

GRANVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
August 5, 2024
GRANVILLE EXPO AND CONVENTION CENTER
4185 US Highway 15 South, Oxford, North Carolina

PRESENT:

Chair Timothy Karan
Vice Chair Jimmy Gooch
Commissioner Zelodis Jay
Commissioner Robert Williford
Commissioner Sue Hinman
Commissioner Tony W. Cozart
Commissioner Russ May

County Manager Drew Cummings
Deputy County Manager Korena Weichel
County Attorney James C. Wrenn, Jr.

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:01 p.m. Chair Timothy Karan called the meeting to order. Commissioner Robert Williford had the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

A revised Budget Amendment #2 agenda item for was provided on this date.

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the consent agenda as follows:

A. Approved Budget Amendment #2 for fiscal year 2024-2025.

BUDGET AMENDMENT No 2
August 5, 2024
Legal Document

Be it ordained, the FY 2024-2025 Annual Budget Ordinance is hereby amended as follows:

GENERAL FUND

Expenditures	Increase	Decrease	Total
General Government			\$ 11,885
Finance	\$ 1,337	\$ -	
Human Resources	\$ 10,548	\$ -	
Public Safety			176,828
Sheriff's Office	\$ 1,492	\$ -	
Emergency Management	\$ 66,670	\$ -	
Emergency Services	\$ 5,000	\$ -	
911 Operations	\$ 79,992	\$ -	
Animal Control	\$ 23,674	\$ -	
Community Services			173,469
Cooperative Extension Service	\$ 96	\$ -	
County Library System	\$ 7,772	\$ -	
Construction Administration &	\$ 10,967	\$ -	
Construction Projects	\$ 154,634	\$ -	
Human Services			37,246
Veterans Services	\$ 6,105	\$ -	
Oxford Senior Center	\$ 11,141	\$ -	
Senior Center - North	\$ 5,000	\$ -	
Senior Center - South	\$ 7,500	\$ -	
Creative Lifetime Learning	\$ 7,500	\$ -	
Area Projects and Other Appropriations			16,391
Non-Departmental	\$ 13,750	\$ -	
Pass Thru Funds	\$ 2,641	\$ -	

Contributions to Other Funds & Contingencies.		-\$50,000	
Contributions & Transfers	\$	-	\$ -
Contingencies	\$	-	\$ 50,000
		Total Expenditures	365,819
Revenues			
Restricted and Intergovernmental	\$	64,334	\$ -
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	301,485	\$ -
		Total Revenues	\$365,819

B. Approved Triangle North Project Ordinance Amendment #1 for fiscal year 2024-2025.

Project Ordinance
Triangle North - Water and Sewer
Budget Amendment #1 (during Fiscal Year 2025)
Budget Amendment #3 for Project Ordinance
August 5, 2024
LEGAL DOCUMENT

Be it ordained, the Triangle North - Water and Sewer Project Budget Ordinance is hereby amended as follows:

Expenditures	Increase	Decrease	Total
Triangle North - Water & Sewer		1,598,385	\$ (1,598,385)
Escrow Hold - Road Improvements	1,598,385		\$ 1,598,385
Total Expenditures			\$ -

C. Approved resolution for new Fire and Rescue District funds investment account.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE OPENING OF NEW INVESTMENT ACCOUNT
FOR THE FIRE AND RESCUE DISTRICT FUND

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners desires to open a new account with the North Carolina Capital Management Trust for the purpose of investing Fire and Rescue District funds in an interest-bearing account pursuant to North Carolina General Statute §159-30 and 20 North Carolina Administrative Code 3.0703.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Granville County, North Carolina while in Session on the 5th day of August 2024, as follows:

- (1) The Finance Director is hereby authorized to open a new interest-bearing account with North Carolina Capital Management Trust for the purpose of investing Fire and Rescue District funds pursuant to North Carolina General Statute §159-30 and 20 North Carolina Administrative Code 3.0703; and
- (2) The County Manager, Finance Director, and Clerk to the Board are authorized as signers on the account authorized herein; and
- (3) The Finance Director is hereby authorized to execute such documents as necessary to complete the opening of the new account authorized herein; and
- (4) The Finance Director is hereby authorized to invest Fire and Rescue District funds as authorized by North Carolina General Statute §159-30.

D. Approved the following tax refunds, releases, and write-offs:

- Refunds June 20, 2024 – July 24, 2024: \$ 13,272.49
- Releases June 20, 2024 – July 24, 2024: \$ 4,930.18
- Write-offs (\$2 and less) June 20, 2024 – July 24, 2024: \$ 127.84

E. Approved a 4% annual merit pay increase for the Elections Director as recommended by the Granville County Board of Elections in accordance with N.C.G.S. 163-35(c).

F. Approved awarding the contract to Dribben & Associates CPAs, PLLC to perform the annual agreed-upon procedures report based on a review of cash receipts, disbursements, and changes in cash balances prepared according to generally accepted

accounting principles (GAAP) as required by the 2023 Fire Protection Agreement between the County and the twelve (12) Volunteer Fire departments; and furthermore, Board authorized the County Attorney to draft a contract based on the proposal for a flat fee of \$3,368 per volunteer fire department for an amount not to exceed \$45,000 and authorized the County Manager to execute the contract document.

G. Approved revisions to Granville County I.T. Policy.

H. Approved minutes:

- June 17, 2024 Regular Meeting
- July 1, 2024 Regular Meeting

INTRODUCTIONS, RECOGNITIONS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Board Presented Plaque in Recognition of Service to Angela Crawford

Chair Karan invited Angela Crawford to come forward. Commissioner Cozart made remarks and presented the following plaque in recognition of Crawford's service during her time with the Granville County Department of Social Services:

Angela Crawford
Granville County Social Services
April 1, 1988 – July 31, 2024
In Recognition of Outstanding Service
To The Citizens of Granville County
Presented by
The Granville County Board of Commissioners
August 5, 2024

Board Received Presentation from the Summer Civic Youth Leadership Program and Board Presented Certificates of Recognition and Education Stipends

Lina Howe, the 4-H Cooperative Extension Agent in Granville County, explained that the Summer Civic Youth Leadership Program is a collaborative effort involving various County departments to provide rising seniors with hands-on work experience and knowledge about their local community. Interns are required to complete at least 120 hours of work, attend a three-day orientation, become CPR certified, and participate in weekly cohort days to learn more about their community. She then invited each of the five interns to come forward and present on their experiences.

- Praley Williams (Granville Early College High School)
- Destani Harris (Granville Central High School)
- Leah Scott (Henderson Collegiate High School)
- Jazmin Santiago-Barrera (Granville Early College High School)
- Madison Martinez-Molina (South Granville High School)

Praley Williams shared that she aspires to become a police officer and potentially an FBI agent. Her summer internship gave her insights into county government operations and allowed her to work at various locations, including the 911 call center, which she found particularly beneficial given her career interests.

Destani Harris expressed how her internship, particularly in the Emergency Management department, was impactful. She enjoyed activities like building inspections and using a fire extinguisher, appreciating the supportive environment, especially in relation to safety during outings.

Leah Scott highlighted her experiences at the Cooperative Extension as transformative, where she learned budgeting and CPR, among other skills. She also gained insights into city government through a visit to Oxford City Hall, where she was struck by the personable nature of political figures.

Jazmin Santiago-Barrera discussed her experiences in Administration, where she learned about various career opportunities and the workings of local government. She appreciated the mentorship and the exposure to different community aspects, which clarified her career aspirations.

Madison Martinez-Molina appreciated her time at the Finance office, finding the exposure to government financial operations aligning with her academic interests in economics and international business. She enjoyed the work environment and the critical role the department plays in managing the County's finances.

Howe thanked the following departments for their voluntary participation:

- Administration
- Animal Management
- Department of Social Services
- Emergency Management
- Granville County Cooperative Extension/4-H
- Human Resources
- Tax Administration
- Tourism
- Waste Management

Chair Karan stepped forward to present each intern with a \$1,400 education stipend and a certificate.

Board Received Presentation by Kaylee Overby, the 2024 Youth Voice Delegate

Line Howe introduced Kaylee Overby, an active member of the Pop Shots 4-H Club and the Granville County Youth Leadership Council. She highlighted Overby's commitment to enhancing her leadership skills and civic engagement through 4-H. Howe expressed gratitude for the sponsorship that allowed Overby to attend the August 8, 2024 – August 10, 2024 annual NCACC conference as the 2024 NCACC Youth Voice delegate.

Kaylee Overby expressed gratitude for the opportunity to attend the NCACC annual conference and spoke about the significant impact that Granville County 4-H has had on her development. She recounted her roles within the organization, including serving as secretary for the Spurs and Buckles 4-H Group and treasurer for the Pop Shots 4-H Group, which enhanced her leadership skills, organization, financial responsibility, and transparency. Overby also shared her passion for shooting sports, like compound archery and .22 pistol shooting, highlighting the discipline and patience these activities have instilled in her. Additionally, she is involved in the Granville County Youth Leadership Council, where she contributes to the Our Minds Matter campaign and other projects, enhancing her ability to make a positive community impact. Overby credited Granville County 4-H with providing valuable growth opportunities and mentorship, which she believes will benefit her future endeavors.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ralph Steele, 1178 Beaver Dam Road, Creedmoor, NC, spoke about his dissatisfaction with the recent property revaluation and the associated tax increase in Granville County. He was surprised by the high valuation of his property and considered appealing but decided against it after reading about the revenue-neutral tax rate, which he expected would keep his taxes roughly the same. Despite expecting a modest increase due to rising costs, he was shocked by a 25% increase and noted that others in the county saw even higher increases. Steele stated that there is a lack of transparency and ethical conduct in government, along with a disconnect between the promises made and actions taken. He said that the term "revenue-neutral" used in communications was misleading. He questioned whether the Commissioners could be trusted, emphasizing the importance of honesty and straightforwardness in governance.

David Doneldson, 212 Deer Lane, Kittrell, NC, expressed his concerns about the significant increase in his property tax, which he said rose by 41.5% following an 89% increase in his property valuation. He noted that he did not receive a letter about a revenue-neutral tax rate and was expecting a more modest increase of 15-20%. Doneldson questioned the justification for such a steep tax hike, saying it was his understanding that the county budget only increased by about 6%. He asked for clarification on where the additional funds were being allocated, especially given his understanding that there was no line item for debt payment or contingency fees, and he believed there to be a reduction in school funding. He sought an explanation from the officials about the distribution of the tax revenue.

Maggie Davies, 2746 Michelle Court, Creedmoor, NC, shared her concerns about significant property tax increases affecting her and her family, with her own taxes rising by 47%. She said that despite assurances of minimal impact due to a revenue-neutral tax rate, she and others experienced substantial increases. As a widow of a retired military serviceman and a retiree herself, she emphasized the financial strain on those with fixed incomes, including people on disability and social security, who are facing much smaller increases in their income compared to the tax hikes. She mentioned a neighborhood discussion forum where over 7,000 people reacted, highlighting the widespread concern over the affordability of such tax increases.

Anna Elliott, 2486 Patton Lane, Franklinton, NC, expressed her frustration at a recent property tax increase that coincided with property revaluations, which she said resulted in a significant financial burden for her family. She criticized the Board and County Manager for approving the tax increase, especially during a time when she and her husband are already struggling financially, working multiple jobs to make ends meet. Elliott also highlighted concerns about potential homeowner insurance rate increases and questioned the County's financial management, particularly regarding the ownership of a county hospital which she felt could be sold to fund the county's budget. She argued that the hospital was not adequately serving the financially needy in the community. Additionally, she mentioned a reported budget shortfall in the county's finances, suggesting mismanagement. Elliott concluded by thanking Commissioner Russ May for voting against the tax increase, appreciating his consideration for the financial strain on county residents.

Joan Roberson, 502 North Country Club Drive, Oxford, NC, expressed surprise and dissatisfaction at a recent decision to give a raise to the Director of Elections, which was included in the consent agenda of a Board of Commissioners meeting. She was concerned not only about the decision to grant a raise but also about the inclusion of such a significant item in the consent agenda without broader discussion. She said that during a previous board meeting, the Director of Elections had discussed the heavy workload and the need for more staff, suggesting that at least five additional full-time employees were necessary, but the County did not approve this request. Roberson also criticized the management of voter rolls in Oxford,

saying there were numerous inaccuracies such as deceased individuals remaining on the rolls for years, duplicate registrations, and residents who had moved away still being listed. Furthermore, she said there was a significant issue from 2022 where approximately 6,000 to 8,000 residents in District 3 were denied the opportunity to vote due to administrative errors, which she claimed the State later acknowledged should have been addressed in time for the primaries.

Alaina Wilson, 1049 Bluebell Lane, Wake Forest, NC, expressed gratitude to the Granville County Sheriff's Office, and specifically Sheriff Fountain, for their efforts in dismantling a cockfighting operation near her home on Lawrence Road. She appreciated the action against animal cruelty in southern Granville County and expressed a desire for continued enforcement and additional charges related to animal cruelty in the future.

Deja Borders, 109 Church Street, Henderson, NC, introduced herself and her organization, Genesis Project, which serves mental health patients and those recovering from substance abuse across eight counties. She spoke at the meeting to offer her company's services to the community and expressed a desire to connect with individuals who could help enhance their outreach. Borders invited attendees to meet her personally at the end of the meeting to discuss potential collaborations.

Mark C. Griffin, 1629 Tally Ho, Road, Oxford, NC, highlighted the critical lack of broadband internet service in his community, describing it as a significant shortfall that particularly impacted the youth during the COVID-19 pandemic when they struggled with remote learning. He announced that Representative Sossamon is hosting two forums on broadband internet access, encouraging residents to attend and engage with the issue. The forums aim to provide a platform for discussing challenges and finding solutions to improve internet service. The sessions are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, with one at Perry Memorial Library in Henderson and the other in Oxford. Griffin urged the community to participate and hold service providers accountable.

County Manager Drew Cummings, when invited to speak by Chair Karan, responded to the various concerns about property taxes and the revaluation process during the meeting. He clarified that the County does not set property values but reflects market evaluations, and there was a comprehensive appeal process available. Despite the requirement to publish a revenue-neutral rate, the actual tax rate set by Commissioners can differ, and this was communicated through multiple channels. He acknowledged the significant increases in property taxes and provided reasons for deviations from the revenue-neutral rate, including the necessity to fund the volunteer fire departments and EMS systems adequately, to address public safety employees' salary disparities, and to plan for future capital needs including maintenance for schools and community college facilities. He also noted the underperformance of sales tax revenues as a factor in the tax rate decision. The budget, as adopted, aimed to address these comprehensive County needs and was ultimately approved by the Commissioners.

When Commissioner May asked about broadband initiatives, County Manager Cummings discussed the constraints and progress in expanding internet access in Granville County. Cummings explained that federal funding has been instrumental since COVID-19 began, allowing the County to secure funds to connect thousands of new locations, especially in unserved areas. He noted potential future funding opportunities that could further enhance broadband access without requiring a County match. Cummings also clarified that State legislation prohibits local governments from competing with private internet service providers, which limits the County's direct involvement in broadband expansion. Despite these restrictions, the County is actively pursuing available federal and state incentives to improve internet service in rural areas.

Additionally, Cummings addressed a query about school funding, confirming that funding for Granville County public schools increased by \$1.5 million, primarily for capital maintenance needs.

SHERIFF MATTERS

Board Approved Extending Current Consulting Contract Extension with Bailess LLC through September 30, 2024

Chair Karan introduced this item regarding the renewal of a consulting contract with Bailess LLC for services provided by Robert Bailess.

County Attorney Jim Wrenn recommended extending the current contract for Bailess until September 30, allowing time for further discussions between Sheriff Fountain, Mr. Bailess, and himself before bringing it back to the Board for review.

Sheriff Fountain agreed with this approach, requesting the Board to table the matter until the end of September to refine the process.

County Manager Cummings clarified that the proposal was to approve the contract for a shorter period than originally planned.

When asked if the extension was for the current year, 2024, County Attorney Wrenn confirmed.

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, Board approved extending the current consulting contract with Bailess LLC through September 30, 2024.

Sheriff Fountain provided an update, expressing appreciation for his staff's hard work during a busy week. He mentioned ongoing charges related to a recent event and collaboration with federal agencies, including Immigration and Homeland Security, to deport certain individuals and pursue asset forfeiture on abandoned vehicles. He thanked the community and various supporting agencies, such as 911 Communications, Animal Management, and the State Highway Patrol, for their assistance in the operation, which ran from Friday to early Sunday morning.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Board Approved Heating and Cooling Replacement for Granville County Courthouse

Development Services Director Scott Phillips presented a request to award a fixed-price service agreement for replacing two 3.0-ton heating and cooling units at the Granville County Courthouse. The existing units, which are 36 years old, have outlived their anticipated lifecycle and need replacement. Granville County requested fixed-price proposals from area service firms, receiving two responsive proposals, with a third being nonresponsive. Killian Engineering evaluated the proposed systems for performance and price, recommending a single-stage compressor unit with a variable speed air handling unit to address excessive humidity in the basement document storage areas.

When Commissioner Hinman asked if the heating and cooling units being replaced would be included in the upcoming courthouse renovations, Mr. Phillips responded that they likely would not. He explained that the 36-year-old units were causing humidity issues in the basement and, although they had not yet failed, the replacement was a proactive measure.

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, and unanimously carried, Board approved awarding a fixed-price service agreement to Gupton Services, Inc. for the replacement of two (2) heating and cooling units at the Granville County Courthouse for an amount not to exceed \$18,524 unless authorized by an approved change request; furthermore, Board authorized the County Attorney to finalize the contract and the County Manager to execute the contract document.

Board Approved Construction Materials Testing for North Granville Senior Center

Development Services Director Scott Phillips presented a request to award a unit-price service agreement for construction materials testing at the North Granville Senior Center in Stovall, NC. The purpose of the testing is to ensure the quality of materials and work, including soil compaction, concrete testing, foundation soil bearing capacity, and asphalt pavement density. Granville County evaluated several firms and found ESP Associates, Inc. to be the most suitable for the project. Although the estimated budget for services is \$36,666, the final cost will depend on the contractor's schedule and construction methods. The recommendation included exempting the County from the "Mini-Brooks Act" due to the estimated fees being under \$50,000 and awarding the service agreement to ESP Associates, Inc. Additionally, a \$10,000 contingency was recommended for unforeseen services.

When Commissioner Williford asked if the money was already budgeted, Mr. Phillips confirmed that it was included in the project ordinance.

Motioned by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, the Board approved exempting the County from the requirements of the "Mini-Brooks Act" based on the fees being estimated at less than \$50,000; approved awarding a unit-price service agreement to ESP Associates, Inc. for construction materials testing for the North Granville Senior Center located at 303 Oxford Street in Stovall, NC, for an estimated amount of \$36,666; authorized the County Attorney to finalize the contract and the County Manager to execute the contract document; and approved a contingency of \$10,000 for services not anticipated based on the contractor's schedule and methods of construction.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

Board Approved NC Department of Commerce Main Street and Rural Planning Center Strategic Plan Proposal

Economic Development Director Joe Stallings presented a preliminary request for approval to conduct a five-year countywide economic development strategic plan initiative in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Main Street and Rural Planning Center. He explained that after meeting with representatives in June 2024, it was determined that such a plan would be beneficial for Granville County, which currently does not have a strategic economic development plan in place. The initiative was supported by the Economic Development Advisory Board, and if approved by the commissioners, formal documents will be prepared for review at the September board meeting.

When asked about the cost to the County, Director Stallings informed the board that the North Carolina Department of Commerce would charge no more than \$600. He highlighted that the strategic plan would include valuable initiatives such as labor force research, asset mapping, retail market snapshots, countywide surveys, economic development positioning and visioning, and conducting focus groups throughout the county. This approach aims to involve more citizens in the economic development future and strategic planning, offering community outreach and involvement at an unbeatable rate.

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the North Carolina Department of Commerce Main Street and Rural Planning Center proposal to conduct a 5-year countywide economic development strategic plan and authorized staff to prepare the formal contract, resolution, and memorandum of understanding for presentation at an upcoming Board meeting.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS MATTERS

Board Approved TDMA Radio Upgrade

Emergency Communications Director Stacy Hicks presented a request for the approval of a TDMA radio upgrade for the Emergency Communications Center. The VIPER system used by Granville County is being upgraded to Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA) technology, which increases the efficiency of radio frequencies by doubling the capacity for concurrent conversations. This upgrade is necessary to ensure the County's communications infrastructure remains current and capable of handling increasing demands. All radios must be TDMA ready by July 1, 2025, requiring upgrades or replacements of existing equipment. The total cost for the upgrade is \$30,037.75.

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the purchase and installation of the TDMA radio upgrade for the Emergency Communications Center from Motorola Solutions in the amount of \$30,037.75 and authorized the County Manager to execute the contract document once finalized by the County Attorney.

Board Approved Priority Dispatch License Service Agreement

Emergency Communications Director Stacy Hicks presented a request to approve the renewal of the license service agreement with Priority Dispatch for Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) and Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD) services. The system is essential for providing pre-arrival instructions and prioritizing emergency responses. The renewal includes licensing, technical support, and updates to ensure dispatchers have the latest tools and training. The total cost for the renewal is \$10,240.

Motioned by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the renewal of the license service agreement with Priority Dispatch for Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) and Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD) services in the amount of \$10,240 and authorized the County Manager to execute the contract document once finalized by the County Attorney.

APPOINTMENTS

Board Approved Reappointment to the Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control Financing Authority

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, board reappointed Chris M. Bass to the Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control Financing Authority District 5 seat.

Board held District 7 seat.

Board Approved Appointment to the Research Triangle Regional Partnership (RTRP)

Economic Development Director Joe Stallings informed the Board that Joshua Florio, the Vice President at Ontic and the supervisor of the previous board member Javier Hernandez, had

agreed to serve as the new representative on the Research Triangle Regional Partnership (RTRP) board.

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commission Jimmy Gooch, and unanimously carried, Board appointed Joshua Florio to the Research Triangle Regional Partnership board.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

Appreciation for Summer Youth Civic Leadership Program

County Manager Cummings expressed gratitude to the staff who worked with the participants of the Summer Youth Civic Leadership Program. He praised the presentations given by the youth and acknowledged the efforts of the staff in providing a valuable summer experience for the participants. He humorously noted that the boys have some work to do to match the impressive presentations given by the girls.

Budget Clarifications and Addressing Rumors

County Manager Cummings addressed budget-related concerns circulating within the community. He clarified that there are no missing or misappropriated funds and that the County has fully reserved funding for all economic development incentive contracts. He also assured that there are no current grant agreements where the County is not meeting its match obligations.

Cummings acknowledged an error in the budget process, stating that not all the funding intended for the capital improvement plan was included in the current year's budget. He took responsibility for this oversight but emphasized that there are sufficient revenues in the adopted budget to cover all specific commitments made by the Board, including new capital outlay funding for Granville County public schools, Vance Granville Community College, and debt service for the North Granville Senior Center. He concluded by offering to answer any questions from the Commissioners.

When Commissioner May asked for clarification on the varying percentages of tax increases mentioned by residents during public comments, County Manager Cummings explained that the differences in tax increases are due to a variety of factors. He noted that property values in different parts of the county appreciated at different rates, and the type of property, any additions, and its condition all contribute to the final tax increase. Cummings emphasized that while municipal tax rates can also impact the overall increase, the specifics of each property play a significant role in determining the exact tax change.

When Commissioner May asked about opportunities for tax appraisal adjustments in January, County Manager Cummings explained that administrative errors, such as incorrect square footage or misclassification, could be corrected at any time.

County Attorney Wrenn elaborated by reading from General Statute 105-287, which outlines the conditions under which property values can be adjusted in non-reappraisal years. These conditions include correcting clerical or mathematical errors, correcting appraisal errors due to misapplication of standards, recognizing changes in value from conservation or preservation agreements, recognizing physical changes to the land or improvements, and changes in the legally permitted use of the property.

Attorney Wrenn clarified that property values are presumed to remain as last appraised unless one of these conditions applies. Adjustments cannot be made for physical depreciation,

economic changes affecting the county in general, or non-commercial betterments to the property.

Commissioner May emphasized the importance of providing ample notice to the public before January for any lawful adjustments.

Attorney Wrenn summarized that while there are specific statutory reasons for adjustments, it is not an opportunity for a second appeal if none was filed this year.

County Manager's Report

County Manager Cummings did not have any further items to report.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Board Approved Resolution Authorizing Execution of Kroger Opioid Settlement and Approving the Second Supplemental Agreement for Additional Funds

County Attorney Wrenn presented a resolution for the Board to authorize the execution of the Kroger opioid settlement and approve the second supplemental agreement for additional funds. He explained that a nationwide settlement had been reached in the Kroger opioid litigation, with a total settlement of \$1.37 billion. North Carolina state and local governments could potentially receive just over \$40 million between 2024 and 2034 to address the opioid crisis, provided all relevant requirements are met.

Attorney Wrenn sought the Board's approval to execute the necessary paperwork to join the settlement agreement and be eligible to receive the funds.

When asked if other counties were participating, Attorney Wrenn stated that it was recommended by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, and to his knowledge, no counties had opted out. He advised that not approving the settlement would leave money on the table and put the County outside the norm.

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, Board approved the Resolution Authorizing Execution of Kroger Opioid Settlement and Approving the Second Supplemental Agreement for Additional Funds; and further authorized the County Attorney and/or County Manager to electronically sign the Kroger Settlement and SAAF-2 by August 12, 2024.

County Attorney's Report

County Attorney Wrenn did not have any further items to report.

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS

Commissioner Gooch expressed his gratitude to the young participants of the Summer Civic Youth Leadership Program, recognizing their impressive sense of direction and purpose at such a young age. He also thanked the County Manager for his hard work and perseverance, acknowledging challenges encountered along the way.

Commissioner Jay echoed appreciation for the Summer Civic Youth Leadership Program participants. He thanked the County Manager, those who attended the meeting, and staff members in the audience for their contributions and involvement in the County.

Commissioner Williford briefly expressed his gratitude to the staff and County Manager, and he gave a special acknowledgment to the Sheriff's Office for their recent work in the southern end of the county, appreciating their efforts in addressing the issue.

Commissioner Hinman thanked Mark Griffin for reminding everyone about the broadband information sessions hosted by Representative Sossamon. The upcoming forum was scheduled for August 7, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. at the Granville County Convention and Expo Center. She also expressed gratitude to DSS Director LaToya Toussaint and her team, recognizing their commitment to serving both senior citizens and young people. As chair of the DSS board, she emphasized the importance of understanding the department's work in order to provide better support.

Commissioner Cozart expressed his gratitude to DSS Director LaToya Toussaint for assembling a strong team and congratulated her on their efforts. He also commended the Summer Civic Youth Leadership Program student interns for their articulate presentations and expressed pride in their work. Additionally, he noted the return of teachers and extended well wishes to all students and staff for a safe and successful school year.

Commissioner May expressed his appreciation to those who spoke during the meeting, acknowledging their concerns and letting them know that the Board is listening. He mentioned the ongoing efforts to enhance broadband in the county and the pursuit of grants to support these initiatives. He also discussed two studies currently underway in the county: the CAMPO Corridor study and the Blueprint for Safety study, both of which involve community input. Commissioner May commended the Sheriff's Office for their work on a recent cockfighting investigation, recognizing the complexity and resource demands of such cases. He concluded by asking County Attorney Wrenn to explain the statutory guidelines regarding the pay increase for the Director of the Board of Elections.

County Attorney Wrenn explained that North Carolina General Statutes establish a distinction between the Board of Elections and the County Board of Commissioners to maintain the independence and integrity of elections. According to NCGS 163-35(c), the compensation for directors of elections must be recommended by the County Board of Elections and approved by the County Board of Commissioners, ensuring that it is commensurate with the salary of directors in similarly situated counties. Attorney Wrenn clarified that the County Board of Commissioners does not evaluate the performance of the director of elections but must approve the recommended salary if it aligns with comparable counties. In response to Commissioner May's follow-up question, Wrenn confirmed that the salary recommended for Director Tonya Burnett was commensurate with those in similar counties.

Chair Karan commended the Sheriff's Office for their work, particularly in recent drug busts, and expressed appreciation for their efforts to keep the community safe. He recognized the difficulties county staff encounter, particularly during periods of public dissatisfaction, emphasizing that addressing these challenges is a fundamental responsibility of county government. Chair Karan also addressed concerns about the recent wet weather and potential upcoming storms, urging residents to be cautious on the roads, especially in areas with washouts or flooding. He advised reporting road hazards to the NC DOT using their online submission forms for a quicker response and emphasized safety precautions, such as properly venting generators and helping neighbors. He concluded by noting there were no additional matters for the Board and that there would be no closed session.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were no other matters for open session.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Commissioner Sue Hinman, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board