as a mentor for an internship program as well as willing to put together a proposal for a job description for students that will come to the County for the summer and make improvements for the citizens of the County. He stated that the students receive a Scholarship to attend Duke or UNC and one stipulation in the scholarship is that the student participates in community projects. Dr. Leland introduced Ralph Lawton, the intern who will be working at the Health Department to help build community awareness on the opioid epidemic through community engagement and community presentations. Dr. Leland invited the Board to participate by sharing information regarding the projects he shared with them and to include the interns by inviting them to events that might be of interest relative to the projects.**

**B. Recognition of assistance provided by North Carolina Forest Service following Hurricane Matthew.**

**Mr. Evans stated that during Hurricane Matthew recovery one of the first outside agencies to show up at the Emergency Operations Center were gentlemen from the Forest Service who asked what could they do to help. Mr. Evans stated that they began to volunteer doing a number of things to help, in particular their manning of the donation center. He introduced Mr. George Evans and Mr. Seth Bogus, who came forth to accept a plaque of appreciation from the Board of Commissioners.**

Mr. Felton read the plaque and made the presentation on behalf of the Board.

**C. Viola Barnes-Gray, Downeast Partnership for Children, presented the Twin Counties Health Assessment.**

Mrs. Barnes-Gray invited the Board to the Twin Counties Health Summit being held on June 26<sup>th</sup> at the Booker T. Theater. She stated that there will be two events on that day, a leaders luncheon at 2 p.m. to 2:30 when the Partnership will share information from health surveys that were taken in the Twin Counties and in the evening there will be a session which is open to community members from 6 – 8 p.m. She stated that she came before the Board on behalf of the Twin Counties Partnership for Healthier Communities to share a brief background to and to highlight the efforts of the Partnership and invite the Board's input as they move forward. The Twin Counties Partnership for Healthier Communities is a network of over 60 health and service agencies dedicated to supporting health, wellness and unity in the Twin Counties. The Partnership was formed in 2015 and has three established work groups: Physical and Behavioral Health, Active Living, and Collaboration, Communication and Community Outreach. In March of 2017 they conducted a door to door community health survey in Edgecombe and Nash Counties and asked residents to share their opinion on what they felt most influenced the quality of life in their community and what type of health improvement programs they considered really important. Mrs. Barnes-Gray stated that they also asked questions relative to their nutrition, their physical activity and access to health care. The survey was the first step to gather input from the residents across the counties to inform the further work of the Partnership. The next step is to engage with leaders and residents from the communities to share what the Partnership learned from the survey and other recent surveys that have been conducted. Their plan is to discuss how they can continue to move forward together and to address the needs identified as a result of these surveys.

**D. Sheriff Cleo Atkinson will give an update on his first ninety days as Sheriff.**

Sheriff Atkinson presented a list of activities which included, but not limited to the following:

- Personnel: appointments, promotions, training.
- Addressing of inmates.
- Meetings held and meetings he attended.
- Surplus vehicles.
- Sheriff Department's grounds and parking lot.
- Evidence.
- Implemented Command Staff.
- Received seven patrol vehicles.
- Numerous speaking engagements.
- Animal Control and new equipment.
- Walking after 5 in neighborhoods implemented.
- Pods in the Detention Center.
- Presentations to local high school graduates.
- Meeting with local colleges regarding training and personnel development.

**6. PUBLIC PETITIONS.**

Mr. Jim Wrenn, Phoenix Historical Society, 704 NC 97 East, Tarboro came forth and

invited the Commissioners the following events sponsored by the Phoenix Historical Society:

- Saturday, June 10, 2017 at the Dunbar Community Center to dedicate a NC Historical Marker relative to State –vs- Will, a famous 1834 North Carolina Supreme Court Landmark Decision which gave protection to slaves who killed in self-defense. The marker will be located at the corner of Dunbar Road and US 64.
- October 7, 2017, the Phoenix Historical Society in conjunction with the Rocky Mount Edgecombe CDC will observe jazz artist, Thelonious Monk’s 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday,

**7. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**A. Approval of budget amendments.**

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the budget amendments as presented. Mr. Felton seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

**B. 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, 2017 at 9:00 p.m. for the Town of Tarboro and July 3, 2017 at 9:00 p.m. for the Town of Macclesfield.**

Mr. Felton moved to authorize the Fire Marshall’s Office to issue the necessary permits for the fireworks displays as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

**C. Approval of an amendment to the fiscal year 2016 audit contract with Carr Riggs & Ingram, LLC and approval of the audit contract for fiscal year ending June 30, 2017.**

Mr. Evans stated that the County currently has Carr, Riggs & Ingram under contract to audit our accounts. Due to delays that are reasonable, the audit was not completed within the time frame expressed in the Contract. Therefore, an amendment is needed to extend the contracted time for completion to March 15, 2017. Mr. Evans stated that also included is a contract with the same firm for the audit of fiscal year 2017.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the amendment to the audit contract as presented, Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Wooten moved to approve the audit contract for fiscal year ending June 30, 2017 as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

**D. Approval of Essential Single Family Rehabilitation-Disaster Recovery Procurement Policy.**

Mr. Evans stated that Edgecombe County has been selected to receive \$150,000 under the Essential Single Family Rehab-Disaster Recovery Loan Pool program from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency. With these funds, we will be able to assist homeowners affected by Hurricane Matthew with repair needs. Once the \$150,000 reserved for Edgecombe County has been used, we can reserve additional funds as long as they are available in their state-wide pool, which has \$15 million appropriated. The program requires a stand-alone procurement policy that is based on the requirement set forth by NC Housing Finance Agency.

Mr. Felton moved to approve the procurement policy as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

**E. Approval of adopting the County Management Records Retention and Disposition**

**Schedule.**

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the Records and Retention and Disposition Schedule as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

**8. APPOINTMENTS.**

**A. Carolinas Gateway Partnership Board of Directors.**

Mr. Felton called for a motion.

Mr. Boswell moved to appoint Mr. Leonard Wiggins. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

**9. PLANNING BOARD REPORT.**

Ms. Cynthia Jenkins, Planning Director, presented the report.

**A. Action Items:**

1. Carpenter's Country Corner – Proposed Seven Lot Subdivision.
2. Chair and Vice-Chair elected.

**B. Other Business.**

**C. Draft Minutes.**

**D. Next meeting scheduled for June 19, 2017.**

**10. CONTRACTS FOR REVIEW AND/OR APPROVAL.**

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the contracts as presented. Mr. Felton seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

**11. AFTERLISTS AND RELEASES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.**

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the afterlists and releases as presented. Mr. Felton seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

**12. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS FOR REVIEW.\*\*\*Received\*\*\***

**A. Water Services.**

**B. Financial Summary Report.**

**13. MANAGER'S REPORT.\*\*\*Received\*\*\***

**A. Economic/Workforce Indicators.**

**B. S&P Global Ratings letter.**

**C. Edgecombe County ABC Board budget message.**

**D. Announcement of Health Foods Grants.**

**E. US 64/Hwy 17 Association update.**

**F. Announcement of closure of Tarboro Armory.**

**G. Letter re: Bridge construction on NC 42 over the Tar River.**

**H. Letter of congratulations from Representative Shelly Willingham.**

Mr. Evans mentioned to the Board about an invitation to a breakfast meeting with Vidant Edgecombe Hospital staff on June 28 at 9:00 a.m.

**14. COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.**

**A. NCACC 2017 Annual Stewardship Report.**

**15. ATTORNEY'S REPORT.**

16. **CLOSED SESSION.**

Mr. Wooten moved to go into closed session to discuss economic development and a personnel matter. Mr. Boswell 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.

17. **MRS. POWELL MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING UNTIL MONDAY, JULY 3, 2017. MR. FELTON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.**