

March 5, 2024

County of Greene, Virginia

THE GREENE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MET ON TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024, BEGINNING AT 4:30 P.M. IN PERSON IN THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING MEETING ROOM AND BY ZOOM VIDEO COMMUNICATION

Present were: Marie Durrer, Chair
Davis Lamb, Vice Chair
Steve Catalano, Member
Tim Goolsby, Member
Francis McGuigan, Member

Staff present: Cathy Schafrik, County Administrator
Kim Morris, Deputy Clerk
Jim Frydl, Director of Planning and Zoning
Melissa Meador, Director of Emergency Services
Terry Beigie, Grant Writer
Dan Chipman, Finance Director

RE: BUDGET PRESENTATION – COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Schafrik presented her budget to the Board of Supervisors. She explained that she balanced the budget on a 4.24% increase. This includes a 3% increase in employee compensation made up of 1% progression through the range and 2% COLA. She said that the school budget also allows for a 3% increase. There were thirty-one positions requested and none of those are included in this balanced budget until the Board shares their priorities. She said that she also has not made a change to the tax rates. The contingency fund was lowered from the amount that was funded last year. Ms. Schafrik discussed the CIP and asked the Board to prioritize what they wanted to fund in the upcoming year so that she could work those projects into the budget. She said that she brought in some experts to help with the revenue projections and to create a budget and a citizen guide. She said that we do not have official revenue numbers at this point and will not for several more weeks. She explained the drop in personal property tax revenues due to the value of used cars decreasing now that Covid is over and people not buying brand new cars because of the high interest rates. Ms. Schafrik said that the value of a penny on the real estate tax is just short of \$300,000. She said that the small increase that we are seeing in real estate tax is from new construction as next year will be a reassessment year. The pay increase for staff has a value of \$321,000. The school increase would be \$454,035. There was also a large increase for CSA and an increase for Jaunt. She shared her highest priority items for the Board to consider funding. Ms. Schafrik thanked staff and her experts that were brought in, Marsha Wilds and Bill Yake.

RE: BUDGET PRESENTATION – SCHOOL BOARD

Ms. Cherish Albert was present on behalf of the School Board. She said that their goal is to take care of the children and the educators. She shared that the ESSR funds that came in to the schools as part of the pandemic relief program are now running out and said that they had to come up with a way to address that. She said that they have tried to keep in tune with technology and teaching methodology as they are ever changing as are the different needs that students have. Ms. Albert said that there are mandated programs from the state and some funding is given to us for those. She shared that several programs are getting new standards which used to be staggered, but are coming all at once this year, which means there is a need for new textbooks. She said that there was also a health insurance increase of 9.5% and an additional position for an English language teacher due to the number of English learners we have in our county. She said that they appreciated the support from the Board and introduced Dr. Whitmarsh to share the details of their budget.

Dr. Whitmarsh shared her presentation with the Board. She showed the demographics for enrollment numbers, the economically disadvantaged, the English learners, students with disabilities and the graduation statistics. She shared that they are still struggling with recruitment and retention of teachers. Dr. Whitmarsh said that the All In Virginia is requiring extra resources for tutoring to address learning loss, implementing the Virginia Literacy Act, and addressing the increases in chronic absenteeism. She said that the Standards of Learning are changing and with those changes are the challenges of implementation and meeting the changing rigor of the curriculum and the impact on staff and students. Assessments and testing are also being evaluated to change to meet the new standards of learning. Dr. Whitmarsh shared regional salary data and staffing statistics. She said that the VRS rate is increasing as is the LCI and social security. She said that the Governor's proposal has a 1% one-time bonus. The Senate's proposal is more favorable than Governor's proposal removes the funding for one-time bonus and adds in a 3% increase for each year of biennium and proposes removal of more of the support cap which provides more funding, as well as additional support for at risk, and more funding in lieu of grocery and hygiene taxes. The House proposal removes the funding for one-time bonuses and adds in a 3 3/8% increase for each year of biennium and proposes additional support for at risk students. Dr. Whitmarsh shared the revenue amounts from the state and federal governments and noted that all COVID related funding ends effective September 30, 2024. Dr. Whitmarsh discussed the VRS rate change and the healthcare renewal projection of 9.5% which is \$434,500. She shared the school's adopted budget and said that they are requesting \$454,035 in additional funding from the county.

The Board discussed the proposed school budget and thanked Ms. Albert and Dr. Whitmarsh for their presentations.

RE: BUDGET DISCUSSION WITH SHERIFF STEVE SMITH

Ms. Bunch began the presentation and said that there was a decrease in their original request of \$714,260 which funded the new positions. She said that a little over \$1 million of salaries are comp board funded. She said that there were also other decreases made after their meeting with the County Administrator.

Sheriff Smith shared statistics which showed increases for calls for service, civil paper services, court services, and the number of transports. He shared the need for increased officers for the courts and said that they would like to have an office deputy that would take care of calls that are walk-ins at the office. He said that they would like new Toughbook for their vehicles, new tasers and AED units for their vehicles. They also would like a drone with an infrared system. He said that the 911 center is requesting three new positions. Animal Control is requesting a new position.

The Board thanked Sheriff Smith for his presentation.

RE: BUDGET DISCUSSION WITH COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY EDWIN CONSOLVO

Mr. Consolvo said that his office is not requesting any new positions this year. He said that the salaries of the employees in his office are much lower than the starting salaries of those right out of law school. He said that his staff is working more with technology-based evidence such as body cams, dash cams and ring cameras which they usually review over the weekends. He said that the court has expanded the number of days that they are meeting which has created an impact on his office.

The Board thanked Mr. Consolvo.

RE: BUDGET DISCUSSION WITH TREASURER STEPHANIE DEAL

Ms. Deal said that she is requesting a new position due to the increased workload in her office due to the water and sewer billing. She said that they are also requesting an increase to be able to send out dual billing notices rather than just once per year. She also added that she feels that the requested position in the Finance Department is needed.

The Board thanked Ms. Deal.

RE: BUDGET DISCUSSION WITH CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT ASHBY LAMB-GOMEZ

Ms. Lamb-Gomez said that her office operates with a bare bones budget and said that she has not asked for an increase from last year's budget.

The Board thanked Ms. Lamb-Gomez.

RE: BUDGET DISCUSSION WITH COMMISSIONER OF REVENUE KIM TATE

Ms. Tate said that her office's budget request only increased because the vendor used to obtain the data needed to assess personal property raised their rate drastically. She said, other than that, her budget request did not increase from last year.

The Board thanked Ms. Tate.

RE: GENERAL BUDGET DISCUSSION

Ms. Schafrik said that she understands that there are critical needs and that the Board has to make some hard decisions. She said that the position in the Finance Department is especially critical. She asked the Board to give her direction as to which departments should come to the next budget workshop and whether or not they would like to fund any of the addendum requests. She also said that Ms. Kemp has found that the Board can raise the TOT without a referendum.

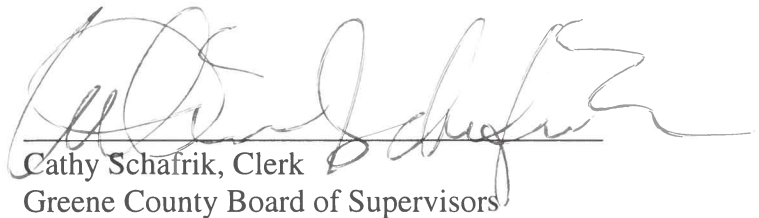
The Board discussed several factors related to the budget and whether or not they should increase some of the County's fees such as Solid Waste tipping fees, building inspection, and permitting fees. It was also mentioned that the fee structure for water and sewer should be looked at. The Board asked Ms. Schafrik to invite Economic Development & Tourism, EMS, Water & Sewer, and Social Services to the next workshop.

RE: ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned.



Marie Durrer, Chair
Greene County Board of Supervisors



Cathy Schafrik, Clerk
Greene County Board of Supervisors