

**At a Special Meeting & Budget Work Session  
of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors  
Held in the Social Services Conference Room on  
Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 5 pm**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

C. Eric Fly, Sr.  
Alfred G. Futrell  
Debbie P. Jones  
Wayne O. Jones (Virtual)  
Susan B. Seward  
Steve White, Tie Breaker (Virtual)

**BOARD MEMBER ABSENT**

Rufus E. Tyler, Sr.

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Richard Douglas, County Administrator  
David Conmy, Deputy County Administrator/Economic Development Director  
John Broderick, Public Schools Director of Finance & Business Operations  
Deste J. Cox, Treasurer  
Eric Danuser, IT Manager (Virtual)  
Ernest Giles, Sheriff  
Kelly W. Moore, Finance Director  
Nick Sheffield, Emergency Services Chief  
Morris Taylor, Public Schools Director of Federal Programs  
Shilton R. Butts, Asst. to the County Administrator/  
Clerk to the Board of Supervisors (Virtual)

**Item 1. Call to order/Determine Quorum (6:07 p.m.)**

The May 11, 2023 Special meeting and Budget Work Session of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Chairman W. Jones.

**Item 2. Invocation**

Supervisor Fly offered the Invocation.

**Item 3. The Pledge of Allegiance.**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

**Item 4. Agenda Amendment**

There were no agenda amendments.

## **Item 5. Approval of Agenda**

ON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR D. JONES, seconded by SUPERVISOR FUTRELL and carried: RESOLVED that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors hereby approved the May 11, 2023 Special meeting and Budget Work Session. All Board members present voted aye.

## **Item 6. Presentation of the Proposed FY24 Operational and Capital Budgets**

County Administrator Douglas stated he wasn't prepared to give formal presentation the way he would have liked. He was providing the highlights. He noted that the State has yet to adopt the budget. County Administrator Douglas noted that the State's budget would more than likely be adopted after July 1. However, the County has to have a budget in place by June 30.

He noted that a lot of the numbers were based on estimates. If the State changes their numbers where it equals to more than one percent of their budget, the County will have to go back to the process with Public Hearings and readopt the budget. County Administrator Douglas stated that this had been the challenge with DSS and the State Compensation Board. He noted that most Counties were working with the information they had. He stated that the budget was balanced.

County Administrator Douglas stated that he wanted to acknowledge Kelly Moore (Finance Director) and Deste Cox (Treasurer) for a great job. He thanked the Department Heads for the meeting with Administration with reviewing their requests.

County Administrator Douglas stated that one of the primary goals placed was to preserve in the budget was the five percent COLA across the board. He noted that it was anticipated from the Compensation and DSS.

County Administrator Douglas noted that in regards to Revenue, there was no tax increase this year. He noted that Mr. Conny completed a comparative chart of comparable and surrounding counties with similar social economic backgrounds, as well as counties with DOC facilities. He wanted to identify those numbers, because these counties have to deal with the Payment in Lieu of Taxes issue also. He noted that the County has low tax rates. He stated that he would like the Board to give serious consideration to moving forward next year with an increase. This would get the County closer to average in most of the categories listed.

County Administrator Douglas stated he knew that many of the Board members had concerns with the tax rates, particularly not doing anything with of how the agricultural properties are(???)

He stated that at the last four meetings, there was discussion of Revenue used to balance the budget which include the Solid Waste Fee, \$52 a year per resident. This would be \$231,000 a year. He stated that this is the recommended approach in comparison to increasing tax rates. Only properties with residences would be charged this fee. Research has been done to determine how the fee would be implemented, i.e. via tax bill. There were discussion of other localities procedures. County Administrator Douglas stated that due to concerns of some of the Board members, he is requesting to exclude this miscellaneous revenue. He stated that almost all Capital items were cut out of the budget to balance it. They are proposing to use approximately \$125,000 in ARPA funds

next month. These items will be presented separately. He noted that there were a few Big Ticket items included. He stated that he could review later. He stated \$462,000 of Fire and EMS Escrow funds were used to cover the Fire and EMS Vehicle debt service for the upcoming fiscal year. These funds were set in the past to pay for fire trucks in advance. The methodology was changed to use lease purchases. Those numbers were not used in any calculations for Fund Balance or anything related to the availability of funds. The intended use of those funds was for the purchase of fire trucks. County Administrator Douglas noted that the \$462,000 will not be there next year.

He stated that there were two other ways used to balance the budget. One way includes the use of the DSS Cost Allocation Plan Revenue that the County receives for basically overseeing DSS related to building maintenance, utilities, lawn care, IT, etc. It was noted that in the past, it had not been counted revenue. He stated most counties do. It was basically going into the designated DSS Services Fund. Most counties count it as General Fund Revenue. He stated that he was requesting to move to General Fund Revenue. He stated that the cap dollar increases from \$100,000 this current year to the \$182,000 next year. This increase is namely due to providing the correct measurements of the building. He stated that Children's Services Administrative Fund that are received from the Office of Children Services Administrative fund goes into the reserve of the Children's Services Fund. It is recommended to move to General Fund Revenue.

County Administrator Douglas noted that some of the highlights for the expenditures include the five percent COLA to allow the County to maintain what's able to be paid to the State employee. He noted that there are some counties budgeting for seven percent just in case the State awards to seven percent due to the uncertainty of funding.

He stated the School funding was level funding from last year. The request for \$250,000, that was cut two years ago, has been requested to be restored. He noted it was mainly because of the loss of solid waste revenue. Solid Waste revenue has not recovered. The anticipated revenue budgeted is \$50,000 less than last year. He stated that there was zero communication on the impact of the loss funding over the last two years. He stated that the letter recently received was the first he heard regarding the loss salaries. There was discussion of meetings and invitations. It was noted that Sussex schools were always near the top of the list for funding being above the required local level.

There was discussion of restoring the \$250,000 for level funding to the schools. It was noted that funding was not budgeted.

*Vice Chairman Seward arrived at 5:26 p.m.*

Chairman W. Jones recommended having mandatory quarterly meeting with the schools to keep the Board informed.

There was inquiry of the school's Average Daily Membership (ADM) for this year and what it's projected to be in September. Mr. Broderick stated that the ADM is 1,000 and was projected to be 1,000 in September as well. There was inquiry as to the drop in students and drop of ADM. There was discussion of the composite index of the county.

Mr. Broderick stated that the schools were behind on teachers' pay and health insurance. He stated that it would cost approximately \$600,000 to offer the same plan.

Ms. Moore noted that the external organizations were level funded. She also noted that a lot of the big ticket items were not included in the budget.

County Administrator Douglas stated that there was not a huge difference in cost for the Children's Services Program. He is proposing to move the CSA position from Social Services to Administration, which will help align her with access to other County resources. He stated that it was under strong advisement of the State new OCS Director. It was under Administration in several counties. The CSA Coordinator will not be paid out of DSS funds. There is about \$16,000 of the OCS Administrative Fund to apply toward that position. County Administrator Douglas stated that, for the Board's information, there is only one local funded position in DSS that has caused some issues with how the County is reimbursed. He noted that some funds may have to be paid back to the position due to an audit.

County Administrator Douglas stated that there are two new positions. There is a full time Solid Waste Coordinator position, namely because the County no longer contracts with GardaWorld. The County has their own staff. This position will be responsible for maintenance, scheduling, monitoring and ensuring all the dumpsters are emptied, etc. He stated that there is a Lead Maintenance Worker position also added to the Public Works Department. There was discussion of those salaries being reduced from the initial requested salaries.

There was inquiry of a full-time Solid Waste Supervisor. There was discussion of already having someone in place to supervise the convenience sites and Lead Maintenance Worker positions. There was inquiry of what was the Public Works Director responsibilities due to the inquiry of the Lead Maintenance position person qualifications. The County Administrator stated he wouldn't put this person as the Public Works Director. There was discussion and clarification of the salary of the positions in the budget. It was noted that benefits were included.

There was discussion that the County has started creating positions and not having enough work around the complex to support these positions. Any time there are any big contracts, outside contractors are hired to do the jobs. County Administrator Douglas stated that there's potential in leadership in the Buildings and Grounds of retirement. There has been some long term illness. There was discussion of bringing someone on board making considerably more than what the employee already in place is receiving. There was discussion of decreasing maintenance (Building & Grounds) staff previously. There was discussion of the maintenance worker abilities/qualifications that's currently employed.

It was noted the need to have someone manage the convenience sites. There was inquiry of who would be responsible for roadside pickup. There was also discussion in regards to hiring workers instead of supervisors. There was discussion of justifying the Public Works Director position and pay. The County is now creating two new positions as supervisors.

County Administrator Douglas told Chairman W. Jones that he obviously didn't have confidence in him putting the budget together. He was going home. He told everyone "Good Night". He departed at 6:15 p.m.

It was stated that the Public Works Director position concerns were raised because it was thought that his position was in charge of maintenance. This was the justification for the creation of the Public Works Director position. It was noted that there were no shadow on the Director; however, it was believed that the director doesn't have the skills to fix air conditioning units, to put walls up and doors up. The person in question has the skills. However, this person is in the Solid Waste Department, but is doing maintenance work.

There was brief discussion of restoring the schools request. There was discussion of the students having to buy their own uniforms instead of the school. It was discussed that this was a school issue. There was discussion of the "hole" in the budget. It was stated that the County Administrator noted that if the Board desired to restore the schools funding, it could be done. It is believed that the frustration was because Administration was notified at the last minute. It was discussed that there need to be better communication.

There was discussion of concerns of moving DSS and CSA funds out of line items into General Funds. It was noted that DSS Cost Allocation funds are \$182,000. It was noted that funds have been "going", being paid out DSS and CSA funds line items to Administration for paying expenses; however, they were budgeted in the General Funds. It doesn't affect what DSS will be reimbursing.

There was inquiry as to whether the Solid Waste Collection fee was included in the budget. It was noted that it was included under the Revenue. The fee would be \$52 per resident/household for an estimated total of \$271,000 (at a 70% collection rate). However, it was noted that there was discussion that this item could be excluded from the budget. It was also clarified that there was no "hole" in the budget. The budget was balanced. It was stated that the total in the Contingency was \$697,000.

Supervisor Fly stated that he would ask the Board to consider removing the \$271,000. There was discussion having an ordinance in place.

ON SUPERVISOR FLY, seconded by SUPERVISOR FUTRELL and carried: RESOLVED that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors hereby removes the Solid Waste fee of \$271,435 from the Revenue. All Board members present voted aye.

Supervisor Fly noted that the Contingency Fund was reduced to \$425,579.

The Solid Waste and Building and Grounds Departments discussion was revisited regarding personnel. It was discussed to better describe the position, in lieu of a Public Works Director, the two departments be run separately. There was discussion of the structure of the department(s). There was inquiry of how much does the Public Works support Building Official. It was noted that the Building Inspections Department is totally run by the Building Official. It was requested to have the County Administrator to provide the Board a current job description the positions/responsibilities. It was also requested to provide the total cost of local salary from Comp Board.

There was inquiry of whether Capital Improvement Projects were included in the budget. Ms. Moore advised that technically they were not.

There was also discussion of acquiring property near the County complex to house the Administration offices. Deputy County Administrator Conmy recommended utilizing the Capital Improvement Plan. This would channel things through the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission would vet everything first and establish the criteria--the biggest priority and how it would be addressed fiscally. There was discussion of possible mold in the old County Administration building and other repairs needed.

There was inquiry of the 771 33-3 Telecommunications line item. It was noted that it was E911.

There was inquiry of complaints of radio system. At what point does the County reinvest. Mr. Sheffield, Emergency Services Chief, provided an update regarding the maintenance agreement. He noted that maintenance wasn't being scheduled appropriately. The Harris representative was contacted. The Harris representative came out and started doing the preventive maintenance. On that Saturday, there was a fire. They had some issues. Harris was contacted. They came out. Some issues were found that needed to be addressed, as well as updates were needed. Mr. Sheffield noted that the issues and the updates were accomplished. He stated that currently, the radio system/communication is better than it has been. He stated that a lot of stride has been made due to the preventive maintenance work being done. He noted that the next step is to touching the terminal end, which is the radio itself, updating each piece of equipment. He's hoping this will fix the issue. He stated that he recommended to Harris to only have one person as hands on with maintenance. He stated that there was no contract for the terminal end.

There was inquiry of the Sheriff of how many Deputy Sheriffs he was short. Sheriff Giles advised that at the moment, he was short of three Deputy Sheriffs. There was inquiry as to whether these three position vacancies were included in the budget.

It was noted that they were included. The total cost is \$490,000 not including what is received from the DSS Comp Board position. It was noted that five percent COLA and two new positions were included.

Sheriff Giles stated that he saved and can purchase two new vehicles out of his own budget, if funds are transferred before June 15. There was a general consensus from the Board.

Mr. Conmy advised the he was tasked with the Capital Improvement Plan.

There was discussion of ending purchases through the leasing process.

There was discussion of the renovation of the old Courthouse. Supervisor Fly stated that more than likely it would not happen soon, if at all. He stated that something had to be done with the County Administration office. He inquired as to what the Board wanted to do or what direction the Board would take. There was discussion of moving County Administration back to the building they were previously located/housed and move the current building. Then, move Building

and Grounds with an office and break room in that location where the current Administration is located. Another option mentioned was to move County Administration in the Health Department's current location; and, move the Health Department to County Administration's current location. Another option mentioned was to move the Health Department's location to Stony Creek. There was mention of a doctor's office.

### **Item 7. Review of Proposed FY24 Operational and Capital Budgets**

After inquiry, Chairman W. Jones stated due to incompleteness of the review/presentation of the budget, another meeting will need to be scheduled. It was noted that the budget was balanced. No funds were placed in the Reserves.

Ms. Moore stated that a meeting is scheduled for May 24, 2023 for the Public Hearing for the proposed budget. After discussion, it was decided upon to schedule a Special meeting/Budget Work Session on Thursday, May 18, 2023 at 4 p.m. The location is to be determined.

There was discussion of providing information of the breakdown of the Public Works position/job description at the next meeting. Deputy County Administrator Conmy stated that he would do his best. He was not sure if he could gather the information in time for the meeting. Chairman W. Jones noted that the biggest concerns were the titles of the position for the departments.

There was inquiry as to the amount budgeted for the landfill.

### **Item 8. Citizens' Comments**

Citizens' comments were heard from:

- Ernest Giles (Sheriff/Waverly District) - Advised that the grant applied for was received from DCJS; Five percent COLA important to employees.
- Kevin Bracy (Yale District) – CIP; hiring and firing staff; buildings on complex; school supplying uniforms; paying to dump trash.
- Robert Hamlin (Henry District) - Thanked the Board; request later ARPA funding; external organizations level funding.

Inquiry of whether funding was received for business located on Highway 460. It was stated that the Chamber of Commerce would be having a ribbon cutting on Tuesday, May 16th at 11:00 a.m. at new business at OG Ribs and BBQ Outdoor Dining located on Hwy 460 in Waverly, Virginia.

### **Item 9. Adjournment**

ON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR SEWARD, seconded by SUPERVISOR FUTRELL and carried: RESOLVED that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors hereby adjourned the May 11, 2023 Special meeting and Budget Work Session at 7:43 p.m.