

**MINUTES**  
**WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**BUDGET RETREAT WORK SESSION**  
**February 19, 2019**

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 for a lite Dinner beginning at 5:00 P.M., Budget Retreat Work Session followed at the Wilkes County Office Building Conference Room located at 110 North Street, with the following members present: Chairman Gideon Keith Elmore, Vice Chairman Eddie Settle, Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, Commissioner David Gambill, and Commissioner Brian Minton.

Also present for the meeting were Tony Triplett, County Attorney; John Yates, County Manager; Chris Huffman, Finance Officer; and Sarah Call, Clerk to the Board.

**WELCOME – CALL MEETING TO ORDER** – Chairman Keith Elmore called the work session to order and stated he wanted this to be somewhat informal and for the Board to discuss information and share ideas on the upcoming budget.

**CURRENT BUDGET OVERVIEW** – Finance Director Chris Huffman provided the January 2019 Financial Report. He added these are preliminary, normally he sends this out at the end of the month, and some of the numbers may change a little. Mr. Huffman provided a Fund Balance update as of June 30, 2018.

**BUDGET PROCESS AND TIMELINE** – County Manager John Yates provided the following timeline:

Non Profits and County Departments	March 1, 2019
Chairman’s Meetings	March 1 – 30, 2019
Budget to Board of Commissioners	May 7, 2019
Commissioners hold Work Session	May 7 – June 4, 2019
Public Hearing on Proposed Budget	May 21, 2019
Commissioners Adopt Budget	June 4, 2019

Chris Huffman presented the Debt Service Requirements and Preliminary 2019-2020 Revenue Projections. He added the revenue projections are an estimate from Alex Hamilton and are preliminary.

**CAPITAL PROJECTS** – John Yates presented the following Capital Projects for discussion:

DSS Curtis Bridge Road Office  
Landfill: Scales; Phase 5 =\$2,250,000; Closures 1-4 =\$4,000,000; Land Acquisition  
Mulberry School Sewer Project (\$1,000,000 CDBG)  
Mt. View EMS  
County Office Building Property  
PC upgrades

The Board discussed an Emergency Management Center, perhaps to include a county morgue, which included a discussion of possibly using the unfinished space at the Ag Building. The upcoming lease with the Hospital at the existing EMS office was briefly discussed. The Board discussed the Veterans Office building and possibly discussing moving this to the Ag Building due to better parking and access that the Veterans may need.

**LOOKING AHEAD** – John Yates provided handouts and information on the below.

Schools K-12  
Wilkes Community College  
Library – increase from pay plan \$30,000 (\$90,000 over 3-years)  
COLA – 1% = \$187,000; 2% = \$373,000; 3% = \$560,000; 4% = \$746,000  
Health Insurance  
WTA  
Economic Development

The Board discussed per child funding for K-12 and they have increased this the past few years and are now above the state average and also above some of the boarding counties. They did mention the enrollment has dropped as well.

The Board briefly discussed that WCC would like an increase in salaries to extend their work year by two weeks (one before and one after) to closer match the K-12 school year. Chairman Elmore stated Dr. Cox could better explain this, they would need approximately \$100K additional in salaries and would like this to be considered by the Board.

This will be the second year of a three year commitment of the pay plan for the Library. This will be an increase of about \$30K each year for a total of almost \$90K at the end of the third year. The Board discussed they would like to know the benefits and cost of being a Regional Library vs. County Library. They would like to know if citizens are better served by being regional or county. Mr. Yates stated he would contact HCCOG to see if they can pull together some information on this topic for the Board.

WTA will request an increase in their appropriation of around \$50K.

Economic Development has mentioned they would like the \$20K back that was cut from last year's appropriation to them.

**ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION** – Chairman Elmore asked if the county will need to appropriate money in the budget for the runway project. Mr. Yates replied some funds may be needed. He added the good news is, the runway extension is on the STIP and there would be no match for that. The taxiway project that came up last year and the bids came in over budget. The State has asked them to put it back out for bid. Mr. Yates added the match is 10%, the last bid was \$3 million, in which 10% would be \$300K. He said they are planning to meet with Samaritan's Purse to see what is needed to support their larger planes. The Board discussed the county is blessed to have Samaritan's Purse in Wilkes, they are bringing in more jobs, doing good things, and expanding.

Commissioner Gambill stated he and Vice Chairman Settle attended the Fireman's Association Meeting recently and discussed with the members that they are Co-Fire Commissioners and it went very well. They are looking at purchasing a new Fire Safety House that will cost about \$70K. They have donations from businesses and departments of about \$17K. They take this around to the schools for fire safety training for children. Commissioner Gambill said they would like the county to come up with some funds to help on this. They did not ask for funds from the county, but he and Vice Chairman Settle would like to help, and would like the Board to consider a small appropriation in the upcoming budget.

**ADJOURN** – The Budget Retreat Work Session ended at 6:51 P. M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Giddeon Keith Elmore, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: