

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

May 23, 2021

6:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Willie Campbell, Aaron Frazier, Ross Garland, Julie Guinn, Travis Hill, Brad Johnson, and Robin McKamey

ABSENT: Austin Jaynes

CALL TO ORDER: Aaron Frazier

ROLL CALL: Quorum Present

Aaron Frazier outlined the meeting agenda. Director of Schools Dr. Tracey McAbee will speak first. The Committee will then consider the County portion of the 2022-23 Budget. Willie Campbell made a motion to approve the agenda and Travis Hill was second. All approved.

Dr. McAbee spoke first and stated that the School Board did not vote to adopt the Carter County school budget last week. He is present to answer questions about the budget. Brad Johnson noted that they had just received the budget so it would be hard to ask questions about it. Julie Guinn asked why the Board did not pass it? Dr. McAbee stated he did not know why they did not pass it. He informed the Committee that the budget proposed included a 1 ½% raise for the teachers and a 4% raise for the paraprofessionals. Also provided was a sheet that outlined a higher raise for the teachers and he asked if the Commission might fund the additional amount. It was clarified that school employees received a bonus in February, 2021 from ESSER funds.

Dr. McAbee then stated that the School Board had voted to initiate a request to the County Commission to fund \$9.5 million for the Hunter Elementary School project. He understands that this will first go to the Financial Management Committee for review. Travis Hill asked if any decision had been made to close schools because if an addition is made to Hunter Elementary there would be no way to support all these schools. Dr. McAbee agreed and reiterated that the budget could not support this. A discussion ensued about using the Capital Improvement Fund #177 for making a bond payment, which could be done. Dr. McAbee advised that this fund shouldn't be used in its entirety for that because the other buildings will need maintenance and perhaps emergency repairs. The need to remit 35 % of whatever is funded, to the City of Elizabethton Schools, was reviewed.

The Maintenance of Effort was considered and Dr. McAbee noted that the MOE as funded by the Commission was greatly appreciated. Brad Johnson asked for a specific breakdown of how the Hunter Elementary project is to be funded. Dr. McAbee outlined the \$9.8 million from ESSER 3.0, \$11 million from Fund Balance which together totals \$20.8 million. The bid total was \$29 million. A total of \$9.5 million is being requested to include some funding for furniture in the new classrooms and gym. Gary Bailey noted that some could come of the 177 Fund, over

the next two years to cut the \$9.5 million to about \$5.5 million, and this would make it a lot easier of a request.

Brad Johnson asked why this is being done now. One major point is the funding coming out of ESSER 3.0, which will never happen again.

Dr. McAbee noted that in the past few years over 40 positions have been eliminated from the budget due to retirements and normal attrition. Other issues were discussed such as roofing and the septic permits at Keensburg and Valley Forge Elementary. If schools were combined once the Hunter Elementary project is completed, it would save about \$1 million in operating costs and improved student to teacher ratios. Aaron Frazier concurred that while it is difficult on the communities where the schools close, it benefits everyone in the district by using some of this money to give raises and to not raise taxes. The school district has lost significant numbers of students in the past several years due to changing demographics and a loss due to COVID.

Brad Johnson asked that for specific items to be presented at the June 8th Financial Management Committee meeting, to include a detailed funding plan and options for financing. He stated that perhaps the Hampton Elementary School preliminary plan could be funded in the same bond.

Aaron Frazier asked the School District to return in 10 days with an approved budget for all its departments. A Budget Meeting will be scheduled for June 8th at 6:00 pm for this purpose. It was reiterated that the School Board members can come to this meeting, but the Commissioners cannot attend the school's meetings and actively discuss or influence anything.

By this time, Mr. Anthony Garland, the School Board President was in attendance. He was asked of the plans to close schools. He stated he can only speak for himself and that he did not want to borrow money and keep schools open. It was reiterated that the school budgets are to be presented on June 8th, which will be a voting meeting. June 9th is a County Commission Workshop.

The meeting was recessed for a break.

The committee reconvened and considered the proposed budgets for various County departments.

- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the HIGHWAY/PUBLIC WORK's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the SOLID WASTE/SANITATION FUND's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

- Motion was made by Ross Garland, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the HEALTH DEPARTMENT FUND's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the DRUG CONTROL FUND's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Travis Hill, seconded by Brad Johnson to reject the SPORTS AND RECREATION FUND'S budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carries. The Sports and Recreation budget will be presented again at the June 8th meeting for consideration.
- The committee did not vote on for the AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARP)'s fund since no funds are being budgeted for expenditure.
- Motion was made by Travis Hill, seconded by Brad Johnson to approve the GENERAL DEBT SERVICE FUND's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

The Budget Committee then reviewed the funding allocations for Outside Agencies for Fiscal Year 2022-23.

- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request of VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS in the amount of \$469,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the request of the BUTLER VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT in the amount of \$3,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the CITY OF ELIZABETHTON FIRE DEPARTMENT's request in the amount of \$9,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- The Committee did not receive a request for the FIREFIGHTER GRANT so no action was needed.
- Motion was made by Brad Johnson, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the request of the RESCUE SQUAD in the amount of \$371,105. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Ross Garland, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request for VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION in the amount of \$27,809. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request from THE SHEPHERD'S INN in the amount of \$12,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request from the CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER in the amount of \$5,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request from ISAIAH 117 HOUSE in the amount of \$5,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the request from ASSISTANCE & RESOURCES MINISTRIES (ARM) in the amount of \$7,500. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the request from SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK in the amount of \$10,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request from LOAVES AND FISHES in the amount of \$12,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request from KEEP CARTER COUNTY BEAUTIFUL in the amount of \$5,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Brad Johnson, seconded by Ross Garland to not fund the request from KIDS LIKE US. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Travis Hill, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request from the RED CROSS in the amount of \$2,500. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the request from APPALACHIAN TAILS RESCUE in the amount of \$12,000. By a roll call vote of 6 ayes and 1 abstain from Robin McKamey, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Travis Hill, seconded by Willie Campbell to approve the request from UETHDA for its housing and neighborhood services program (RSVP program was formerly funded) in the amount of \$4,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the request from the SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER in the amount of \$26,500. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Willie Campbell to approve the request from the ELIZABETHTON/CARTER COUNTY LIBRARY in the amount of \$75,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the request from CITY PARKS AND RECREATION in the amount of \$25,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request from the BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB in the amount of \$20,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Travis Hill, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request from the IMAGINATION LIBRARY in the amount of \$5,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Travis Hill, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the request for SOIL CONSERVATION in the amount of \$44,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

- Motion was made by Travis Hill, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the request from the DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE in the amount of \$1,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Ross Garland, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request for TOURISM to the Elizabethton / Carter County Chamber of Commerce in the amount of \$225,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Travis Hill, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request of the FIRST TENNESSEE DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT in the amount of \$13,015. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the request of the AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION in the amount of \$1,500. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the request of the EAST TN SPAY & NEUTER in the amount of \$2,500 for the benefit of Carter County residents. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to reject the request from the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (NeTREP) in the amount of \$15,000. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried. The committee will entertain a request in the future by the newly formed economic development entity.

The committee then reviewed the proposed revenue projections for the County General Fund for the Fiscal Year 2022-23. The property tax revenues were increased slightly due to new housing starts. Robin McKamey made a motion to recognize and to appropriate the proposed funding totaling \$19,584,935. Willie Campbell was second and with a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

A representative from Carter County 911 Emergency District was present to request additional funding over that which was initially allocated which is \$225,000. This is due to a variety of cost and labor increases that are significant. Ross Garland made a motion to increase the allocation to \$245,000. Julie Guinn was second and with a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

The Committee next considered County departmental budgets.

- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the COUNTY COMMISSION's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Ross Garland, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the BOARD OF EQUALIZATION's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Willie Campbell to approve the COUNTY MAYOR/EXECUTIVE's budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the COUNTY ATTORNEY'S budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Willie Campbell to approve the ELECTION COMMISSION's budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Ross Garland, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the REGISTER OF DEED's budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the PLANNING budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the COUNTY BUILDING's budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- With no budget assigned, no action was needed on OTHER FACILITIES.

The committee took a break at 9:17 pm. Travis Hill departed the meeting.

- Motion was made by Travis Hill, seconded Ross Garland to approve the PRESERVATION OF RECORD's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Ross Garland, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the FINANCE budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Ross Garland, to approve the PROPERTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Brad Johnson, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the REAPPRAISAL PROGRAM's budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Brad Johnson to approve the COUNTY TRUSTEE'S OFFICE budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made Ross Garland, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE/CIRCUIT COURT's budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the GENERAL SESSION COURT's budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Ross Garland, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the DRUG COURT's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Brad Johnson, seconded by Willie Campbell to approve the CHANCERY COURT's budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the OTHER ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made to approve the SHERIFF DEPARTMENT budget by Willie Campbell, seconded by Julie Guinn. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Brad Johnson, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the JAIL budget. During discussion it was confirmed that the budget includes the raise calculation as approved earlier in the year. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

- Motion was made by Ross Garland, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the JUVENILE SERVICES budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the RESUCE SQUAD budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (EMA) budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Ross Garland, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the INSPECTION AND REGULATION's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the COUNTY CORONER/MEDICAL EXAMINER's budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the OTHER PUBLIC SAFE (CIVIL SERVICE BOARD) as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE (LOCAL HEALTH CENTER) budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Brad Johnson to approve the RABIES AND ANIMAL CONTROL budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Ross Garland to approve OTHER LOCAL WELFARE SERVICES/PAUPER BURIALS as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the SENIOR CITIZENS ASSISTANCE budget as presented.
- Motion was made by Brad Johnson, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the AGRICULTURE EXTENSION SERVICE budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Ross Garland, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the FLOOD CONTROL budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the OTHER AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Robin McKamey, seconded by Julie Guinn to approve the VETERAN'S SERVICES budget. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- Motion was made by Willie Campbell, seconded by Ross Garland to approve the MISCELLANEOUS budget as presented. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.
- A motion was made by Julie Guinn, seconded by Robin McKamey to approve the LITTER AND TRASH GRANT. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

The departmental budgets were then finished. Aaron Frazier stated the committee then needed to consider employee raises and the MOE for the school district.

Julie Guinn began by expressing her thoughts that the ARP funds proposed for staff bonuses were for a time period in the past. This is not the same as a raise for current staff members which is now and into the future. Aaron Frazier asked if ARP funds could be used to fund the increases requested by the Volunteer Fire Departments, Rescue Squad etc. This is not possible. It was also noted that TDEC has decreased its funding allocation by \$1 million for the local projects and it may be that the loss of funds is taken out of ARP funds. Mayor Patty Woodby asked that retired employees receive the ARP bonus.

A list of possible scenarios for staff increases was distributed. With the calendar dates next year, Director of Finance Carolyn Watson said that there are 27 pay periods in the fiscal year. Although employees will make the same annual pay, their pay rate will decrease in each paycheck and some may not understand this. Due to the additional payroll, an increase of \$750 in annual pay will generate a very small weekly change in a person's paycheck. The various options were considered.

The Maintenance of Effort amount for the School District was discussed. Carolyn Watson was advised by the Department of Education that the MOE could be lowered by about \$231,000 due to the current year estimated decrease in students. She noted that there is a raise in the current draft of the school budget. The Sheriff deputies get automatic step raises. The jailers just received a pay raise and both the jail and the sheriff employees received retention bonuses. Further is it possible to give different amounts of increases to county employees based on their department.

Julie Guinn then made a motion to provide all County employees a \$1,000 increase for full-time and a \$500 increase for part-time employees, to be funded by a reduction the school's maintenance of effort of about \$231,000, and the rest of the cost being made up by the anticipated surplus in the proposed budget, and any remaining expense to come from Fund Balance. Robin McKamey was second. Willie Campbell abstained. Aaron Frazier, Ross Garland, Julie Guinn and Robin McKamey voted aye. Brad Johnson voted Nay. Motion failed.

Following additional discussion about the Maintenance of Effort, Julie Guinn made a motion to reduce the Carter County School District's Maintenance of Effort funding based on the state's MOE calculation, which is \$231,592. Willie Campbell was second and by a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

The meeting calendar was then reviewed. Parks and Rec and the School Department need to return on the 8th.

Aaron Frazier stated that with the imminent departure of Austin Jaynes, a new Vice Chair is needed. Ross Garland nominated Julie Guinn. Willie Campbell nominated Ross Garland. Nominations were closed.

Willie Campbell voted for Ross Garland. Aaron Frazier voted for Julie Guinn. Ross Garland voted for Julie Guinn. Julie Guinn voted for Ross Garland. Brad Johnson voted for Julie Guinn. Robin McKamey voted for Julie Guinn. Julie Guinn was elected as Vice Chair of the Budget Committee.

It was requested to copy only those items that would change for the meeting on the 8th. Complete copies will need to be provided to the Commission workshop on the 9th.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 11:07 pm. By a roll call vote of all ayes, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Audra Gerty

Approved for entry:

Aaron Frazier, Chairman