











May 27, 2021 (Recessed)

grant to purchase the gear for our deputies). We requested a trailer to store, transport, and organize the civil unrest gear applied for in the grant. This request has not been included in the recommended budget. Any type of civil unrest event tends to be fast developing and a drain on resources and manpower. Having a trailer to store, protect, and organize vital equipment is a component of a successful program. The equipment that we intend to purchase through the GCC grant includes bulky items such as shields, body armor, batons, and gas masks. We also need the ability to contain and transport quantities of 40mm gas munitions and the guns used to project those rounds. Individual deputies simply do not have the means to store, transport, and safeguard this type of equipment. Another key consideration is that this trailer would remain ready to go. It would simply be a matter of hooking a vehicle up to the trailer and proceeding to where the civil unrest is occurring. We would also use the equipment and trailer to respond to incidents within our jail. We would respectfully request that the trailer with a cost of \$6,200.00 be reevaluated and funded to enable us to safely protect our citizens and their property.

Sheriff Whisenant said they feel confident that they will get the equipment, but they have nowhere to store it, noting the need for a centralized location for the equipment for rapid deployment. Commissioner Carswell asked how many mutual aid calls for civil unrest did they go on last year. Sheriff Whisenant said two (2), discussion ensued, and Sheriff Whisenant noted that they are often asked to assist in civil unrest situations, but they do not have the officers or equipment to assist. Commissioner Carswell asked why would the County purchase the trailer now if they do not have the personnel or equipment. Major Banks Hinceman, who was in the audience, said they want to get the equipment so they can get their personnel trained and they need a place to store it. Chairman Brittain asked the Board if they would like to proceed with the request based on the awarding of the Governor's Crime Commission grant funds. Commissioner Abele agreed but Commissioner Carswell said he had mixed feelings on the request. After additional comments from Commissioner Carswell, County Manager Steen said if the Sheriff's Office gets the equipment later in the year, then this item could be considered at a later date and the \$6,200 could come out of General Fund, Fund Balance.

**RESULT: NO CHANGE TO THE RECOMMENDED BUDGET.**

#### **ITEM 5 - APPEAL RECOMMENDATION BUDGET FOR JAIL**

Sheriff Whisenant presented the following information:

1. UTILITIES - \$167,500 requested v \$150,000 recommended = \$17,500 shortfall. Our requested amount was based on billing received to date and we can only anticipate these costs either staying the same or increasing. They will not decrease. We request that our original request of \$167,500 be recommended by the County Manager.
2. M&R BUILDING AND GROUNDS - \$160,385 requested v \$75,000 recommended = \$85,385 shortfall. The shortfall is explained by the disapproval of our requests for Parking Lot; Fencing; Padded Cells repairs; and Decontamination of Cells costs. We are requesting that the Padded Cells repairs be approved as damage to these cells cannot be prevented and repairs must be made to restore the integrity of these cells. We are also requesting that the Decontamination of Cells costs be approved. Recently, the Sheriff's Office had to pay close to \$4,500 to

May 27, 2021 (Recessed)

- have one vehicle decontaminated following fentanyl exposure. The approval of these two items will increase the County Manager's recommended figure by \$33,500, for a total recommended figure of \$108,500.
3. COMMUNICATION WIRELESS PHONE - \$5,600 requested v \$4,055 recommended = \$1,545 shortfall. Our requested amount was based on billing received to date. We cannot reduce this cost without cancelling three of our cellphones. These phones are only used by Supervisors and On-Call Employees (Maintenance and Transport). For safety, emergencies, and efficiency, we should not reduce this number of cellphones and request that our original request of \$5,600 be recommended by the County Manager.
  4. STAFF TRAVEL - \$11,800 requested v \$7,300 recommended = \$4,500 shortfall. \$3,500 of this shortfall was requested to send five attendees to the annual NC Jail Administrators Conference. In an effort to recruit, retain, and offer opportunities to further professionalize our jail staff we request this cost be approved. Jail courses and training opportunities for detention offices is already significantly limited and this training is an effort to improve those opportunities. Approval will increase the County Manager's recommended figure by \$3,500, for a total recommended figure of \$10,800.
  5. PROGRAM SUPPLIES - \$116,410 requested v \$75,000 recommended = \$41,410 shortfall. \$9,900 of this shortfall was requested to purchase 10 x 'XPR 3500e Radios.' These are required as part of our process for maintaining safety and security of the building, staff, and inmates. Approval of this item will increase the County Manager's recommended figure by \$9,900, for a total recommended figure of \$84,900.
  6. EQUIPMENT - \$191,000 requested v \$0 recommended = \$191,000 shortfall. \$13,500 of this shortfall was requested to purchase 2 x 'APX 8000 Radios'. These will be our only form of external communication in instances of phones/internet outage that we have experienced multiple times including an outage on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May, from 11 am -7 pm, when a fiber cable was accidentally cut somewhere in Morganton. As recently as last night, we experienced a significant and dangerous situation with not having adequate communications from the inside the jail to the outside. With these two radios placed in the control room and booking locations, we would at least be able to communicate with Fire, EMS and others outside the jail. Approval of this item will increase the County Manager's recommended figure by \$13,500, for a total recommended figure of \$13,500.
  7. SALARIES FULL TIME - \$2,542,310 requested v \$2,480,490 recommended = \$61,820 shortfall. We are requesting approval for the additional Lieutenant's position.

Appeal Budget Recommendation for Sworn/Training Jal Lieutenant  
Justification

- Will provide the jail with a full-time training coordinator, certified as a General Instructor and an OC Spray Instructor.
- Allows for quicker training of staff, alleviating the training workload off shift Sergeants and Corporals.
- Provides another Lieutenant for the on-call rotation schedule for current jail staff.

May 27, 2021 (Recessed)

- Provides the jail with another sworn officer, who will have the ability to assist with serving papers on current inmates; performing local transportations of inmates; and other duties requiring a sworn officer.

Lt Steve Massey has been in this position since February 15, 2021, as approved by the Commissioners for the remainder of the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year (ending June 30, 2021). During this time, he has:

- Reorganized the Supply Room.
- Transported inmates.
- Served warrants on current inmates (sometimes to include fingerprinting, also).
- Commenced training initiatives, including actions to be taken by officers in the event of a fire alarm being triggered, and daily training of newly hired detention officers. In light of the difficulty in hiring and retaining detention staff, the significant assistance this position has brought to our jail, currently with 15 vacancies, and our efforts in filling the vacancies, we ask that this position not be cut from the jail staff.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for discussion. Commissioner Carswell asked why \$167,500 for utilities is being requested. Sheriff Whisenant said that is how much they paid in utilities last year and they do not believe they will be paying less in utilities this year. Ms. Pierce said the recommended \$150,000 is based on her estimate of what they need to cover existing utility bills. Discussion continued. Commissioner Carswell inquired as to why the jail is having problems with the padded cells and noted they were told the cells were indestructible. Captain Greg Huntley, Jail Administrator, said they were told the cells were indestructible, but the vendor was wrong, and the padded cells have been torn up four (4) times already. Discussion continued. Regarding Item No. 5 and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds, Ms. Pierce said after reading the initial documentation, staff is hopeful that the request for fencing will qualify. Captain Huntley said based on the information Ms. Pierce provided, he removed the projects that may be eligible for ARP funds and the balance before the Board is to compensate for the padded cell repairs and the ability to do a Fentanyl decontamination in the jail, bus, or van. Chairman Brittain asked if the radios are \$6,000 each. Sheriff Whisenant said yes and discussion continued on radios. County Manager Steen said it was his understanding that there was at least one (1) Viper Radio in the command module and advised they did not see a justification to add more Viper Radios to the budget. While a lot of these requests are small, he said they do add up after a while. Discussion continued on radios in the jail, two (2) different radio systems and Chairman Brittain asked if there is a Viper Radio in the control room. Captain Huntley said no, the Viper Radio was purchased for the captain of the jail, noting he did not have one when he assumed his current role. Discussion continued and Captain Huntley said they need one (1) Viper Radio for the control room and one (1) for booking. Commissioner Carswell expressed support for adding the two (2) Viper Radios but not those under item No. 5 for internal usage. Chairman Brittain asked is there communication between the control room and booking when communications are out. Captain Huntley said the small radio is not impacted by anything that is supported by fiber optic, it is basically line-of-sight. After additional discussion, Commissioner Carswell expressed support for adding one (1) Viper Radio.

**RESULT: ADDED FUNDING FOR ONE (1) VIPER RADIO TO THE FY 21-22 BUDGET.**

### **BOC - DISCUSSION ON THE FY 21-22 RECOMMENDED BUDGET**

Information from the agenda packet:



May 27, 2021 (Recessed)

This is an opportunity for the Board to discuss the recommended budget, provide direction to staff on any proposed changes to the budget or for staff to address any questions the Board may have about the recommended budget for FY 21-22.

Chairman Brittain apologized for leaving early on Tuesday and opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Commissioner Carswell said it was recommended that VEDIC (Valdese Economic Development Investment Corporation) receive no funding, but he requested that they be given \$5,000 and that the County remain in the program. Further, he wanted the item listed under the donation line item in the budget instead of economic development, to avoid being associated with the County's economic development program. Discussion continued with Ms. Pierce inquiring whether to move the funding for the airports out of the economic development line item. Commissioner Carswell responded in the affirmative. Commissioner Abele expressed his support for the ongoing employee pay plan analysis and said the County has a lot of good employees. He said he is comfortable with the budget and with what they discussed today. While some people complain about a growing budget, that is a fact of life, and noted how the cost of running his business has increased. Commissioner Carswell asked how much did the retirement contributions increase. Ms. Pierce said 1.25 percent, discussion ensued regarding reduced health insurance premiums and the impact of the employee clinic. Commissioner Carswell asked what the is the status of County capital projects, especially concerning the Human Resources Center (HRC) building. County Manager Steen said funds for the continuation of the HVAC project are in the budget and noted they are trying to use the new federal funds once they receive the final rules. However, if the projects are budgeted, then the federal funds cannot be used. Ms. Pierce also advised that no funds are being set aside for long-term capital improvements and provided a short update on staff's efforts to hire a consultant to analyze county buildings. Mr. Steen also advised there are a lot of roof / building repairs included in the recommended budget. Commissioner Carswell expressed support for the recommended budget. Chairman Brittain requested in the next month or so that the Board receive a report on HVAC projects, especially at the HRC building. He also requested a report from HR and the jail on their employee recruitment / retention efforts. In response to a question from Clerk Draughn, Chairman Brittain said the reports could be a presentation at a pre-agenda meeting and it may not need to be moved to a regular meeting. County Manager Steen advised that some of the HVAC parts will not arrive until July. Staff responded to multiple questions from Chairman Brittain concerning budget requests for Cooperative Extension (vehicle), EMS (salaries), General Services (vehicles), IT (maintenance/repair software, computer equipment and telephone system), Parks and Recreation (equipment - open dozer blade quick coupler with a bucket), Tax Department (appraisal), and the water/sewer system (ARP (American Rescue Plan) funds will be used for eligible maintenance / repair projects). Chairman Brittain and Commissioner Carswell expressed support for funding the requested equipment for Parks & Recreation. Commissioner Carswell also asked Management staff to verify that the requested equipment is what is actually needed. Selling surplus vehicles, trail maintenance / security was also discussed.

**RESULT: ADDED \$27,900 FOR EQUIPMENT (OPEN DOZER BLADE QUICK COUPLER WITH A BUCKET) TO THE FY 21-22 BUDGET AS REQUESTED BY THE PARKS & RECREATION DEPT.**

Commissioner Abele left at 3:58 p.m. for a family emergency and was not present for the remainder of the meeting. Chairman Brittain announced that with the departure of

May 27, 2021 (Recessed)

Commissioner Abele, the Board lost its quorum. He asked the Clerk to contact Vice Chairman Mulwee and she reported he would be there in 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Carswell noted a minor discrepancy in the budget message. In response to a question from Chairman Brittain, County Manager Steen said they are still waiting for the final rules for the incoming federal ARP funds and noted he is pleased with the conversations he has had with the General Services Director regarding the projects he would like to complete. Further, he reported having met with judicial officials regarding the possibility of using the ARP funds for new capital projects at the courthouse and noted the need for Board approval before beginning the projects. In response to a question from Chairman Brittain, Sheriff Whisenant advised he has not been made aware of any COVID-19 funds coming to the Sheriff's Office. Discussion continued with the Sheriff during which he advised that the numbers in his budget appeal requests do add up. Commissioner Carswell reported the opioid lawsuit is in the final throws of settlement so they should see something soon.

### **RECESS OF MEETING**

At about 4:00 p.m., the Board took a 10-minute recess while they waited for Vice Chairman Mulwee to arrive. Vice Chairman Mulwee arrived at 4:12 p.m. which created a quorum of the Board and the meeting resumed. Vice Chairman Mulwee was present for the remainder of the meeting.

<b>RESULT: NO ACTION TAKEN.</b>
---------------------------------

### **ITEMS FOR DECISION**

#### **BOC - CANCELLATION OF JUNE 1 BUDGET MEETING**

Chairman Brittain reported if the Board is comfortable in its review of the FY 21-22 recommended budget, then the Board may wish to consider cancelling the budget meeting scheduled for June 1<sup>st</sup>. At this time, staff does not have any other information to present to the Board at that meeting.

#### **Motion: To cancel the June 1, 2021 budget meeting.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Johnnie W. Carswell, Commissioner
<b>AYES:</b>	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Scott Mulwee and Johnnie W. Carswell
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Wayne F. Abele, Sr. and Maynard M. Taylor

### **ADJOURN**

#### **Motion: To adjourn at 4:14 p.m.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Scott Mulwee, Vice Chairman
<b>AYES:</b>	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Scott Mulwee and Johnnie W. Carswell
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Wayne F. Abele, Sr. and Maynard M. Taylor

Approved this 15<sup>th</sup> day of June 2021.

May 27, 2021 (Recessed)

  
Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman  
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

  
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC  
Clerk to the Board