

PERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

JUNE 4, 2019
OTHERS PRESENT

David B. Newell, Sr.
Gordon Powell
Jimmy B. Clayton
Kyle W. Puryear
B. Ray Jeffers

Heidi York, County Manager
Brenda B. Reaves, Clerk to the Board

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Person, North Carolina, met in recessed session on Tuesday, June 4, 2019 at 10:00am in the Commissioners' meeting room in the Person County Office Building.

Chairman Newell called the recessed meeting to order. Chairman Newell stated there might not be a need to increase the property tax rate if the Board could prioritize items in the budget.

Commissioner Puryear stated his priorities were to maintain the current property tax rate at \$.70, to review revenues noting possible new revenues in the future, consider the state mandated services with a goal to offer his best proposal to offset the proposed tax increase.

The Board reviewed line items in the FY2019-2020 Recommended Budget to which staff answered questions. County Manager, Heidi York, Finance Director, Amy Wehrenberg, Assistant Finance Director and Budget Manager, Laura Jensen along with Assistant County Manager, Sybil Tate noted the recommended budget was a conservative proposal, which help to grow Fund Balance with many figures being floating figures.

Following a discussion related to the state reimbursement for inmates, the Board asked that the Sheriff be available at the next budget work session.

Commissioner Puryear asked for a breakdown for the Economic Development budget where contracted services increased to fund Target Industry Feasibility Study, Speculative Building Feasibility Study, website updates, and consulting services.

The Board also desired a breakdown of the Cooperative Extension contracted services to fund a full time Extension Director and state mandated salary increases.

The Board discussed the Health Department Budget with its Director, Janet Clayton. Ms. Clayton, Ms. Wehrenberg provided clarification to the Health Department's fiscal resources using its Balance Sheet data pulled from Munis and explained how the Health Department Fund Balance and General Fund support worked. Ms. Wehrenberg stated the Fund Balance and the year-end 2018 plus revenues minus expenditures provides a snapshot of its fiscal worth for that point in time.

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The same concept holds true for the Department of Social Services' Fund Balance and General Fund support.

Chairman Newell noted the following three priorities: 1) increase working capital in the Economic Development budget by \$250,000 primarily to complete the mega site so that they could market it, 2) designate \$1M in a fund for water/sewer/broadband noting to connect to Virginia's broadband system would benefit a prospect's request for redundant services, and 3) set aside funds for school system retrofits.

Commissioner Powell stated schools have not historically been funded as a top priority; his top priorities are education and economic development.

Commissioner Clayton cited his priority was to establish a water/sewer fund noting a water line to circle the landfill would cost \$14.4M. He noted there is a need for a water/sewer/environment fund to provide solutions for landfill clean up. He noted he was good with the manager's recommended budget for the schools' budget, compression study for employees but felt like full time positions were needed for a Cooperative Extension Director, an Environmental Health Inspector, and a Building Inspector.

Commissioner Puryear asked Ms. York to provide information related to the vehicles request in the budget, i.e. mileage.

Commissioner Puryear asked the costs associated with the cell phone change to which she said the current cell phone program costs \$121,686 and the new program will cost \$144,276, a \$22,590 increase.

Vice Chairman Jeffers addressed the volunteer fire departments (VFDs) recommending to cut \$30,000 in the appropriation to the Woodsdale Volunteer Fire Department, but to keep that funding in the fire tax fund. The Board discussed attaching conditions to the VFD funding for lower ISO ratings. Vice Chairman Jeffers noted the VFDs are now working together better and offer countywide ISO trainings. His recommendation for an individual to lead the group to achieve lower ISO ratings would be City Employee, Fire Chief Wayne Wrenn, who serves as the President of the Fire Chief's Association.

Vice Chairman Jeffers said after listening to the other commissioners' priorities, he said the Board provided direction to the Manager following the retreat and that she delivered a budget reflecting such. He suggested the following:

- Increase Economic Development \$250,000,
- Establish a water/sewer fund using \$500,000 from Fund Balance,
- Include the study for the YMCA at \$25,000,
- Cut Woodsdale appropriation by \$30,000,
- Fund the Compression Study for one-half implementation for \$363,471,
- Establish a School Investment Fund for \$500,000 (later determined to hold for the debt consultants strategy)

Vice Chairman Jeffers' funding to achieve the above noted items was to increase taxes one additional cent over the proposed increase (\$.70 to \$.73).

Chairman Newell and Commissioner Puryear stated preference to keep the tax rate flat and desired the opportunity to offer a proposal for cuts within the budget at the Board's next budget work session.

Chairman Newell stated the following were being subsidized by the County's General Fund:

Health Dept.	\$1.3M
Parks & Recreation	\$900K (could correct with adjustment to fee schedule)
Person Industries	\$334,000, and up to \$600,000 with utilities, etc.
Library	\$400,000
Senior Center	\$88,000

Commissioner Puryear suggested for the Board to schedule its next budget work session for June 11, 2019 at 9:00am.

It was the consensus of the Board to recess the meeting at 11:55am until June 11, 2019 at 9:00am for its next budget work session.

Brenda B. Reaves
Clerk to the Board

David B. Newell, Sr.
Chairman

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