MINUTES
BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING

Due to scheduling conflicts, the Burke County Board of Commissioners' budget meeting scheduled for May 26, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. was cancelled. The Board rescheduled the budget meeting as a special meeting which was held on Friday, May 27, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. using Zoom, a virtual meeting / teleconferencing platform with simultaneous communication, to facilitate the meeting. The purpose of the special meeting was to discuss the FY 22-23 budget and to consider cancelling the June 2, 2022, budget meeting. The special meeting notice was executed by Chairman Mulwee and published on May 14, 2022, and again with Zoom login information on May 24, 2022. The Commissioners, the County Manager, the County Attorney, the Clerk and County staff as well as any citizens that joined the virtual meeting, could hear and see one another for the duration of the meeting. The Clerk shared each agenda item on her computer screen so that meeting participants could see the items being discussed and the agenda, in its entirety, was posted to the County's website, www.burkenc.org, several days prior to the meeting as usual. A verbal roll call was conducted and those present were:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	Scott Mulwee, Chairman Johnnie W. Carswell, Vice Chairman Wayne F. Abele, Sr. Jeffrey C. Brittain (Arrived at 9:33 a.m.) Maynard M. Taylor
STAFF PRESENT:	Bryan Steen, County Manager Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director J.R. Simpson, II, County Attorney Kay Honeycutt Draughn, Clerk to the Board

CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Mulwee called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Motion: To approve the agenda.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER:	Maynard M. Taylor, Commissioner
AYES:	Scott Mulwee, Johnnie W. Carswell, Wayne F. Abele, Sr. and Maynard M. Taylor
ABSENT:	Jeffrey C. Brittain

Commissioner Brittain joined the meeting at 9:33 a.m. and was present for the remainder of the meeting.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

FINANCE - FY 22-23 UPDATED BUDGET EXPLANATION OF CHANGE AND ITEMS OF NOTE
Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, reviewed the following changes to the budget as requested by the Board (by consensus) at their May 19th meeting:

1. Evaluate use of ARP funds for possible additional contributions to Burkes Arts Council

and Burke History Museum.
2. Fund Foothills Conservancy Oak Hill Park project at $10,000.
3. Increase funding for VEDIC to $10,000 total, $5,000 increase.
4. Review the reclassification request from the Health Department. Added the increase per County Manager; $14,240 increase.
5. Change the name on HR miscellaneous line to "Recognitions".
6. Increase salary and benefits for Register of Deeds salary per Ms. Norman's request; $12,415 increase.
7. Review Governor's budget for possible funding options for public safety and other areas.
8. Increase funding to WPCC by $56,000.
9. Reevaluate the proposed rate changes for water/sewer. **New options will be provided for direction from the Board on May 27 at the budget meeting.*

Total General Fund increase of $97,655 to come from additional Fund Balance appropriation. No expenditure changes provided for other Funds. She also reported that she misspoke at the May 19th meeting concerning the Health Department's interns and advised that a typographical error in the budget book was corrected. Further, as requested, the list of all the requested positions was provided and reads as follows:

This space is intentionally left blank.

Department	New or Reclass	Position	Grade	Salary / Impact	Benefits	Total
Animal Services	New	Animal Services Technician	14	27,307	8,193	35,500
Animal Services	New	Animal Services Technician	14	27,307	8,193	35,500
Communications	New	Staff Recruitment Specialist	21	38,425	11,525	49,950
Building Inspections	New	Administrative Specialist (Permit Techician)	15	28,673	8,602	37,275
Building Inspections	New	Building Inspector I	21	38,425	11,525	49,950
Community Dev	New	Planner	24	44,485	13,345	57,830
Coop Extension	New	Program Assistant IV (4-H Assistant)	15	28,673	8,602	37,275
EMS	New	Major	G	55,510	16,655	72,165
Emergency Services	New	Emergency Planner	25	46,715	14,015	60,730
General Services	New	Accounting Tech IV	21	38,425	11,525	49,950
General Serv-SW	New	Code Enforcement (/Comm Serv Supervisor)	21	38,425	11,525	49,950
Governing Board	New	Deputy Clerk	22	40,346	12,104	52,450
IT	New	GIS Manager- recom GIS Tech	28	54,076	16,224	70,300
IT	New	GIS Tech	22	40,346	12,104	52,450
Library	New	Library Assistant - 18 hrs/wk	14	12,288	2,457	14,745
Library	PT to FT	Library Assistant - add 1080 hrs/yr	14	13,654	11,731	25,385
Sheriff's Office	New	Patrol Deputy	L02	38,105	12,195	50,300
Sheriff's Office	New	Patrol Deputy	L03	38,105	12,195	50,300
Sheriff's Office	New	Patrol Deputy	L04	38,105	12,195	50,300
Sheriff's Office	New	Patrol Deputy	L05	38,105	12,195	50,300
Sheriff's Office	New	Admin Assistant I for Civil area	17	31,608	9,487	41,095
Sheriff's Office-Jail	New	Sworn Lt (continue expiring position-Massey)	L07	62,955	18,885	81,840
DSS-1	New	Social Worker II	21	38,425	11,525	49,950
DSS-2	New	IMC II FNS	18	33,193	9,957	43,150
DSS-3	New	Social Worker II	21	38,425	11,525	49,950
DSS-4	New	IMC II FNS	18	33,193	9,957	43,150
DSS-5	New	Social Worker III - Foster Care	23	42,362	12,708	55,070
DSS-6	New	IMC III - LTC-SA	20	36,584	10,976	47,560
DSS-7	New	Processing Assistant IV-Adult Medicaid LTC	15	28,673	8,602	37,275
DSS-8	New	Social Worker Supervisor III - CPS	27	51,487	15,448	66,935
DSS-9	New	IMC II - PRIVATE LIVING	18	33,193	9,957	43,150
DSS-10	New	Social Worker III - APS Guardianship	23	42,362	12,708	55,070
DSS-11	New	Admin Assistant II for Accounting area	19	34,850	10,455	45,305
DSS-12	New	Social Worker II - SA- IN HOME	21	38,425	11,525	49,950
DSS-13	New	Social Worker III - Foster Care	23	42,362	12,708	55,070
DSS-14	New	Social Worker III - APS	23	42,362	12,708	55,070
DSS-15	New	Processing Assistant IV-CPS-FC-APS	15	28,673	8,602	37,275
DSS-16-1	New	Social Worker III - APS Guardianship	23	42,362	12,708	55,070
DSS-16-2	New	Social Worker IAT-CPS	25	46,715	14,015	60,730
DSS-17	New	IMC I ENERGY	16	30,106	9,034	39,140
DSS-18	New	IMC I ENERGY	16	30,106	9,034	39,140
DSS-19	New	IMC I ENERGY	16	30,106	9,034	39,140
DSS-20	New	Social Worker II	21	38,425	11,525	49,950
DSS-21	New	Social Worker II	21	38,425	11,525	49,950
DSS-22	New	PROGRAM MANAGER- FOSTER	28	54,076	16,224	70,300
DSS-23	New	Social Worker III - Foster Care	23	42,362	12,708	55,070
DSS-24	New	Social Worker III - MAPP Trainer/Recruiter	23	42,362	12,708	55,070

DSS-25	New	Social Worker IAT-CPS	25	46,715	14,015	60,730
DSS-26	New	Social Worker Supervisor III - CPS	27	51,487	15,443	66,930
DSS-27	New	Processing Assistant IV-CPS-FC-APS	15	28,673	8,602	37,275
DSS-28	reclass	IMC III-LEAD WORKER	5% INC	1,829	551	2,380
DSS-29	New	IMC III - QC	20	36,584	10,976	47,560
DSS-30	New	IMC III - QC	20	36,584	10,976	47,560
DSS-31	New	IMC III - QC	20	36,584	10,976	47,560
DSS-32	New	IMC III - QC	20	36,584	10,976	47,560
DSS-33	New	IMC SUPERVISOR II - QC	22	40,346	12,104	52,450
DSS-34	New	Social Worker III - QAQI	23	42,362	12,708	55,070
DSS-35	New	Social Worker III - QAQI	23	42,362	12,708	55,070
Health	New	4 paid intern positions	?	28,000	5,600	33,600
Communications	pay type change	all 34 Telecommunicators, ave inc of $1,511	17-20	42,815	8,565	51,380
Deeds	pay inc	Register of Deeds (SN)	30	10,344	2,071	12,415
EMS	reclass	Paramedics to EMT I or II - 8 positions	A-C	-	-	-
Finance	reclass	Senior Accounting Specialist to Support Services Specialist	21 to 23	4,035	810	4,845
General Services	reclass	Facility Tech II to Facility Tech III	19 to 21	3,575	715	4,290
Health	reclass	PH Education Specialist to EM Planner	21 to 25	11,865	2,375	14,240
Recreation	pay inc	Recreation Program Coordinator (DG)	5%	1,805	360	2,165
Sheriff's Office	pay inc	all sworn and non sworn in office and	10%	675,751	135,149	810,900
Sheriff's Office	pay inc	give officers working with trainees add'l pay	NOT KNOWN		-	-
Sheriff's Office	reclass	Deputy to FTO Coordinator	5%	2,000	400	2,400
Sheriff's Office-Jail	reclass	Detention Officer to Detention Sgt DCI/PREA	20 to 22	3,678	738	4,416
DSS	pay inc	after hours premium for CPS		10,000	2,000	12,000
All Depts	pay inc	education benefit for all not currently receiving		20,000	4,000	24,000
		REQUESTED NEW POSITIONS		2,167,441	RECOMM	535,495
		REQUESTED RECLASS/CHANGES		785,867	W/ BENEFITS	58,605
				2,953,308		594,100
**GREEN HIGHLIGHTED ARE INCLUDED IN RECOMMENDED BUDGET						

Ms. Pierce noted that due to the changes noted above, the new total fund balance appropriation is $2,640,280. Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Commissioner Taylor made comments regarding the increasing number of employees and noted there is no conservative action on the Board.

RESULT: NO ACTION TAKEN.

FINANCE - FY 22-23 PROPOSED FEE CHANGES – WATER & SEWER RATES - REVISED
Information from the agenda packet:

> Fee changes for water and sewer have been modified per discussion. Option 2 would give an additional $215,400 from the previous Option 1 recommendation. No fund balance would be needed with Option 2 and expenditures could increase by $60,810. Staff recommends the additional $60,810 be put in M&R Water and Sewer System if Option 2 is chosen. Direction from the Board is requested.

FY 21-22 Fees - Water is $25 base, first 4,000 gal. at $4.65, then rest at $5.80. Sewer is $25 base, & all at $5.80.

Water Fees budgeted under current rates: $ 1,052,500

Sewer Fees budgeted under current rates:	$ 575,000	
	Revised FY 22-23 Recommended Budget	Estimated increase
Option 1-Water & Sewer $20 base, no tiers, $6.00 a gallon		
Water Service Charges	$1,092,000	39,500
Sewer Service Charges	$600,000	25,000
Total Water & Sewer Fee increase estimated:		$64,500
Option 2-Water & Sewer at $25 base, no tiers, $6.00 a gallon		
Water Service Charges	$1,212,000	159,500
Sewer Service Charges	$ 695,400	120,400
Total Water & Sewer Fee increase estimated:		$279,900

The Water Sewer Fund will have an increase of $79,400 under Option 1 and $294,800 in overall fee increases proposed under Option 2. Option 2 will decrease the water/sewer fund, fund balance being used by to balance the budget.

Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, reviewed the item and asked for input from the Board. Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Commissioner Brittain said he believed when the rate study is conducted, the basic facilities charge will show a higher recommendation. After Ms. Pierce responded to questions from Commissioner Brittain, she noted that a rate study is not funded in the budget because they hope to fund the study using other sources such as grants. Commissioner Taylor said the sewer rate should be 85 percent of the water rate and made additional comments regarding water / sewer rates. Chairman Mulwee asked for direction from the Board. Commissioners Brittain, Abele, and Carswell supported option two as did Chairman Mulwee. Commissioner Taylor supported option two with an 85 percent usage rate against water bills for sewer. It was the consensus of the majority of the Board to pursue option two as originally proposed.

RESULT:	**OPTION 2 SELECTED [MAJORITY CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL**

BOE - FUNDING REQUEST FOR ENCLOSED TRAILERS - $41,000

Debbie Mace, Elections Director, requested $41,000 to purchase enclosed trailers (8.5 x 20) to move election equipment in lieu of renting liftgate trucks as has been done in the past. The trailers were not included in the Department's original budget request. Ms. Mace noted recent difficulties in procuring the rental trucks. Further, Brian Tart, Assistant General Services Director, spoke about how the department scrambled to find rental trucks with liftgates due to a last-minute cancellation by the local rental company and how precarious loading the heavy and bulky voting machines into trucks without a liftgate was. He further commented on the cost of renting trucks / trailers and proposed to use county vehicles to pull them. Ms. Mace commented on how using the trailers will save staff time, be safer and more efficient. Staff responded to questions from the Board regarding the possibility of renting trailers, storage, bidding, material composition of the trailers and costs of renting the trailers versus buying them. Commissioner Abele expressed his support for purchasing the trailers. Discussion continued and in response to a question from Chairman Mulwee, Mr. Tart estimated that the trailers will last approximately 20 years as long as they are properly stored. After additional questions, it was the consensus of the Board to include funding for the purchase of the enclosed trailers in the FY 22-23 budget. Bids required.

Consensus: To include $41,000 for enclosed trailers in the FY 22-23 budget.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL**

FFST - BUDGET RECONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Friends of the Fonta Flora State Trail requested $30,000 for operations but it was not included in the FY 22-23 recommended budget. The proposed funds would be used for the salary of their new full-time executive director who will administer the "Complete the Trails Funds", a new funding stream that the F3ST administers, and assist Burke County in overseeing important projects. Beth Heile, F3ST Volunteer President, requested reconsideration of F3ST's funding request and responded to questions from the Board. She reviewed the County's return on its FY 21-22 investment in trail advocacy, funds awarded and grant applications. Further, she reported the Canal Bridge project, a crucial part of Burke County's FY 22-23 trail plan, is the highest priority item for F3ST's "Complete the Trails Fund" with a project total of $355,000 and a completion date of Sept. 1, 2023.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Commissioner Taylor expressed his support for providing the additional funding. Chairman Mulwee expressed concern that last year, the Board was told this would be a one-time request and F3ST is once again asking for funding from the County. Ms. Heile noted that they were not successful in receiving full funding from the state. Ms. Heile and Alan Glines, Deputy County Manager/Planning Director, responded to additional questions from Chairman Mulwee regarding trail construction, funding, and maintenance. Commissioner Taylor suggested matching McDowell County's funding amount of $20,000. Vice Chairman Carswell asked if F3ST received funding from the City of Asheville or Buncombe County. Ms. Heile said no, discussion ensued, and she responded to additional questions from Vice Chairman Carswell who commented on the lack of funding from other government entities. He agreed with Commissioner Taylor about potentially supporting F3ST at an amount less than $30,000. Commissioner Abele agreed with supporting F3ST at McDowell's funding level of $20,000.

Consensus: To include $20,000 in the FY 22-23 budget for F3ST.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL**

BCPS - REQUEST FOR BUDGET RECONSIDERATION - $500,000

Keith Lawson, BCPS Finance Officer, was present, along with other BCPS staff, to request a budget increase in the amount of $500,000.

	FY 19-20 ACTUAL	FY 20-21 ACTUAL	FY 21-22 BUDGET	DEPARTMENT REQUESTED FY 22-23	MANAGER RECOMMENDED FY 22-23
BURKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS					
ANNUAL APPROPRIATION	14,981,050	15,156,050	15,156,050	15,402,247	15,156,050
SCHOOL NURSES	893,153	893,155	893,155	1,146,958	893,155
TOTAL BURKE CO PUBLIC SCHOOLS	**$15,874,203**	**$16,049,205**	**$16,049,205**	**$16,549,205**	**$16,049,205**

Mr. Lawson reported the additional funding is needed for increases in the following areas:

Continuation Budget Increases due to wage, benefits & consumables increases	
Increases for retire & health insurance	61,243
Wage increases for certified & classified	235,834
Instructional Supplies/Books	145,961
Utilities increases	78,732
Repairs/Parts/Matls/Maintenance Supplies	128,192
Net all other increases & decreases	(93,281)
Total inflationary and wage increases	**556,682**

With regard to the local school nurses funding, he advised that although there are 14 positions, the current funding only covers 12.35 postions due to inflationary and wage increases absored by BCPS over the past few years. An additional $253,803 is needed to cover all 23 nursing positions, six of which are paid for with ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funding. Mr. Lawson explained that DPI (Dept. of Public Instruction) does not allow ARP or ESSER funding to be used on pre-pandemic positions. Their total budget increased by $810,000, $219,000 of fund balance was used to balance the budget which resulted in the $500,000 request for assistance. Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Mr. Lawson and Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, responded to numerous questions from the Board regarding staffing, American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding being able to fund nursing positions as well as BCPS's fund balance. Ms. Pierce was asked to investigate whether ARP funding could be utilized for school nurses. Chairman Mulwee asked why BCPS did not commit more of last year's unspent monies towards balancing their budget and reduce their request for assistance by half. In the spirit of compromise, Mr. Lawson said if BCPS received $254,000 to make the nurse funding whole, then BCPS could use additional fund balance ($246,197) to cover the remainder of the request. Chairman Mulwee and the rest of the Board members supported funding $253,803 for school nurses. After additional discussion, it was the consensus of the Board to fund the school nurses at $253,803 either out of General Fund, Fund Balance or by utilizing ARP funds pending investigation by Ms. Pierce.

Consensus: To include $253,803 for school nurses in the FY 22-23 budget using General Fund, Fund Balance or by utilizing American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds pending investigation by the Deputy County Manager/Finance Director.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL**

RECESS OF THE MEETING

At 11:03 a.m., the Board took a short recess at the request of Commissioner Brittain. The meeting resumed at 11:08 a.m. All Board members and staff were present.

ASF - RECONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST FOR A TRANSPORT VAN

Burke Co. Animal Services Department requested $38,000 for a Ford Transit 350 High Roof Cargo transport van to relocate surplus pets to other states that have a shortage of adoptable pets due to strict longstanding spay and neutering laws. (A Ford F-350 truck was erroneously referenced in the FY 22-23 budget materials instead of a van.) Despite significant cost savings demonstrated by the transport program, funding for the van was not recommended in the FY 22-23 budget. Alan Wood, President of the Animal Services Foundation (ASF), a nonprofit created to support the county animal shelter, requested $20,000 to assist the ASF in purchasing a new or gently used transport van. He advised that the nonprofit would contribute the rest of the purchase price early in the next fiscal year and that the van would also be used for adoption and responsible pet ownership training events. However, he clarified that they would not request the money until they have raised the balance of the funds and had a commitment on what they were purchasing. Continuing, he said the nonprofit would own the vehicle, provide insurance, be responsible for maintenance and repair costs and vet the drivers.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Mr. Wood responded to questions regarding potentially purchasing a gently used van, which he said they would like to do, maintenance, which would be paid for by the ASF, transportation of animals, and potentially giving an older county van to the ASF for trade-in.

Consensus: To include up to $20,000 in the FY 22-23 budget for the Animal Services Foundation to purchase a transport van.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL

County Manager Steen requested that Animal Services be allowed to make a presentation for their budget reconsideration. Chairman Mulwee agreed.

ANIMAL SERVICES – FY 23 BUDGET RECONSIDERATION REQUEST

Kaitlin Settlemyre, Animal Services Director, presented a request for two (2) additional Animal Services Technicians to assist with animal care. She noted the department currently has two (2) Animal Services Technicians who focus solely on animal care, but it's not enough to meet the demand. Ms. Settlemyre suggested a potential option, one that other shelters utilize, to bring in seasonal help through a temp agency during the busy season to assist with cleaning and animal care.

Department	New or Reclass	Position	Grade	Salary / Impact	Benefits	Total
Animal Services	New	Animal Services Technician	14	27,307	8,193	35,500
Animal Services	New	Animal Services Technician	14	27,307	8,193	35,500

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. In response to a question from Commissioner Taylor regarding employee numbers, Ms. Settlemyre said there are seven (7) current positions within Animal Services. Staff responded to additional questions from the Board regarding employee costs, utilizing temporary employees, space needs for additional staff, average number of animals in the Animal Services Center and volunteers. Commissioner Taylor said if the Sheriff's Office was able to run the animal shelter with four (4) employees, seven (7) should be enough. Discussion ensued and Ms. Settlemyre said that the way the Animal Services Center is operated now is different than when the Sheriff's Office ran the shelter and noted it was not as expensive to hold an animal for three (3) days before euthanizing it as was done in the past. Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director clarified that when the Sheriff's Office operated the shelter, they had five (5) employees, discussion continued. Vice Chairman Carswell asked if Ms. Settlemyre would rather have one (1) full-time employee or two (2) part-time employees. Vice Chairman Carswell also noted that in the past, the shelter was a killing machine and with Ms. Settlemyre and others, they have changed the operating philosophy. Ms. Settlemyre said the full-time position would be the most beneficial, discussion ensued. Chairman Mulwee expressed support for adding one (1) full-time position. Discussion ensued regarding the cost for one (1) full-time employee compared to two (2) part-time, 7-month employees hired through a temp agency. Commissioner Brittain expressed support for utilizing two (2) part-time positions. After further discussion, to provide the Animal Services Director greater flexibility on determining the number of employees hired and hours worked, Board members proposed to designate an amount of $30,000.

Consensus: To include $30,000 in the FY 22-23 budget for seasonal help in the Animal Services Department.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL

COMM. DEV. - FY 23 BUDGET RECONSIDERATION REQUEST

Alan Glines, Deputy County Manager/Planning Director, and staff requested budget reconsideration for the following three (3) items:

1. Permit Technician/Admin Position
   a. Estimated cost (salary + benefits) - $59,245.20
   b. Description - This position would be responsible for processing permits, handling phone calls, and basic plat map approvals. All permits for the County must be entered manually by County Staff and this is the limiting factor for handling more permits/growth in support of continued development in Burke County.

Mr. Glines spoke at length about why the position is needed, the current permitting process and time spent interfacing with the Munis software, the number of permits issued this year, staffing comparison of surrounding counties, the online inspection request process, and permit growth between 2016 and 2021.

2. Planner
   a. Estimated cost (salary + benefits) - $68,930.00
   b. Description - The primary responsibility for this position would be to support the Operations Manager for accelerating the development of trail projects including the Fonta Flora State Trail. The position would also support other planning functions such as shoreline permits, zoning code enforcement, and managing public facing zoning information.

Shane Prisby, Community Development Operations Manager, spoke at length about how the planner position will address the backlog of infrastructure needs for the Fonta Flora (FF) Trail, accelerate trail construction and capitalize on funding opportunities as well as serve other functions of department presently limited by staff capacity. He reviewed all the projects staff complete in-house for the FF Trail like maps, which have saved the County thousands of dollars, but requires significant staff time. He also responded to a question from Vice Chairman Carswell regarding Complete the Trails Funding (state funds), and how a lack of personnel prohibits projects from being submitted.

3. Flexible spending for special projects
   a. Cost - $15,000.00
   b. Description - This fund would be used for survey, engineering, or other expenses incurred to carry out assigned projects, grants, or other opportunities as directed by the County Manager. Examples of past projects are Jonas Ridge Convenience Site/Cranberry Bog Nature Park land surveys, Electric Vehicle Charging Station Grants, Survey for the Harris Whisnant Trailhead. Having this minimal fund would accelerate County projects because currently each individual expense is treated as a Budget Amendment

that must be approved the Board of Commissioners. This typically adds at least an additional month to any project.

Mr. Glines spoke on how having this funding would be beneficial to the department to keep projects moving forward and eliminate frequent time-consuming requests to the Board for small amounts of funding.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Staff responded to questions from the Board regarding overtime, Commissioner Brittain expressed his support for additional administrative staff for Community Development. Discussion ensued regarding fees, overtime, comp time, and space needs for two (2) additional employees. Chairman Mulwee asked for the pleasure of the Board. Commissioner Brittain said he would support the Permit Technician and the Project Opportunity Fund. In response to a question from Chairman Mulwee, Mr. Prisby said if they had the additional planner position, the Fonta Flora State Trail could be finished approximately 50 percent faster. Discussion continued. Chairman Mulwee expressed support for both the additional Planner and Permit Technician. Discussion continued. Commissioners Taylor and Abele expressed support for both positions as did Commissioner Brittain and Vice Chairman Carswell.

Consensus: To include funding for the Planner and Permit Technician positions in the FY 22-23 budget.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL**

RECESS OF THE MEETING

At 12:35 p.m., the Board recessed for lunch. The meeting resumed at 1:05 p.m. All Board members and staff were present.

DSS - BUDGET RECONSIDERATION OF POSITIONS AND FUNDING FOR TEMPORARY HELP

Korey Fisher-Wellman, DSS Director, and DSS staff requested budget reconsideration for these five (5) positions: Social Work Supervisor III, Food and Nutrition Services IMC II, Social Worker II-Visitation Coach, APS/Guardianship SW III and PA-IV for Children. In addition, the DSS Director requested that consideration be given to increasing the budgeted amount for temporary help services to match the amount budgeted for FY 21/22. Mr. Fisher-Wellman and/or Amanda Grady, Economic Services Program Administrator, reviewed challenges the Department faces, their request for 35 positions, positions included in the manager's recommended budget, child welfare statistics, caseload ratios, Food & Nutrition Services statistics and state reimbursement rates.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Staff responded to questions from the Board regarding federal and state funding compared to Burke County funding for DSS, House Bill 630 and staffing ratios. Discussion continued with Commissioner Brittain suggesting funding the top three (3) positions, Social Work Supervisor III, Food and Nutrition Services IMC II, and Social Worker II – Visitation Coach, as well as the temporary funds which Mr. Fisher-Wellman and staff discussed. A lengthy discussion continued regarding approximate reimbursement rates for DSS positions, the Visitation Coach position, clients served by DSS, Medicaid expansion, total number of employees in DSS and office space for employees. Chairman Mulwee asked for the pleasure of the Board. It was the unanimous consensus of the Board to fund the top three (3) positions, Social Work Supervisor III, Food and Nutrition Services IMC II, and Social Worker II – Visitation Coach, and to include $15,000 for the Temporary Help Services Fund.

Consensus: To include funding for the Social Work Supervisor III, Food and Nutrition Services IMC II, and Social Worker II – Visitation Coach positions as well as $15,000 for temporary help in the FY 22 -23 budget.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL

FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY OF NC - RECONSIDERATION OF FUNDING FOR OAK HILL PARK - $200,000

Andrew Kota, Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina (FCNC) Executive Director, after expressing appreciation for the $10,000 included in the recommended budget and in lieu of his original request of $200,000, he requested $60,000 as a one-time capital investment for a vault restroom at the Oak Hill Community Park. These funds would be matched 1:1 and accelerate project completion. Mr. Kota also offered the County utilization of a portion of the Park's 60x40 metal building for storage of land maintenance equipment, which is currently stored at the landfill and would reduce drivetimes. Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. In response to questions, Mr. Kota advised that the total budgeted amount for this project is approximately $753,000 with $200,000 coming from the State, and with the County's portion, FCNC would fund the remaining approximately $500,000. After further discussion, Chairman Mulwee asked for the consensus of the Board, and everyone expressed support for providing a total of $60,000.

Consensus: To include a total of $60,000 for the Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina for the Oak Hill Community Park & Forest in the FY 22-23 budget.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL

GS - RECONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REQUESTED IN THE FY 22-23 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

Mark Delehant, General Services Director, requested funding for the following five (5) items:

1. Accounting Technician III - Grade 19, $34,850.21 (minimum)

Margaret Pierce, Deputy Co. Manager/Finance Director, advised that this was not the same position requested earlier in the budget process and she estimated the annual cost to be approximately $48,000 for a grade 19. Ms. Pierce asked if one of the three (3) techs at the Water & Sewer office could handle these duties. Mr. Delehant responded in the negative and reviewed all the tasks the water and sewer administrative staff handle.

2. Controls upgrades and UV Air Purification for General Services Building.

Building	Year Build / Renovated	Controls / UV Air Purification
General Services Bldg.	2003	$55,000 / $65,000
	Total =	$120,000

In response to questions from the Board concerning the potential use of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds for controls, Mr. Delehant advised that Caldwell Co. used them for this purpose and Ms. Pierce said they were ineligible. Then Mr. Delehant spoke about how the controls change out the air in the building every night and Ms. Pierce said she would be happy to check the ARPA rules again.

3. UV Air Purification for HRC, East Burke Library / Senior Center, Foothills Higher Education Center, Sheriff's Office, General Services Building, and Avery Building.

Building	Year Built / Renovated	UV Air Purification
Health Dept. / DSS	1973	$65,000
East Burke Library / Senior Center	2017	$15,000
Foothills Higher Education Center	1963 / 2013	$45,000
Sheriff's Office	1993	$55,000
Avery	1920 / 1982	$35,000
	Total =	$215,000

Note: Including the General Services building would bring the total to $280,000 and these are ARPA eligible.

4. Solid Waste rate study - $20,000.

Using the poor condition of the landfill transfer station as an example, Mr. Delehant addressed the benefits of a rate study in planning for large solid waste expenditures and for the solid waste fund becoming self-sustaining.

5. Purchase of Hydro Seeder - $11,300.

In response to a question from Commissioner Brittain, Mr. Delehant said General Services currently rents a seeder for $738 a week in addition to staff travel time to and from Hickory. Having the equipment would also be beneficial to the Parks & Recreation Department, he said.

Chairman Mulwee asked for the consensus of the Board. It was the consensus of the Board to include funding for the Accounting Technician III, Solid Waste rate study, hydro seeder, and investigate using ARPA funds for the UV Air Purification for the HRC, East Burke Library / Senior Center, Foothills Higher Education Center, Sheriff's Office, General Services Building, and Avery Building, and controls upgrades and UV Air Purification for General Services Building. Mr. Delehant also responded to questions regarding outstanding projects the Department has.

Consensus: To include funding for the Accounting Technician III, Solid Waste rate study, and hydro seeder in the FY 22-23 budget.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL**

SHERIFF - REQUESTS FOR BUDGET RECONSIDERATION

Sheriff Whisenant and his staff were present to request reconsideration of several budgetary items that were not included in the FY 22-23 recommended budget. Of a $9,761,970 budget request, only $8,142,205 was included in the recommended budget. The following requests are listed in order of importance.

Sheriff's Office FY 22/23 Budget Appeal to Commissioners
May 27, 2022

1. <u>Pay:</u> The Sheriff's Office (SO) had requested a two-pay grade increase (approximately 10%) for all SO staff to stay competitive and solve recruitment and retention issues that are occurring in law enforcement throughout the state and country. For detention officers we also requested a $2,000 signing bonus to be split between the recruiter and the new officer after one year of service. Lastly, we recommended a change in the pay plan to ensure that when an officer is promoted, they do not revert back to starting their merit increases all over. That process creates feelings that the staff are being penalized for their excellent work resulting in their promotion. (As with the uniform change listed below, this change was one of the staffs' top requests in our survey).

A. Our goal is to be fully staffed and trained in the jail to allow us to begin renting beds to generate a significant amount of revenue for the county.
B. We are aware of four Sheriff's Offices, who increased their pay and solved their recruitment issues.
C. We fear with the significant pay increases received by agencies in close proximity to us and the pay offered by the private sector, we will lose staff and will not be able to recruit staff. One neighboring SO staff are receiving increases between 10 and 20%. We've lost three deputies with a total of 59 years' experience to higher paying jobs in May.
D. The manager recommended a 4% COLA for which is greatly appreciated but no pay grade increases.

Commissioner Taylor made several comments regarding the Sheriff's request for a pay increase and noted the Sheriff's Office has been given pay raises in the past, all departments are finding it difficult to recruit and maintain employees, and often when someone leaves employment with Burke County, it is not solely for pay. He said it is not good practice for the Board to single out one department over another, discussion ensued regarding salaries. Ms. Pierce, in response to a question, advised that the salaries for law enforcement and detention officers were analyzed for market rate conditions even though they were not scheduled to be reviewed this year. Chairman Mulwee spoke about money not being the problem with recruitment and retention. Each Board member was polled, and no one was in favor of granting this request.

RESULT:	**DENIED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL**

2. <u>Uniforms:</u> One of our efforts to solve recruitment and retention problems was providing the staff with a survey to share their desires on what would have positive impacts at the SO. One of the top requests was to upgrade the uniforms to a comfortable, safer, more modern, and medically beneficial uniform to move much of the weight from their hips to a carrier vest.

A. We used $51,770 of a $84,270 grant to purchase the carrier vests for the sworn and non-sworn officers.
B. We requested a uniform budget for FY 22/23 of $127,850 for sworn deputies and detention officers to cover the remaining expense of three uniforms for each officer as well as the normal wear and tear and replacement expenses experienced each year. The recommended budget from the manager is $64,900.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments. Commissioner Taylor, regarding new uniforms, noted they are requesting $159,900 which will provide all sworn and detention staff with three (3) uniforms. Discussion continued on uniforms and associated health benefits. Commissioner Abele expressed his support for the new uniforms and a brief discussion ensued. Board members were individually polled, and all supported the request.

Consensus: To include a total of $159,900 in the FY 22-23 budget for new uniforms for the Sheriff's Office and Detention staff.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL**

3. <u>Jail Personnel Positions:</u> The jail requested (a) the renewal of the sworn Lieutenant position and the (b) reclassification of the DCI/Classification/PREA position from detention officer to Sergeant.

A. The Lieutenant position has become a vital and necessary part of the daily jail operations. This position provides a sworn officer with the ability to serve warrants; perform local and state transports of inmates to DPS facilities; provides a full-time, on-site training coordinator, General Instructor, ASP Baton and OC Spray instructor allowing for faster training time for new hires; and provides another Lieutenant for on-call rotation schedule. Additionally, this position is able to fill-in for shift supervisors when short-staffed, provides a sworn officer to supervise inmates when in a hospital setting, can temporarily perform certain duties of the Captain when he is unavailable, and assists the Sheriff's Office fleet Sergeant with maintenance scheduling of jail vehicles.

B. The DCI/Classification/PREA officer is a mandatory position that is currently occupied by a detention officer. This position is required to provide guidance and instruction on a level beyond that afforded to routine detention officers. Some of the duties include training other officers, instruction in completion of forms, classifying and instructing shift supervisors on housing requirements for inmates, and conducting PREA investigations for any accusations made against subordinate officers.

C. Neither of the two positions were recommended by the manager.

Sheriff Whisenant responded to questions from the Board. The cost of the Jail Lieutenant position was estimated at $44,710 for six months. Board members were polled, and all were in favor of funding the Lieutenant's position (six months only) and the DCI Classification position reclassification.

Consensus: To include funding in the FY 22-23 budget for the Jail Lieutenant's position for six months and the DCI/Classification/PREA Officer position reclassification.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL**

4. <u>Software Subscriptions:</u> This expense line is utilized by the Sheriff's Office to cover the reoccurring expense of software subscriptions such as Leads Online ($6,630.00), which is used to track locate stolen items surrendered to pawn shops and scrap metal facilities; TLO monthly access ($2,500.00), which is used to locate individuals during investigations and the Callyo System ($7,100.00), which is used for clandestine drug operations. In addition, we requested a LEFTA system ($11,475), or something comparable, to meet the statutory requirements under Senate Bill 300 in order to maintain and track critical areas of officer training, citizen complaints, officer conduct issues such as traffic incidents, use of force or disciplinary actions, etc. throughout the officer's entire career.

A. We requested $27,705 to purchase the software listed above but we were recommended for $15,510.

Sheriff Whisenant responded to questions from the Board. At the request of the County Manager, Margaret Pierce, Deputy Co. Manager/Finance Director, advised that the expensive Motorola software the County recently purchased for 911 addresses the requirements of Senate Bill 300. Sheriff's Office personnel advised that Flex software does not cover everything required by Senate Bill 300.

Board members were polled, and after a short discussion, all were in favor of granting the request.

Consensus: To include a total of $27,705 in the FY 22-23 budget for software subscriptions.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL

5. <u>Maintenance and Repair For Current Equipment:</u> This line includes the service agreement for Idemia/AFIS fingerprinting ($7,100.00), which the Sheriff's Office and Jail uses to fingerprint arrestees, new employee hires, citizens applying for concealed carry permits and citizens whose employment requires fingerprinting; radar certifications for currently in-use radar units ($2,800.00); Starwitness ($2,500.00), which allows the monitoring and recording of interviews and interrogations including statutory requirements to record capital and other certain crimes and ($2000.00) for unexpected equipment repairs.

A. We requested $14,500 to cover these expenses but were recommended for $8,200.00.

Board members were polled and after a short discussion, all were in favor of granting the request.

Consensus: To include a total of $14,500 in the FY 22-23 budget for maintenance and repair for current equipment.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL

6. <u>Patrol Vehicles:</u> We requested 14 Ford Explorers at a cost of $663,000 but were recommended for $379,000 which will purchase eight (8) Ford Explorers.

A. We had historically been on a path to replace most of our vehicles with over 100,000 miles. We now have 29 vehicles with over 100,000 and some with over 150,000 miles.

B. With the demand placed on patrol vehicles and with significant maintenance issues with the Dodge Chargers' front ends and engine cams, we believe the cost of repairs and safety makes keeping a majority of our vehicles under 100,000 miles as the most economical and safest plan.

Sheriff Whisenant responded to questions from the Board. At the request of the County Manager, Ms. Pierce, Deputy Co. Manager/Finance Director, advised that eight (8) vehicles have been purchased each year. A general discussion ensued. Board members were polled, and all were in favor of including funding for ten (10) vehicles in the budget.

Consensus: To include $484,800 in the FY 22-23 budget for ten (10) patrol vehicles.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL

7. <u>Training:</u> The training budget for the Sheriff's Office includes firearms training, mandatory Sheriff's Association training, specialized training for specialty positions such as investigators, field trainers, school resource and SWAT, and our required training. We also requested additional funds to cover the expenses of sending six (6) new recruits to BLET training. The practice of hiring and paying BLET cadets has become the norm for us and surroundings counties in order to recruit new officers. The Sheriff's Office has had positive experiences with this method that encourages vital recruitment. We graduated seven (7) recruits on May 20, 20022. The amount requested by the Sheriff's Office in this line is $22,500.00. The amount recommended for approval is $10,000.00, which would not allow funding of the BLET recruitment option to fill a critical number of current vacancies.

A. Our current FY 21/22-line item was funded at $9,500.00 and the Sheriff's Office was required to submit budget amendments in the amount of $15,000.00 to cover necessary training expenses during this FY 21/22. We ask that our $22,500 budget request be granted.

Chairman Mulwee and Commissioner Brittain expressed support for the training funds. A short discussion ensued. Board members were polled, and all were in favor of granting the request.

Consensus: To include a total of $22,500 in the FY 22-23 budget for training.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL

8. Equipment: The Sheriff's Office has secured a grant to purchase items necessary in the event of a civil unrest incident such as occurred at the historical courthouse regarding the statute. It is necessary for the Sheriff's Office to secure a trailer to both store these items and transport them in the event of a civil unrest incident.

A. Commissioners discussed last year if the SO was able to obtain the civil unrest gear, then the civil unrest trailer would be purchased. The trailer was not recommended by the manager. We ask that the trailer be funded at a cost of $11,000.

A general discussion ensued and Sheriff Whisenant as well as Major Hinceman responded to questions from the Board. Board members were polled. Commissioners Brittain, Carswell and Taylor were in favor of granting the request. However, Commissioner Abele was opposed, and Chairman Mulwee thought it was more of a wish list item.

Consensus: To include $11,000 in the FY 22-23 budget for a civil unrest trailer.

RESULT:	APPROVED [MAJORITY CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL

9. Other items:

A. We believe the items requested above are significant and high priorities.

B. The following list would greatly enhance and advance our Sheriff Office to an even greater level of service for our citizens. Those requests include a new Civil Process Administrative Assistant; a Field Training Officer (FTO) Coordinator, additional pay for our FTOs who are training our new officers, an additional deputy for our four patrol shifts, purchase of "The Sheriff's Apt", funding an Explorer program (high school students) to begin a long-term program to help solve recruitment problems, and increase funds for ammunition. Lastly, we requested the funding of two (2) APX 8000 Radios to provide external communication between our jail staff and the "outside world" (that includes our emergency communications center and law enforcement officers) in the event of a jail emergency and/or loss of landline phone service.

A general discussion ensued. Board members were polled, and no one was in favor of granting the request.

RESULT:	DENIED [UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL

RECESS OF THE MEETING

At 3:49 p.m., the Board took a short break. The meeting resumed at 3:55 p.m. All Board members and staff were present.

BUDGET IMPACT

Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, said with the additions from today's meeting, an additional appropriation of General Fund, Fund Balance in the amount of

$1,100,163 of will be required to balance the budget, bringing the total fund balance appropriation to $3,066,788. Commissioner Abele asked how much that would leave in General Fund, Fund Balance. Ms. Pierce said approximately $12 million. She said the General Fund is now approximately $100,574,735 and the Solid Waste Fund is now approximately $6,240,285.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

BOC - CANCELLATION OF JUNE 2 BUDGET MEETING
Chairman Mulwee advised that if the Board is comfortable in its review of the FY 22-23 recommended budget, then the Board may wish to consider cancelling the budget meeting scheduled for June 2nd. At this time, staff does not have any other information to present to the Board at that meeting and Chairman Mulwee stated his intent to be out of town.

Motion: To cancel the June 2, 2022, budget meeting.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER:	Wayne F. Abele, Sr., Commissioner
AYES:	Scott Mulwee, Johnnie W. Carswell, Wayne F. Abele, Sr., Jeffrey C. Brittain and Maynard M. Taylor

Note: Members of the public and the media were notified of the cancellation.

ADJOURN
Motion: To adjourn at 4:01 p.m.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] BY A VERBAL ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER:	Maynard M. Taylor, Commissioner
AYES:	Scott Mulwee, Johnnie W. Carswell, Wayne F. Abele, Sr., Jeffrey C. Brittain and Maynard M. Taylor

Approved this 17th day of January 2023.

Scott Mulwee, Chairman
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board