March 2, 2021

County of Greene, Virginia

THE GREENE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MET FOR A BUDGET WORK SESSION ON TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2021, BEGINNING AT 4:30 P.M. BY ZOOM VIDEO COMMUNICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDINANCE ADOPTED ON MARCH 24, 2020 TO PERMIT PUBLIC BODIES OF GREENE COUNTY TO ASSEMBLE ELECTRONICALLY, TO MODIFY PUBLIC MEETING AND PUBLIC PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES, TO EFFECTUATE TEMPORARY CHANGES IN CERTAIN DEADLINES, AND TO ADDRESS CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC DISASTER

Present were:	Bill Martin, Chair Marie Durrer, Vice Chair Steve Bowman, Member Dale Herring, Member Davis Lamb, Member
Staff present:	Mark B. Taylor, County Administrator Patti Vogt, Deputy Clerk Tracy Morris, Director of Finance

RE: BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Taylor said he is not ready to make a formal recommendation as staff is still gathering information. As indicated by the recent reassessment, a penny on the real estate rate will equal $228,488. Our biggest challenge in forming a budget recommendation for FY 2022 has been the million-dollar hole created by the action of Rapidan Service Authority in eliminating the Greene County facility fee. That money is, and has been, used in accordance with agreements in place to fund debt service. That hole must be filled and is a significant challenge.

There is also a significant budget surprise from JAUNT that is inconsistent with expectations and is challenging the ability to plan. JAUNT has gone through some changes in the last months.

The School Division is requesting approximately $746,000 in new money. The School has asked that School Resource Officers be removed from their budget. Mr. Taylor said the simplest way to account for SRO's would be in the Sheriff's budget as resources that are dedicated to the school operations when the schools are open.

The request from the Sheriff includes four additional road deputies, a detective. Two 911 dispatchers, an increase of ACO position to part-time to full-time, and some additional part-time hours for Victim Witness.

The EMS Department has a significant request that includes an additional ambulance, three EMTs and three Medics. After taking with Ms. Meador and Mr. Anderegg the decision was made to request the addition of one Medic in an advance vehicle. While this is not an optimal solution, it is achievable in terms of dollars.

Health insurance premiums for county employees decreased by 4%. This will be divided with 1% going to the employee and 3% allocated to the county.

The National Association of Counties project direct federal aid to counties with an estimate of $3.8 million for Greene County. Parameters are not known at this time and counties may have to pre-qualify for aid prior to receiving funds.

Preliminary information has been received from the State Compensation Board about raises and staff is waiting on additional information.

Mrs. Morris said the first budget request received from JAUNT was for $595,597 but that figure has been revised to $380,399 after accounting for State funding. This amount includes funds for the JAUNT management and support staff, a 4% salary increase, and salary adjustments for Greene County drivers to be comparable to existing JAUNT salaries. Regular scheduled bus routes are not currently in place and JAUNT is providing "on demand" service similar to the service provided by Greene Transit. Staff is recommending funding in the amount of $190,199. Mr. Taylor said it was the County's desire to transition to a scheduled route to provide commuter service to and from Charlottesville. JAUNT will provide additional information at the next budget work session.

Mrs. Morris asked the Compensation Board for clarification on the 5% salary increase and if any additional positions would be allowed due to census data. Their response was no additional positions for any constitutional office at this time.

Mr. Herring asked if the County is requesting any additional positions this year. Mr. Taylor said requested positions include a grant writer and administrative assistant for fire companies.

Mr. Herring asked if a salary increase will be requested for employees in addition to Compensation Board supported local employees. Mr. Taylor said not at this time. Staff will form a recommendation to the Board.

RE: SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Todd Sansom, Vice Chair of the Greene County School Board, made opening remarks on the School Division's budget request for FY 2022. First, he thanked the Board of Supervisors for their service and noted the difficult task before the Board every year with hard decisions to be made. He considers himself to be a proud constitutional fiscal conservative. When elected, he fully expected to dig down into the school budget and find waste but did not find any. In fact, he found the opposite. He said School Administration does a masterful job at stretching resources and properly matching them to the real priorities, putting needs over wants.

The request this year is modest. The School Division received zero dollars in new local funding last year. The first priority this year is employee compensation. The State has put a 5% salary increase in their budget for SOQ funded positions. Greene is one of four school divisions that has been open for in-person learning since August. The same 5% salary increase is requested for janitors, teacher assistants, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers. These positions are not covered by the State increase. Hiring and retaining teachers is tough and getting tougher. The pool of talent is getting smaller. Greene remains very competitive in employee pay in the region and it is essential to remain so. The second priority is to assist employees with health care costs which are increasing by 3% this coming year.

Everyone knows COVID has upended education and we will be recovering for years to come. The School Board is on top of it. Funding for many of those needs are coming from the State and national level and funds will be repurposed as needed to fill gaps. The budget addresses pressing new needs, new staff, and resources brought about by this pandemic.

Dr. Whitmarsh said the School systems vision is empowering our community's children for life-long success with the mission to engage all students through learning that is innovative, personalized, and relevant.

Ongoing priorities include:

- Support the implementation of Innovate 2021
- Provide competitive compensation and benefits for all staff
- Focus on the support, recruitment, and retention of the most highly qualified educators, leaders, and support staff

Fall enrollment was 2,928 and enrollment has remained study even in the midst of a pandemic. COVID has had a profound impact on the schools and the school system is forever changed. There are many more challenges.

School Board budget priorities for 2021-2022 include:

- Educating the whole child
- Addressing learning loss
- Recruiting and retaining high quality staff

The School Division has offered, since September 8th, in person 5 days per week for pre-k – 5 and 2 to 3 days per week for Grades 6 – 12. Seven hours of daily instruction. Virtual learning was available to grades K– 5 and 6 – 12.

Changes include the reconfiguration of staffing from pre-pandemic to 2021 and beyond based on growing student needs. Positions needed to keep each student on their individual path to academic success include school psychologists, board certified behavior analysts, school counselors, instruction technology support, and enrollment-based support. Learning loss must be addressed. It is believed that it will take 3 to 5 years to close learning gaps. Positions such as intervention specialists, reading specialists, online learning, and student success coaches are needed.

Dr. Whitmarsh said the "iceberg problem" is identified learning loss and unidentified or not yet manifested factors that will continue to surface. The School has to be prepared for what surfaces over the next few years. It's not just the students who were struggling previously but those who did really well academically and socially and are struggling at this time. Staff must be prepared to adapt to student needs and be informed on things such as trauma, social/emotional skills, maximizing engagement, modifying curriculum, and rebuilding classroom communities.

The School Division received federal CRF funds. (Corona Virus Relief Funds) which have been fully utilized and reported. Other funds, such as ESSER, GEER, and Cares Act funds require an application be made and is a reimbursement model.

Dr. Whitmarsh said recruiting and retaining high quality staff is absolutely a priority. We are in the midst of a critical shortage in teaching. Teachers are leaving and fewer are entering the profession to replace them. There is a limited pool and jobs become increasingly difficult. The turnover rate last year was about 3% for teachers and a high turnover is not expected this year.

Revenues expected for FY 2022 from the State is $20,427,176. State ADM projection was 2,833.05. The School Division projection includes a revised count based on changes in returning students and potentially larger kindergarten enrollment. There is the potential for an additional $350,000 in state funding if the 5% raise is approved as opposed to the 2% bonus the Governor proposed in his budget. Federal revenue is anticipated to be flat.

Local funding was last increased in 2018-2019 to cover the first payment of the recent facilities project. The local composite index (LCI) stays flat at .3446 for the second year of the biennium. The VRS rate will stay flat. Health insurance renewal was an increase of 3% or $115,000. Greene is not competitive in relation to our employer contribution on family insurance plans. Funds in the amount of $54,000 were added to slightly increase the contribution for family plans. A 4% salary increase for employees is included in the proposed budget. This budget includes the shift all costs for School Resource Officers to the Sheriff's Office but the School wants to retain the amount of budget for SROs to address the health insurance increase.

Dr. Whitmarsh reviewed the projected revenue spreadsheet. The total requested from the County is $746,114 but that number will decrease significantly within the next few days. Anticipated new request could be reduced to $335,000.

Mr. Herring asked if the budget includes additional hours for summer school. Dr. Whitmarsh said a lot of those costs can utilize CARE Act Funds. Funds for a traditional summer school are included in the budget. Fuel costs are anticipated to remain flat.

Dr. Whitmarsh said they would like to keep funds for SRO costs in their budget. Don't want their budget decreased in order to meet increase in health insurance costs and any additional would be used for employee raises. Nothing has been shared regarding additional CARES Act Funds. Mr. Herring encouraged Dr. Whitmarsh and Mr. Taylor to discuss County CARES Act funds if any are received.

Mr. Martin asked when the transition to full-time in person learning may occur. Dr. Whitmarsh said that will happen as soon as possible. The School needs to keep the virtual option because many families, for a variety of reasons, do not feel comfortable sending their children to school.

RE: SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Smith said current staffing includes:

- 13.5 patrol deputies
- 3 School Resource Officers
- 3 full-time and 3 part-time court/civil process deputies
- 4.5 full-time and 2 part-time investigators
- 2 command staff (Sheriff and Major)

Sheriff Smith is requesting the following new positions:

- 5 full-time patrol deputies
- 2 full-time dispatchers
- Transfer of part-time ACO to full-time Animal Control Officer
- 10 additional hours for part-time Victim Witness

Greene's population in 2020 was 20,323 which is an increase of 9.5% since 2010. Sheriff Smith reviewed tourism increases, housing increases, and projected growth which could result in an increased population of approximately 8,100 residents. This number accounts for 4 persons per household and does not include the increased traffic flow expected on primary and secondary roadways. Growth results in increased calls to the Sheriff's Office for service. Sheriff Smith said hours away from work for deputies caused short staffing of approximately 303 days.

Major Swingler reviewed the fire, rescue, and animal control calls for service from 2016 thru 2020.

Sheriff Smith reviewed information for courts which were closed a lot and required a COVID modified response. Circuit Court is considering adding a 4th day to the weekly docket. Two new witness/suspect waiting areas installed behind Courthouse will require additional security. There was an increase in civil papers served. Resources are tied up for emergency custody orders (ECO) and temporary detention orders (TDO). An investigator is assigned to Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC); white collar/property crime, evidence, and street crimes. Critical incidents require the attention of all available investigators.

Sheriff Smith is requesting an increase in funding for the Victim Witness program. There was an increase of 55 victims served from FY 19 to FY 20. Need court and office coverage to maintain caseload and grant program requirements.

Mr. Herring said the change to School Resource Officers will not increase staffing in the Sheriff's Department. The change in UVA ECO/TDO policy occurred this year. Mr. Herring also asked about COVID related calls and the addition of a 4th day for court. Sheriff Smith thought the additional court day was due to caseload.

Mr. Lamb asked if anyone is in training and Sheriff Smith said he has one in training and is in the process of filling two positions. Field training can take twelve weeks and the Academy lasts twenty weeks.

Mr. Bowman asked the Sheriff if he could work deputies during the busy shifts if one or two are approved. Sheriff Smith said he would put them where they are needed.

Mrs. Durrer asked if at least two deputies are required for court. Sheriff Smith said two or more are required for court and the new mobile units will require security also.

Mr. Lamb asked if the dispatch position is important. Sheriff said dispatchers are their lifeline and are very important. Dispatch positions are hard to fill and it can take a year to determine if a person will work out. ECC is an ever-evolving department.

RE: COMMONWEALTH ATTORNEY

Mrs. Morris said Mr. Consolvo would not be present.

RE: TREASURER

Mrs. Stephanie Deal, Treasurer, spoke briefly on her budget request which she said is pretty consistent with prior years. Her office is open for business. Funds that she was not able to use last year will be used this year. Collection numbers for real estate are above the prior year just slightly. Personal property is down not quite a percentage point. She has decided to wait until next week before starting collection action to give people more time.

RE: CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

Mrs. Birckhead was not present.

RE: COMMISSIONER OF REVENUE

Mr. Snow was not present.

RE: GENERAL BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Martin said it looks like another tough budget year. Detail has not been received from some departments and the school division. The proposed increase in the budget for the Central Virginia Regional Jail is $59,036.

Mrs. Durrer questioned why funds for unemployment compensation were removed from the Sheriff's budget. Mr. Taylor said one unemployment line item will be used for all departments.

The next budget work session is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 4:30 pm. An additional meeting, if needed, will be on Thursday, March 11 at 4:30 pm.

RE: ADJOURN

Upon motion by Davis Lamb, second by Marie Durrer and unanimous roll call vote, the Board meeting was adjourned.

William Bryan Martin

William Bryan Martin, Chair
Greene County Board of Supervisors

Mark B. Taylor

Mark B. Taylor, Clerk
Greene County Board of Supervisors