

# **Official Minutes**

## **April 17, 2025**

### **Board of Commissioners Meeting**

#### **In Attendance:**

Randy Church, Chairman  
Mike LaBrose, Vice Chairman  
Jeff Branch, Commissioner  
Donnie Potter, Commissioner  
Patrick Starnes, Commissioner  
Interim County Manager, Wayne Rash  
Chief Financial Officer, Tony Helton  
Abigail Rich, County Clerk

Chairman Church called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM.

Chairman Church made the motion to enter closed session to discuss a personnel matter.

The motion carried unanimously.

The Board resumed open session at 4:43 PM.

Cooperative Extension was the first department to review its budget requests. Cooperative Extension Director Seth Nagy said most of the changes to the budget are for salaries. It was noted by CFO Tony Helton that the County does not provide merit raises to these employees due to the agreement with the State.

Information Technology was the next department to present its budget. Information Technology Director Chris Austin said the County was getting behind and becoming obsolete with various servers and software. The large amount for contractual fees is necessary to maintain the standard the County now has in place. Director Austin reviewed the capital requests and said these items would make things better but were not necessities. The Board and Director Austin discussed which items he would most like to have if possible.

The Water Department was the next department to present its budget. Deputy Water Director Emily McNeil said the Water Department is requesting to replace a 305 excavator. The excavator being replaced is a 2006 model. There was a discussion about the health of the Water Fund currently and it is good. The Board discussed moving from \$2 to \$3 to increase funding for maintenance to water infrastructure and asked the Water Department to incorporate this change with its fees.

Commissioner Potter exited from 5:47-5:49 PM.

Emergency Services was the next department to present its budget. Emergency Services Chief Trevor Key told the Board there was no request for new positions and he believed the RESTART Coordinator position could be rified. Additionally, Chief Key said the EMS Manager position could be reclassified and would save money. The biggest change to this budget is salaries and benefits. The Board discussed the starting pay of EMS employees. Chief Key was able to show the Board salary comparisons from surrounding counties.

Vice Chairman LaBrose left the meeting at 6:29 PM due to a conflicting obligation.

There was a discussion held concerning FEMA funding to reimburse expenditures related to Hurricane Helene.

There was a discussion held concerning funding EMS backup to Little River and the City of Lenoir Fire Departments. Instead of paying out the \$15,000 each to these departments, Chief Key suggested splitting this funding between all the fire departments for supplies. The Board and Chief Key discussed the logistics of doing this.

There was a brief discussion about incentivizing County employees for joining local volunteer fire departments and being active members.

Commissioner Potter exited from 7:12 to 7:13 PM.

Chief Key informed the Board EMS is requesting a new ambulance and remount of an ambulance. There are currently two trucks over the milage policy. Other purchase requests included the replacement of video laryngoscopes, and ultrasound machine, and First Watch AI Software.

Commissioner Branch exited from 7:55 to 7:57 PM.

The Board discussed the new EOC facility and the structure of the Emergency Services Department.

With there being no more business to attend to, Chairman Church made the motion to adjourn at 8:53 PM.

The motion carried unanimously.