

March 1, 2022

County of Greene, Virginia

THE GREENE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MET ON TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022, 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
Dale Herring, Vice Chair
Steve Bowman, Member
Abbey Heflin, Member
Davis Lamb, Member

Staff present: Mark B. Taylor, County Administrator
Kim Morris, Deputy Clerk
Jim Frydl, Director of Planning and Zoning
Tracy Morris, Director of Finance

RE: MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mr. Bowman requested a moment of silence in support of the people of Ukraine.

RE: SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Steve Smith was present to discuss his budget request with the Board. He said that he was willing to answer any question or concerns of the Board. Mr. Lamb asked if mileage reimbursement was for deputies attending school. Ms. Bunch said that line item is only used if there is not a spare vehicle available. Mr. Bowman asked if the Sheriff requested 6 new positions. Sheriff said that yes, he requested 6 additional deputy positions. Mr. Bowman asked if they were road deputies. Sheriff said that was what was requested, but an agreement had been reached to hire 3 this year and 3 next year. Ms. Durrer asked about the replacement of the body cameras. Sheriff said that the request was only to replace a portion of them because it's too expensive to do them all at one time. Mr. Bowman asked how many extra cameras they have and if they were assigned to an individual. Sheriff said that they are assigned to an individual. Mr. Herring asked if they were on a replacement cycle or on an as-needed basis. Sheriff said they are replaced as needed. Mr. Herring asked if they were still being reviewed by the Commonwealth's Attorney Office. Mr. Consolvo said that they are being reviewed, as well as the dash cams. The Sheriff said that the newer technology will not require the deputies to manually download the footage; it will be done automatically. Mr. Herring asked how many deputies are currently employed. The Sheriff said he believes they currently have 29. Mr. Herring asked how many vehicles they

currently have. Sheriff said that each of them have a vehicle and there are a couple of spares and a couple of specialized vehicles. He said that 5 of their vehicles are earmarked to turn in. Mr. Herring asked how long it takes to train a deputy. The Sheriff said that the academy is about 6 months and then they have to FTO for about 3 months, but they are hoping to hire people who are already certified. Mr. Lamb asked how many back-up vehicles the Sheriff would like to have. Sheriff said he would like to have 6, 3 marked, 2 unmarked and a K9 vehicle. Mr. Bowman asked the Sheriff if he has looked at his staffing at the E911 Center and asked what concerns he may have. Sheriff said that staffing in Dispatch is always a concern. He said that they are getting ready to hire Mr. Jones to do a pay study and evaluation of the Sheriff's Office. He believes that the study will show that more dispatchers are necessary. Mr. Bowman asked about the workload on dispatchers once NextGen is fully implemented and if the State has done any studies to show how this would change. Sheriff said no, not yet. Mr. Bowman shared a national effort that is ongoing to reevaluate the position of E911 dispatcher because, federally, they are still listed as secretarial and he feels that the County needs to look into this.

The Sheriff thanked the Board and Mr. Taylor and Ms. Morris.

RE: COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY OFFICE

Mr. Consolvo started by thanking Mr. Taylor and Ms. Morris for their assistance with his budget process. He said that the only difference between last year and this year is that he is requesting the grant funded, County supplemented position have the pay increased so that it is comparable to the other Comp Board funded position in his office that is doing the same job. Mr. Consolvo said that, due to a change in laws related to jury trials, they will now be having Circuit Court at least 3 days per week, if not more. This requires a substantial amount of time and effort on top of what they were already doing. Ms. Durrer agreed that this is a drastic change. Mr. Bowman asked what this change is doing to his assistants and the pressure on the physical court rooms, themselves. Mr. Consolvo said, that yes, partly due to Covid but also due to these changes, they have been having to use both courtrooms and there has also been extra pressure on the Sheriff's Office as they have to provide security. Mr. Bowman asked if he felt that that issue would become more intense as time goes. Mr. Consolvo said, yes, absolutely. Mr. Bowman said that we need to capture the concept that things are changing and remember this for the future. Mr. Lamb asked how many Deputies would be needed for court. The Sheriff said a minimum of 5 per court day.

The Board thanked Mr. Consolvo.

RE: TREASURER'S OFFICE

Ms. Durrer shared that she received an email that Ms. Deal would not be available to meet today. The Board had no questions regarding her budget request.

RE: CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

Ms. Duckworth was not present. The Board had no questions or concerns with her budget.

RE: COMMISSIONER OF REVENUE

Mr. Snow was not present. Mr. Bowman said that he had hoped that he would be present so that the Board could ask him for help with some information gathering regarding tourism and businesses in our County. Mr. Herring said that we could invite him to a future meeting.

RE: SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Todd Sansom, Chair of the School Board, was present to speak about the school's budget request with the Board. He said that the schools had received no increase during his first year on the School Board and last year, they had received only a \$7,000 increase. He asked that this be the year that this changes. He said that they are facing dire staffing shortages. He shared that the employees that they have retained have done a great job dealing with all of the constantly changing Covid mitigation measures but it has been very hard on them. He said that they are desperately in need of quality educators and he hopes that the Board can help to bring them to Greene and keep them in Greene.

Dr. Whitmarsh said that Mr. Sansom summed up the dire straights that they are in concerning their workforce very well. She said that their proposal this year is all about the 3 R's: Restoring, Retaining and Reenergizing our school system. She shared the breakdown of the population of our students and their accomplishments. She shared staffing statistics. She shared the priorities of the School Board and also the budget development process. She shared other demographics such as enrollment numbers and the English learner population, which is steadily increasing. She also shared statistics regarding the economically disadvantaged. She said that the government is currently providing free breakfast and lunch for all students. She shared the numbers of students with disabilities. Mr. Bowman asked if these students required special instructional staff and special facilities. Dr. Whitmarsh said that these students do require Individual Education Plans with a wide range of needs. Mr. Lamb asked if they had autistic students. Dr. Whitmarsh said that they have many students with autism of a wide variety. She shared that this year has been very challenging with staff shortages, disciplinary issues, disrespect of parents, absences of students and absences of staff. Mr. Bowman said that he has seen, while attending School Board meetings, that staff is almost at their breaking point. Dr. Whitmarsh said that she cannot speak highly enough of the dedication of our staff and our leaders. But she said that we have pushed people really, really far and they are tired. She said that the bus staffing is also a challenge and they have to do double runs which makes kids late for school. She shared how Greene County stacks up to surrounding localities. She said that she is uneasy as she continuously sees surrounding localities giving school staff significant increases and bonuses. She shared funding streams from the State and Federal governments. Dr. Whitmarsh said that they are proposing a 7% raise. They also want to correct salary compression on all remaining scales. They want to enhance CTE by adding a manufacturing teacher, career connections teacher, creative media teacher and a welding teacher. They will also need to add a teacher assistant/bus driver. They will also need to add a director of student services to deal with discipline, truancy and school safety. They will need a public information specialist to manage communications to and from the school system. They will need 2 student success coaches and an administrative assistant and 4 alternative education positions which will all come from Federal funds. Dr. Whitmarsh shared the budget worksheet with the Board and said that the request in new funding from the County is \$565,745 which equates to 3.24%. Mr. Herring asked if the LCI was included in that 3.24%. She

said it is. Mr. Bowman asked if she is expecting an alternative state budget from Governor Youngkin. She said that they have not received additional information about it. Mr. Bowman said that he finds the state budgeting paradigm confusing. Mr. Bowman asked Dr. Whitmarsh if she felt that if we were paying more, we would really attract more teachers. Dr. Whitmarsh said that money isn't everything, but of course, it would help. She said that frankly, the profession needs to be elevated and teachers should be compensated as such. Ms. Heflin asked if there were people who didn't go to college to be a teacher, but they wanted to, are there certain requirements that need to be met. Dr. Whitmarsh said that there are flexibilities that are being given to provide provisional licenses. She said that this will be the avenue that they will follow. There are programs that will help people with certifications.

The Board thanked Dr. Whitmarsh for her presentation.

RE: BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Taylor shared that government and public-school functions are essential. He said that he can't thank Ms. Morris enough for her work on this budget. He also thanked Dr. Whitmarsh and Ms. Spencer for all of their assistance. He said that he is happy to say that the County is positioned to recommend the funding as request by the school division. He also said that we are proposing the \$0.82 tax rate. He said that he and Ms. Morris had also had a great working relationship with the Sheriff during this budget cycle and that they were able to come to an agreement to meet the needs of the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Taylor shared Greene County's budget best practices and our approach to balancing the FY2023 budget. He shared the need for the development of a dedicated fund to account for our future water and sewer enterprise. He said that there will be no money assigned to it at this time, but this is one of the conditions that must be met to satisfy VRA to help with the process of having our own water and sewer department. He said that we also need to establish a separate, dedicated capital projects fund for money that will be used to pay for future capital items. He said that the established "sweep" strategy to use the school construction reserved balance to cover debt service on the school renovation project will continue. Mr. Taylor said that it has not been forgotten that the Board granted a \$3,000 bonus to employees. It was a tremendous boost to morale and an unprecedented blessing for our staff. Inflation continues at a 40-year high. The gasoline prices are sky-rocketing. Mr. Taylor said that the State has included a 5% bonus for state employees, teachers and state-supported local employees. In order to be equitable, Mr. Taylor shared that there will be a 5% increase for staff in his proposed budget. He said that we are clearly in a rising compensation market and retention and recruitment are priority concerns as local government provides critical services. He said that the schools requested budget amount of \$18,038,266 is included in his proposed budget. The new positions included for public safety are as follows: part time position moved to full time position in Commonwealth's Attorney, 5 medics in EMS, 4 staff promotions to lieutenant position in EMS, part time moved to full time position in EMS, a Fire Battalion Chief, and 3 deputies. Mr. Lamb asked if the Battalion Chief would do fire inspections. Mr. Bowman said that would require a certification, but yes, that position could do that. The vehicles included for public safety are as follows: 5 Chevy Tahoe units for the Sheriff's Office and 1 ambulance for EMS. The vehicles will be financed, so those payments will not appear until the FY24 budget cycle. The ambulance

cost will come forward as an ARPA funds request if it can meet ARPA funding guidelines. Mr. Bowman and Mr. Herring said that discussions during the ESAB meetings showed that there was a significant increase in call volume due to Covid. Even if we did not fund the entire purchase price using ARPA funds, a large percentage could definitely be justified. Another issue with this purchase is the delay in delivery. Mr. Bowman said that delay could be up to 2 years. Mr. Herring asked if that would impact the usage of ARPA funds. Mr. Taylor said that the ARPA guidance does not give a clear answer to that question. Mr. Lamb asked if the County is getting economic recovery due to the increase in call volume. Mr. Taylor said that number is up and there is also discussion to make an adjustment to the fees for EMS service. He clarified that these are fees to the insurance companies and will not place additional burden to the citizens. The staffing needs being met in this proposed budget for general government include: 1 maintenance worker for Facilities Maintenance, 1 secretary, which will be shared between Facilities Maintenance and Vehicle Maintenance, 1 full time custodian and 2 part time custodians for Facilities Maintenance and a part time Visitor Center worker. Mr. Taylor shared that the increase for health insurance came in higher than expected at 15.6%. We had only prepared for an 8% increase. Mr. Herring said that it seems that when employees use the benefits you're paying for, you have to pay more for those benefits. Mr. Taylor said that this was driven by a couple of covid cases with long hospitalizations, so there is the hope for a downward adjustment. Mr. Bowman asked if we have looked at other providers. Ms. Morris explained that, if you leave in a year of an increase, you will have to pay that increase in order to leave. Mr. Taylor said that we could investigate that potential for the future. Ms. Morris said that The Local Choice is the most beneficial plan that we've encountered. Mr. Taylor again shared that there is a 5% pay increase budgeted which equates to \$375,700. He said that this, coupled with the insurance increase, is a major factor in our FY23 budget. He said that we will need to work together to find a settlement for this issue. He said that we can afford the 5% increase best if the employees pay for the increase in health insurance. He said that for some, the increase will be consumed by the health insurance increase, but they will have the rise in their base salary for retirement purposes. Included in the Capital Projects fund is payment 3 of 7 for the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), Courthouse repairs and Phase III of the Public Safety Radio System and the continuing debt service on the school renovation project. This year's budget cycle will put us on track to establish a \$1,250,000 capital projects fund that will be available in the FY24 budget. Mr. Taylor shared the budgeted revenues for FY23, a comparison of the proposed tax rates for surrounding localities and the budget schedule. He also shared the need for an update to the fee schedule and the pay scale for the Solid Waste facility. He said that those employees are among the lowest paid and, if their current compensation is not looked at, they could easily seek employment elsewhere for more money. Mr. Taylor would like to see the Solid Waste department set up as a separate enterprise fund, as water and sewer will be. Mr. Bowman asked how long the dollar per bag of trash fee has been in place. Mr. Taylor said that he would look into that fee. Mr. Bowman said that we should look into it as that fee has been in place for a long time. Mr. Lamb said that a lot of trash comes from outside of the County. Mr. Taylor said that is correct. He shared that we want our rates to be competitive as there is good value for our operation in processing a large volume of waste. Mr. Lamb said that they have started recycling some items again. Mr. Taylor said that he checks in with Mr. Morris regularly to revisit the recycling market. Mr. Bowman said that it is such a shame to have to start

putting glass and plastic back in the landfill. Mr. Herring said that the TJPDC is currently trying to find resources for recycling and that this is an ongoing regional effort. Ms. Heflin asked if there are any grants that could help. Mr. Taylor said that there are none that we know of. Mr. Taylor said that his budget proposal keeps that tax rates level. Mr. Herring said that this is the first time that he's seen a budget like this since he has been on the Board. He said that the recommendations presented tonight are all included in the proposed budget and we can do all of this with the tax rate remaining the same. Mr. Taylor said yes. Ms. Heflin asked if there was an account with reserve money for emergency situations that may come up. Mr. Taylor said yes, we do have a reserve fund. Mr. Herring said that there is a reserve policy in place, too.

Ms. Durrer thanked Mr. Taylor and Ms. Morris for all of their hard work on the budget.

RE: GENERAL BUDGET DISCUSSION

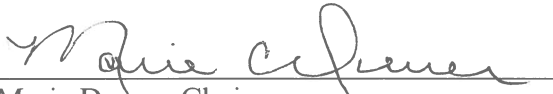
Mr. Herring asked when the last time was that the tax relief for the elderly and disabled was amended. Mr. Herring said that he understands that the last time it was changed was 10 years ago. Mr. Taylor said that he and Ms. Morris plan on looking into that. Mr. Herring said that he also thinks that the Board should look into the personal property issue where citizens are paying more for their personal property because the value of vehicles has increased. Ms. Morris said that she would see if the Commissioner of Revenue can provide additional information. She said that she understands that certain makes and models of vehicles have increased values whereas some do not. Mr. Lamb asked if they have started that reassessment process. Mr. Taylor said that we are looking into that process.

RE: ADJOURN

Upon motion by Steve Bowman, second by Dale Herring and unanimous roll call vote, the Board meeting was adjourned.

Recorded vote:	Marie Durrer	-	Yes
	Dale Herring	-	Yes
	Steve Bowman	-	Yes
	Abbey Heflin	-	Yes
	Davis Lamb	-	Yes

Motion carried.


Marie Durrer, Chair
Greene County Board of Supervisors


Mark B. Taylor, Clerk
Greene County Board of Supervisors