

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

5:00 P.M. – Closed Session

6:30 P.M. – Regular Session

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above stated date and time at the Columbus County Commissioners Chamber, 127 West Webster Street, Whiteville, North Carolina 28472, for the purpose of conducting a Regular Session.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Ricky Bullard, **Chairman**
 Giles E. Byrd, **Vice Chairman**
 Lavern Coleman
 Scott Floyd
 Barbara Featherson
 Brent Watts
 Chris Smith

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Eddie Madden, Jr., **County Manager**
 Amanda B. Prince, **Attorney**
 Jana Nealey, **Clerk to the Board**

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Agenda Item #1: MEETING CALLED to ORDER:

At 5:00 P.M. Chairman Ricky Bullard called the regular session meeting to order.

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into CLOSED SESSION in ACCORDANCE with N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(3) ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE, N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(4) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, and N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(6) PERSONNEL

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to recess regular session and enter into closed session, seconded by Commissioner Coleman. The motion unanimously passed.

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into CLOSED SESSION in ACCORDANCE with N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(3) ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE, N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(4) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, and N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(6) PERSONNEL

RECESS CLOSED SESSION and enter into REGULAR SESSION

MOTION:

Commissioner Watts made a motion to recess closed session and enter into regular session, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

GENERAL ACCOUNT:

Attorney Amanda Prince gave the general account as follows:

The board discussed (1) matter of pending litigation, (1) matter of possible future litigation, and (1) matter regarding Economic Development.

MOTION:

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the General Account, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

Chairman Bullard recessed regular session until 6:30 P.M.

Regular Session resumes at 6:30 P.M.

Agenda Items #2 and #3: INVOCATION and PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE:

The invocation was delivered by Commissioner Watts. Everyone in attendance stood and pledged Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America which was led by Commissioner Barbara Featherson.

Agenda Item #4: APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION:

Commissioner Coleman made a motion to approve the Agenda with discussed Add-ons 7b, 14a, and remove #9, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #5: BOARD MINUTES APPROVAL:

a. December 18, 2023 Special Called Meeting

MOTION:

Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed

Agenda Item #6: PUBLIC INPUT:

Columbus County Board of Commissioners

REQUEST #: <u>1</u> <small>(Leave this blank, Clerk will fill in)</small>	TIME REC'D: <u>6:20</u> P.M.	MEETING DATE: <u>01/16/24</u>
NAME: <u>Ammon</u> <u>McKENZIE</u>		
ADDRESS: <u>PO Box 1884</u> <u>Whiteville</u> <u>NC 28412</u>		
TELEPHONE: <u>(910) 840-0640</u>		
COMMENTS (if desired): <u>Road Improvement 410 Hwy</u>		

NOTE: Thank you for taking the time to address the Board with your information and concerns. Please give this card to the Clerk no later than thirty (30) minutes after the commencement of the meeting. This will aid in a smooth and harmonious meeting, and, in addition, give more people the opportunity to speak.

Ammon McKenzie commented on the issues with the roads on 410.

Agenda Item #7: ADMINISTRATION – EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

County Manager Eddie Madden recognized Tammy Vereen from Department of Social Services.

Agenda Item #7a: PROCLAMATION – HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH:

Lucy Byrd from Families First requested adoption of the National Human Trafficking Prevention Month January 2024.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watts. The motion unanimously passed.



Columbus County

**NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH JANUARY
2024**

WHEREAS: Human trafficking is a nationwide public health and civil rights crisis. Victims and survivors are everywhere, with Columbus County being no exception.

WHEREAS: Human Trafficking includes both labor and sex trafficking, with both international and domestic victims.

WHEREAS: Anyone can become a victim of trafficking. While women and girls are the primary victims, victims/survivors come from every background, race, gender, sexual orientation, and economic status. Traffickers target individuals who, for any reason, are vulnerable.

WHEREAS: Young people are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation but face many barriers in reporting what has happened to them. North Carolina became the 13th state to pass a “Safe Harbor” law that recognizes any youth under the age of 18 who comes forward will no longer face criminal prosecution - instead receiving comprehensive and trauma-informed services. This law seeks provides communities across North Carolina with the knowledge, skills and resources to effectively identify and work with sexually exploited and at-risk youth.

WHEREAS: We encourage victims to seek assistance from appropriate victims’ services organizations and the Families First, Inc. crisis hotline (910-641-0444). It is important to recognize the compassion and dedication of the individuals who provide services safely to human trafficking victims and work to increase public understanding of this significant problem.

WHEREAS: Everyone has the right to live free from abuse.

NOW, THEREFORE, Columbus County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim January 2024, National Human Trafficking Prevention Month throughout the county of Columbus and urge our community to assist victims with safe and accessible services such as Families First, Inc. This agency will provide information and supportive services while instituting effective intervention and prevention policies. The County of Columbus strives to become a place where human trafficking does not exist, where people have opportunities available to them, and where all people are treated as fully human and worthy of a supportive community and freedom.

APPROVED and ADOPTED this the 16th, day of January, 2024

Agenda Item #8: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – APPROVAL to CONTRACT with ATTORNEY ERNEST C. PEARSON on the BUILDING SPEC PROJECT:

Economic Development and Planning Director Gary Lanier requested approval to contract with Attorney Ernest C. Pearson on the Building Spec Project.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to conditionally approve the contract with the necessary modifications by the County Attorney Amanda Prince, seconded by Commissioner Featherson. The motion unanimously passed.

****The Copy of the contract is housed in the Clerk's Office****

Agenda Item #9: HISTORIC COURTHOUSE – UPDATE on RENOVATIONS to the HISTORIC COURTHOUSE by ARCHITECT LEE DIXON from COASTAL ARCHITECTURE:

*****THIS ITEM WAS REMOVED*****

Agenda Item #10: ADMINISTRATION – APPROVAL of the CONTRACT with COASTAL ARCHITECTURE for PROFESSIONAL DESIGN SERVICES of the SHERIFF'S OFFICE EXPANSION:

County Manager Eddie Madden requested approval of the contract with Coastal Architecture for professional design services of the Sheriff's Office expansion paid from the SCIF allocation.

MOTION:

Commissioner Coleman made a motion to conditionally approve the contract with the necessary modifications by the County Attorney Amanda Prince, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.



Standard Short Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect

AGREEMENT made as of the fifth day of January in the year two thousand twenty four
(In words, indicate day, month and year.)

BETWEEN the Owner:
(Name, legal status, address and other information)

Columbus County
127 W. Webster Street
Whiteville, NC

and the Architect:
(Name, legal status, address and other information)

Coastal Architecture pllc
4206 Bridges Street
Suite C
Morehead City, NC

for the following Project:
(Name, location and detailed description)

Columbus County Sheriff's Offices
805 Washington Street
Whiteville NC

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS:
The author of this document has added information needed for its completion. The author may also have revised the text of the original AIA standard form. An Additions and Deletions Report that notes added information as well as revisions to the standard form text is available from the author and should be reviewed. A vertical line in the left margin of this document indicates where the author has added necessary information and where the author has added to or deleted from the original AIA text.

This document has important legal consequences. Consultation with an attorney is encouraged with respect to its completion or modification.

The Owner and Architect agree as follows.
Building is approximately 20,000 SF to be located behind the current Sheriff's Department offices. Initial Building Construction Budget is estimated at \$5-6 million

ARTICLE 1 ARCHITECT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Architect shall provide architectural services for the Project as described in this Agreement. The Architect shall perform its services consistent with the professional skill and care ordinarily provided by architects practicing in the same or similar locality under the same or similar circumstances. The Architect shall perform its services as expeditiously as is consistent with such professional skill and care and the orderly progress of the Project. The Architect shall assist the Owner in determining consulting services required for the Project. The Architect's services include the following consulting services, if any:

The Architects services include, Architectural, Structural, Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical Engineering- Design thru Construction Administration, Civil Engineering, Erosion Control and Stormwater design and permitting is not included in this contract

During the Design Phase, the Architect shall review the Owner's scope of work, budget and schedule and reach an understanding with the Owner of the Project requirements. Based on the approved Project requirements, the Architect shall develop a design, which shall be set forth in drawings and other documents appropriate for the Project. Upon the Owner's approval of the design, the Architect shall prepare Construction Documents indicating requirements for construction of the Project and shall coordinate its services with any consulting services the Owner provides. The Architect shall assist the Owner in filing documents required for the approval of governmental authorities, in obtaining bids or proposals, and in awarding contracts for construction.

During the Construction Phase, the Architect shall act as the Owner's representative and provide administration of the Contract between the Owner and Contractor. The extent of the Architect's authority and responsibility during construction is described in AIA Document A105™-2017, Standard Short Form of Agreement Between Owner and Contractor. If the Owner and Contractor modify AIA Document A105-2017, those modifications shall not affect the Architect's services under this Agreement, unless the Owner and Architect amend this Agreement.

ARTICLE 2 OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Owner shall provide full information about the objectives, schedule, constraints and existing conditions of the Project, and shall establish a budget that includes reasonable contingencies and meets the Project requirements. The Owner shall provide decisions and furnish required information as expeditiously as necessary for the orderly progress of the Project. The Architect shall be entitled to rely on the accuracy and completeness of the Owner's information. The Owner shall furnish consulting services not provided by the Architect, but required for the Project, such as surveying, which shall include property boundaries, topography, utilities, and wetlands information; geotechnical engineering; and environmental testing services. The Owner shall employ a Contractor, experienced in the type of Project to be constructed, to perform the construction Work and to provide price information.

ARTICLE 3 USE OF DOCUMENTS

Drawings, specifications and other documents prepared by the Architect are the Architect's Instruments of Service, and are for the Owner's use solely with respect to constructing the Project. The Architect shall retain all common law, statutory and other reserved rights, including the copyright. Upon completion of the construction of the Project, provided that the Owner substantially performs its obligations under this Agreement, the Architect grants to the Owner a license to use the Architect's Instruments of Service as a reference for maintaining, altering and adding to the Project. The Owner agrees to indemnify the Architect from all costs and expenses related to claims arising from the Owner's use of the Instruments of Service without retaining the Architect. When transmitting copyright-protected information for use on the Project, the transmitting party represents that it is either the copyright owner of the information, or has permission from the copyright owner to transmit the information for its use on the Project.

ARTICLE 4 TERMINATION, SUSPENSION OR ABANDONMENT

In the event of termination, suspension or abandonment of the Project by the Owner, the Architect shall be compensated for services performed. The Owner's failure to make payments in accordance with this Agreement shall be considered substantial nonperformance and sufficient cause for the Architect to suspend or terminate services. Either the Architect or the Owner may terminate this Agreement after giving no less than seven days' written notice if the Project is suspended for more than 90 days, or if the other party substantially fails to perform in accordance with the terms of this Agreement. Except as otherwise expressly provided herein, this Agreement shall terminate one year from the date of Substantial Completion.

ARTICLE 5 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

This Agreement shall be governed by the law of the place where the Project is located. Terms in this Agreement shall have the same meaning as those in AIA Document A105-2017, Standard Short Form of Agreement Between Owner and Contractor. Neither party to this Agreement shall assign the contract as a whole without written consent of the other.

Nothing contained in this Agreement shall create a contractual relationship with, or a cause of action in favor of, a third party against either the Owner or the Architect.

The Architect shall have no responsibility for the discovery, presence, handling, removal or disposal of, or exposure of persons to, hazardous materials or toxic substances in any form at the Project site.

ARTICLE 6 PAYMENTS AND COMPENSATION TO THE ARCHITECT

The Architect's Compensation shall be:

\$350,000.00 for Architectural, Structural, PME engineering design thru Construction Administration

The Owner shall pay the Architect an initial payment of zero (\$ 0) as a minimum payment under this Agreement. The initial payment shall be credited to the final invoice.

Payments are due and payable upon receipt of the Architect's monthly invoice. Amounts unpaid thirty (30) days after the invoice date shall bear interest from the date payment is due at the rate of eight percent (8 %) annum , or in the absence thereof, at the legal rate prevailing at the principal place of business of the Architect.

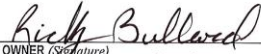
At the request of the Owner, the Architect shall provide additional services not included in Article 1 for additional compensation. Such additional services may include, but not be limited to, providing or coordinating services of consultants not identified in Article 1; revisions due to changes in the Project scope, quality or budget, or due to Owner-requested changes in the approved design; evaluating changes in the Work and Contractors' requests for substitutions of materials or systems; providing services necessitated by the Contractor's failure to perform; and the extension of the Architect's Article 1 services beyond twenty four (24) months of the date of this Agreement through no fault of the Architect.


ARTICLE 7 OTHER PROVISIONS

(Insert descriptions of other services and modifications to the terms of this Agreement.)

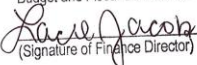
Design will be based on initial concept plan 10/23/23

This Agreement entered into as of the day and year first written above.


 OWNER (Signature)
 Ricky Bullard, Chairman
 (Printed name and title)


 ARCHITECT (Signature)
 Lee Dixon AIA, President Coastal Architecture pllc
 (Printed name, title, and license number, if required)

This instrument has been preaudited in the manner required by the local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

 1/30/2024
 (Signature of Finance Director) Date

Agenda Item #11: COOPERATIVE EXTENSION – ROB EMENS from NC DEPARTMENT of ENVIRONMENT and NATURAL RESOURCES to PRESENT an UPDATE on GIANT SALVINIA:

Rob Emens from the NC DEQ gave the annual update on the eradication of Giant Salvinia in Columbus County.

Agenda Item #12: AIRPORT – APPROVAL of the RESOLUTION regarding a PORTION of SR 1181 (AIRPORT ROAD) for NEW TERMINAL UPDATES:

District Engineer Kenneth Clark from The Department of Transportation requested approval of the resolution regarding abandonment of a portion of Secondary Road (SR) 1181 in order to start the airport's new terminal building updates

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

North Carolina Department of Transportation
 Division of Highways
 Request for Deletion From State Maintained Secondary Road System

North Carolina
 County: Columbus
 Road Description: Abandon a portion of SR 1181 (Airport Road) From M.P. 0.357 to Dead End

WHEREAS, the attached petition has been filed with the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Columbus requesting that the above described road, the location of which has been indicated on the attached map, be deleted from the Secondary Road System, and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners is of the opinion that the above described road should be deleted from the Secondary Road System.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Columbus that the Division of Highways is hereby requested to review the above described road for deletion from the Secondary Road System.

CERTIFICATE

The foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the County of

Columbus at a meeting on the 16th day of January 2024

WITNESS my hand and official seal this the 16th day of January 2024



Clerk, Board of Commissioners.
 County: Jana Nealey

PLEASE NOTE:

Forward direct with request to the Division Engineer, Division of Highways

Form SR-2 (3/2006)

Agenda Item #13: ADMINISTRATION – DISTRICT ENGINEER KENNETH CLARK with NC DEPARTMENT of TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

District Engineer Kenneth Clark from The Department of Transportation presented updates on road work in Columbus County.

*****THE FULL PRESENTATION IS HOUSED IN THE CLERK’S OFFICE*****

Agenda Item #14: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – APPROVAL of the PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) ZONING DISTRICT regarding the GRAGG TRACT:

Economic Development and Planning Director Gary Lanier requested approval of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zoning District for the GRAGG TRACT.

MOTION:

Commissioner Floyd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

****the site plans for GRAGG TRACT Zoning District are housed in the clerk’s office***

Agenda Item #14a: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – APPROVAL of the DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT with the PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) ZONING DISTRICT regarding the GRAGG TRACT:

Attorney Amanda Prince is requesting approval of the GRAGG TRACT development agreement allowing for some modifications and approval of the County Manager and County Attorney.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Feathersen. The motion unanimously passed.

****The Copy of the GRAGG TRACT (PUD) ZONING DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT is housed in the Clerk’s Office****

Agenda Item #15: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – APPROVAL of the AMENDED INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT with the CITY OF WHITEVILLE for 127 WEST COLUMBUS STREET PROPERTY:

Economic Development and Planning Director Gary Lanier requested approval of the amended Interlocal Agreement with the City of Whiteville regarding the 127 West Columbus Street Property.

MOTION:

Commissioner Feathersen made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA AMENDED INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT
COUNTY OF COLUMBUS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THIS AMENDED INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT, made and entered into this the _____ day of January, 2024, by and between the CITY OF WHITEVILLE, a North Carolina Municipal Corporation, organized and existing under the laws of the State of North Carolina (hereinafter “City”), and the COUNTY OF COLUMBUS, a North Carolina body politic, organized and existing under the laws of the State of North Carolina (hereinafter “County”) (collectively, the City and County are the “Parties”).

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute §158-7.1, et seq. and General Statute §158-7.4, et seq., each County and City in the State of North Carolina, is authorized to make appropriations for economic development purposes and may enter into agreements to execute undertakings pursuant to Part 1 of Article 20 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes under which each participating local government agrees to provide resources for development suitable for commercial use; and

WHEREAS, the respective staffs of the City and County have actively participated in the recruitment of an existing business enterprise identified by the Economic Development Departments of the City, County, and State as “Project Cirrus”; and

WHEREAS, on September 27, 2023, the Office of the Governor of North Carolina announced that Provalus, an IT Services Company, previously identified as “Project Cirrus” will establish operations in the City of Whiteville with assistance of the State of North Carolina through a performance-based grant from the One North Carolina Fund; and

WHEREAS, the City and County have agreed to fund the purchase of a facility located at 127 West Columbus St., Whiteville, NC 28472 (“property”), with the City taking title and leasing said property to Provalus to house its operations; and

WHEREAS, the City and County entered into an Interlocal Agreement for Economic Development (“Agreement”) dated October 3, 2023 which identified the terms of the Economic Development Grant being made by the County to the City to assist with the purchase of the property which is attached hereto as Exhibit A-1; and

WHEREAS, since the entry of the Agreement, the terms of the proposed Economic Development Agreement between the City of Whiteville, NC and Optomi, LLC in support of Job Creation Activities (“EDA”), a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit B-1, obligates the City to complete building renovation and up-fits at a cost of up to \$220,000.00 above a Building Reuse Grant of \$390,000.00, a One NC Grant of \$300,000.00, and a Columbus Jobs Foundation Grant of \$90,000.00; and

WHEREAS, this Amended Interlocal Agreement for Economical Development is necessary to revise paragraph 2(a) of the original Agreement so as to provide to the City with reimbursement of City funds expended for the renovation and up-fit of the building being purchased in the event the City sells the property located at 127 W. Columbus St., Whiteville, NC 28472.

NOW, THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the mutual covenants herein contained and the mutual benefits resulting from the Agreement, the parties agree as follows:

All terms of the original Interlocal Agreement for Economical Development dated October 3, 2023 (attached hereto as Exhibit A-1) are ratified and shall remain in full force and effect except for paragraph 2 (a) which is substituted and revised as follows:

“2 a). In the event the City sells the property, the County will receive the sum of \$348,500.00; and the City will receive the sum of \$348,500.00, plus any renovation and up-fit expenses, including any costs associated with planning, engineering, and demolition less any credits as provided in paragraph 6 of the EDA (attached hereto as Exhibit B-1); any funds remaining from the sale proceeds after payment to the County and to the City shall be divided equally between the County and City.”

This Amended Agreement may be further amended by Resolution of the City Council and the County’s Board of Commissioners.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, THE PARTIES HAVE EXECUTED THIS AMENDED INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT AS OF THE DATE FIRST ABOVE WRITTEN.

CITY OF WHITEVILLE

By: _____
MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

COUNTY OF COLUMBUS

By: Rich Bullard
CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

Janae Nealey
CLERK TO THE BOARD



Agenda Item #16: EMERGENCY SERVICES – APPROVAL to PURCHASE DEFIBRILLATORS up to the amount of \$30,000 for SHERIFF’S OFFICE and EMERGENCY SERVICES VEHICLES:

Emergency Services Director David Ransom requested approval to purchase defibrillators up to the amount of \$30,000 for the Sheriff’s Office and Emergency Services Vehicles. This has been previously budgeted.

MOTION:

Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice Chairman Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #17: FINANCE – APPROVAL of BUDGET AMENDMENTS:

Finance Director Lacie Jacobs is requesting approval of the following budget amendments:

- a. EMS Tower Lease
- b. EMS Viper Radio
- c. Finance Training and Supplies
- d. Detention Center SRF Fund

MOTION:

Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

BUDGET AMENDMENT			FY 23/24
Name of Department:			FINANCE/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
Agency Head Signature:			
Date Prepare / Submitted to Admin:			January 11, 2024 Date Received in Admin:
BUDGET CODE			Requested Increase or (Decrease)
Fund Dept Category	EXPENDITURES Classification		
10	4330	519001	CONTRACTED SERVICES \$28,200
Total Net Expense			\$28,200
BUDGET CODE			Requested Increase or (Decrease)
Fund Dept Category	REVENUES Classification		
10	3991	499101	FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED \$28,200
Total Net Revenue			\$28,200
<input type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County Finance Office:			
<input type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County County Manager:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on: _____			

CAPITAL PROJECT BUDGET AMENDMENT			FY 23/24
Name of Department:			FINANCE/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
Agency Head Signature:			
Date Prepare / Submitted to Admin:			January 11, 2024 Date Received in Admin:
BUDGET CODE			Requested Increase or (Decrease)
Fund Dept Category	EXPENDITURES Classification		
55	4322	519931	MOTOROLA PAGING \$119,851
55	4322	519056	ENGINEER DESGN/ADMINISTRATION (\$119,851)
Total Net Expense			\$0
BUDGET CODE			Requested Increase or (Decrease)
Fund Dept Category	REVENUES Classification		
Total Net Revenue			\$0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on: _____			
Signature _____ Date _____			
Explanation of Increase or Decrease: MOVE FUNDS DESIGN/ADMINISTRATION TO PAGING TO PAY MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS INVOICE FOR THE VHF SIMULCAST PAGING SYSTEM			

BUDGET AMENDMENT			FY 23/24
Name of Department:			FINANCE
Agency Head Signature:			
Date Prepare / Submitted to Admin:			January 11, 2024 Date Received in Admin:
BUDGET CODE			Requested Increase or (Decrease)
Fund Dept Category	EXPENDITURES Classification		
10	4130	528000	OFFICE SUPPLIES \$8,000
10	4130	531100	TRAVEL AND TRAINING \$5,000
Total Net Expense			\$11,000
BUDGET CODE			Requested Increase or (Decrease)
Fund Dept Category	REVENUES Classification		
10	3991	499101	FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED \$11,000
Total Net Revenue			\$11,000
<input type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County Finance Office:			
<input type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County County Manager:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on: _____			
Signature _____ Date _____			
Explanation of Increase or Decrease: ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR TRAINING OF FINANCE STAFF; REPLACE FINANCE OFFICE SUPPLY FUNDS USED FOR OTHER SUPPLIES IN BUILDING A AND BUILDING B LOBBY APPROVED BY ADMINISTRATION			

Version 1.0 Budget Amendment.xls Created:12/15/04

BUDGET AMENDMENT			FY 23/24
Name of Department:			DETENTION SPECIAL REVENUE FUND - CENTER FUND
Agency Head Signature:			
Date Prepare / Submitted to Admin:			January 11, 2024 Date Received in Admin:
BUDGET CODE			Requested Increase or (Decrease)
Fund Dept Category	EXPENDITURES Classification		
70	4320	549900	MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE \$50,000
Total Net Expense			\$50,000
BUDGET CODE			Requested Increase or (Decrease)
Fund Dept Category	REVENUES Classification		
70	3432	589042	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE \$50,000
Total Net Revenue			\$50,000
<input type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County Finance Office:			
<input type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County County Manager:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on: _____			
Signature _____ Date _____			
Explanation of Increase or Decrease: ADDITIONAL AVAILABILITY IN DETENTION CENTER SPECIAL REVENUE FUND - COMMISSION FUNDS USED FOR INMATE NEEDS.			

Version 1.0 Budget Amendment.xls Created:12/15/04

Agenda Item #18: DSS – MONTHLY UPDATE for DECEMBER 2023:

DSS Interim Director Dwella Hall gave the monthly update for December 2023

MOTION:

Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

HUMAN SERVICES BOARD REPORT**Dwella M. Hall, Program Manager****Vacancies/Updates/News for December, 2023****Intake/Investigation/Assessment:**

The Intake/Investigation/Assessment Unit continues to be fully staffed. This Unit continues to receive referrals involving substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health issues, among other things. The after-hours positions continue to be fully staffed as well. They are continuing to assist the Foster Care unit with incoming cases due to staff shortage. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted a virtual meeting this month to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

In-Home Services:

The In-Home Services Unit continues to be fully staffed. This unit have seen some decrease in their caseload size indicating more successful outcomes and families can remain together in the home. They are also continuing to assist the Foster Care unit until they are fully staffed. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted a virtual consultation to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

Foster Care/Permanency Planning:

The Foster Care Unit continues to have 3-vacancy. This unit has seen a tremendous amount of turnovers this year. There are currently 109 children in care. The CPS and In-home Services unit continue to assist Foster Care with case management duties, until staff can be hired and properly trained. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted a virtual consultation to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

Transitional Unit:

The Transitional unit is fully staff. This unit continues to work caseloads while assisting the other Child Welfare Units as needed, particularly in the areas of courtesy requests from other counties, assisting with supervising visits and transporting children in custody. This Unit continues to assist particularly in the area of making monthly contacts with the children in foster care. Foster Home Licensing continues to work on completing more licensures to help increase the number of foster home in the county. The MAPP class has ended with 3 families soon to be licensed to accept foster children for placement. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted a virtual consultation to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

Adult Services:

The Adult Services Unit continue to have 1 vacancy. The position has been reposted again. The supervisor continues to be out on medical leave she is now expected to return in February. This unit continues to serve ages 18 and above, with protective services, persons under guardianship, and special assistance in-home case management. The guardianship cases continue to demand extensive time due to severe and persistent mental illness and the lack of resources for this population.

Work First Employment:

This Unit continues to be fully staffed. The unit is open for in-person applications, telephone interviews continue for Work First applications, recertification's, short-term services and benefits. Certain necessary application documentation can be mailed to individuals that wish to apply and when received back the worker can conduct telephone interviews to complete that application. Some application information is also being provided for pick-up in

the foyer area of the agency. Workers are encouraged to make telephone contacts with clients at least every two weeks to offer support and resources to clients and to encourage program participation. The agency continues to have monthly meetings with the state reps by conference calls. The Regional Economic Consultant conducted a telephone consultation this month.

Child Day Care:

The Child Day Care Unit continues to be fully staffed. The Supervisor and staff continue to work the over and under payment report to ensure proper payment is being made to county daycare providers. Day Care services are continuing to be provided and the state is working with county agencies and day cares to help them stay open as much as possible while providing a safe environment for children. Day Care slots within local Day Cares are limited at this time and many Day Cares are now on a waiting list. DSS staff continue to work with families to ensure their services stay in place while limiting contact to the telephone as much as possible. The agency has eliminated the waiting list and able to serve the public. Supervisor continue to ensure case transfers are received properly and sent in a timely manner.

Program Integrity:

Program Integrity office visits are limited and telephone contact is encouraged, but office visits are possible. Repayment agreements are no longer relaxed, and recoupments are being received. Staff are working to clean up a backlog, establishing cases and repayment agreements, all while assisting with the Energy Programs.

Energy Assistance

CIP continues with the heating season which means helping with the main source of heat for the household. LIEAP started for county residents with a household member age 60 and older on December 1, 2024. If eligible, LIEAP assists with the household's main source of heat with a one-time payment paid directly to the heating vendor. Applications continue to be available on EPASS where applicants can complete and submit applications on-line, but continue to be available in our lobby for pick up and completion. Two in-house staff and one temporary staff is currently processing applications. Program Integrity staff are assisting as needed due to influx of applications.

Economic Services Narrative

Darlene Jenkins-Parks, Income Maintenance Administrator

Vacancies/Updates/News for December 2023

Food & Nutrition Services Intake/Processing:

The FNS intake unit currently has (1) one vacancy. December has been a month of up and down flow of applicants. Everyone on the team still works hard individually and collectively to make sure that the deadlines are met and that the work is not left behind. We all are working together as a team to get the job done.

Food Nutrition Services Review:

The FNS Review team has (1) one caseworker that resigned of most recent trainee effective 12/20/23. The remaining (7) seven workers once again will divide the responsibilities of these 2 caseloads in addition to their own heavy caseloads. This unit was able to receive an additional IMC II position as the result of a position reassignment. Our (6) six month follow up Management Evaluation Review was conducted this month for FNS Data Matches and Hearings results received, we remain on the program improvement plan for these items due to **one** error on Data Matches and Hearings.

Family & Children Medicaid Intake/Processing Unit:

The F & C Medicaid Unit is currently have (1) vacancy the new position for Medicaid expansion. There has been a significant increase in our applications since the implementation of Medicaid Expansion on December 1, 2023. We have done well with following all application processing reports to ensure applications are processed timely.

Family & Children Medicaid Review Unit:

We have hired (2) two caseworkers with start date of 01/08/2024. We are looking forward to having them join our team. One of our caseworkers, Dena Cox retired

on 12/29/2023 after more than 29 years of service. She will certainly be missed.

The agency will continue to fill the (3) three additional Medicaid Expansion staff

and the new vacancy of the retiree. It has been such a fast month and very busy. We continue to meet weekly to stay updated on the many changes that are happening. The Adult Medicaid Expansion Program is a very positive change for the citizens of Columbus County.

Adult Medicaid Intake/Processing Unit:

This unit is pleased to announce that we currently have no vacancies. All unit caseworkers are doing an exceptional job with the day to day work for the unit and the new Adult Medicaid Expansion policy implementation. The added MXP program has added stress because the caseworkers are having to learn the new MAGI policy and adjust to the added applications for benefits.

Adult Medicaid Review Unit:

This unit is fully staffed. Our annual MQB-E cases more than tripled our work for the month. Our unit is actively working January, February, and now March reviews. We are actively working our day to day reports, answering phone calls, emails, mail and making any changes to cases while keeping up with the new guidelines since the CCU begun.

Long Term Care, Community Alternative Program & Special Assistance Unit:

The LTC, CAP and SA Medicaid is fully staffed. Effective 12/1/2023 the LTC, CAP and SA unit began the evaluation for the Family Planning and Medicaid Expansion programs for applicants/beneficiaries who are not eligible for the LTC, CAP, or SA program.

Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation (NEMT) Unit:

The NEMT unit is fully staffed. There were 1034 Medicaid trips provided for eligible Medicaid recipients, there currently are 203 active recipients.

Housekeeping Unit:

The Housekeeping unit is currently fully staffed. This staff has a daily routine throughout the day with sanitizing and keeping the agency clean.

Child Support Establishment Unit:

The Establishment unit has (1) one agent vacancy and (1) one new trainee expected to start on 1/8/2024. This unit prepared 16 cases for court action this month for establishment. The Establishment unit continues to utilize the telephone to interview clients/non-custodial parents as well as scheduling office appointments. We continue to conduct DNA testing for clients, children and non-custodial parents onsite.

Child Support Enforcement Unit:

The Enforcement unit has (1) one agent vacancy, with (1) one new trainee expected start on 1/08/2024. This Unit prepared 106 cases for court action the month of December 2023. The Enforcement unit continues to see client/non-custodial parents in office for case consultations and to attempt to resolve as many issues outside of court as possible.

Program Administrator Comments:

All the staff and supervisors have done an outstanding job in 2023 while facing many obstacles in all program areas. The Medicaid supervisors and their staff has worked together to prepare for implantation of the Medicaid expansion program. It has been challenging but they have stepped up to the challenges working together. There has been an increase in applications from all sources, phone calls, and agency foot traffic. All staff are doing an awesome job adjusting to the increase of cases and changes as a result of ending of the Medicaid CCU (Continuous Coverage Unwinding) at this same time. This change has impacted Food & Nutrition staff with an influx of applications and with program changes due to the end of the COVID waivers. This year the Child Support staff has been working to recover from a long period of staff shortages. The department now has a new Enforcement supervisor and lead worker. Since, beginning the role as Income Maintenance Administrator on January 4, 2023, one of goals was to bring a more positive attitude to all staff. It was as important to let them know they are appreciated. We have accomplished some great things by working together. As we move into another year our goal is continue on this positive path and try to implement new ways to show staff how essential they are to our citizens and community.

Monthly Administrative Update

For December, 2023

January 16th, 2024 Meeting

On December 6th, 2023, I attended the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) meeting with Mr. McKenzie. He introduced me to the committee as his successor. I will continue to serve on this committee. They meet the 1st Wednesday of the month.

On December 13th 2023 Regional CQI Specialist conducted an onsite consultation to provide technical assistance to the economic services program staff. The CQI specialist conducted a review to target the technical assistance to meet the needs of various programs i.e., Food and Nutrition, Medicaid, CIP and Work First.

MXP formally known as Medicaid Expansion is up and running and thus far we have seen an increase in applications via email and in person. Staff has also received an influx in phone calls from citizens just inquiring about the process of MXP. Overall, the staff has managed to oversee the increase without incident. We have 4 new MXP positions currently vacant. We will be posting those positions soon.

On December 14th, 2023 Regional Consultant for child welfare conducted a virtual meeting with the CW Supervisors. The consultant covered updated policy and trainings available to staff. Foster care and adoptions unit will be undergoing their IV-E and State audit in February, 2024.

On December 14th, 2023 the agency celebrated our annual Christmas luncheon. We were able to shut down for the approved 2hrs. so that staff can have this time to enjoy one another. We appreciate the Commissioners and County Manager granting this time for the staff. Everyone enjoyed themselves.

Finally, as I move forward in the Interim Directors position, I wanted to take this time to say thank you to the Commissioners and County Manager for this opportunity. I look forward to hitting the ground running and serving the staff of Columbus County as we all help to serve the citizens of our great county.

December 2023 **Human Services**

Adult Services (APS)

APS Reports Accepted: 5
County Wards: 27
Number of Payee Cases: 11
Adults Served APS: 0

Children's Protective Services (CPS)

Reports Accepted: 23
Reports Screened out: 18
Families Receiving In-Home Services: 34
Children Served: 66
Contacts with Families Monthly: 285
Assessments: 17

Foster Care

Foster Children in Foster Homes: 91
Children Placed Outside County: 35
Agency Adoptions: 0
Pending Adoptions: 11
Total Foster Homes Licensed: 8
Total Children in Foster Care: 102

Work First Employment (TANF)

Applications Taken: 17
 Applications Approved: 2
 Individuals Receiving Benefits: 134
 Entered Employments: 0
 Number in Non-Paid Work Experience: 0

December 2023
Human Services (continued)

Program Integrity

Collections for Fraud: \$4,220.00
 New Referrals: 17
 Cases Established: 1

Day Care

Children Receiving Day Care Assistance: Not Available
 Children on the Waiting List: 0
 Amount Spent on Day Care Services: \$314,343.00

December 2023
Economic ServiFood & Nutrition

Applications Taken: 163
 Applications Approved: 179
 Active Cases: 6,075
 Benefits Issued: \$1,996,307.00
 Participants Served: 11,953

Adult Medicaid

Applications Taken: 108
 Cases Terminated: 100
 Redeterminations: 407
 Applications Processed: 80
 Total Medicaid Cases: 14,953
 Total Individuals Receiving: 22,506

Medicaid Transportation (NEMT)

Number of Medicaid Transportation Trips: 1,034
 Amount Requested for Reimbursement: \$32,893.36

Family & Children's Medicaid

Applications Taken: 618

Applications Processed: 575
 Redeterminations: 1,220

Child Support

Absent Parents Located: 40
 Orders Enforced: 979
 Active Cases: 3,519
 Collections: \$368,190.00

November 2023
Human Services

Adult Services (APS)

APS Reports Accepted: 5
 County Wards: 26
 Number of Payee Cases: 11
 Adults Served APS: 0

Children's Protective Services (CPS)

Reports Accepted: 15
 Reports Screened out: 18
 Families Receiving In-Home Services: 34
 Children Served: 60
 Contacts with Families Monthly: 352
 Assessments: 12

Foster Care

Foster Children in Foster Homes: 98
 Children Placed Outside County: 40
 Agency Adoptions: 0
 Pending Adoptions: 11
 Total Foster Homes Licensed: 8
 Total Children in Foster Care: 109

Work First Employment (TANF)

Applications Taken: 17
 Applications Approved: 2
 Individuals Receiving Benefits: 134
 Entered Employments: 0
 Number in Non-Paid Work Experience: 0

November 2023
Human Services (continued)

Program Integrity

Collections for Fraud: \$4,908.29

New Referrals: 7

Cases Established: 1

Day Care

Children Receiving Day Care Assistance: 476

Children on the Waiting List: 0

Amount Spent on Day Care Services: \$288,206.00

November 2023

Economic Services

Food & Nutrition

Applications Taken: 192

Applications Approved: 238

Active Cases: 6,248

Benefits Issued: \$2,062,876.00

Participants Served: 12,274

Adult Medicaid

Applications Taken: 76

Cases Terminated: 83

Redeterminations: 315

Applications Processed: 78

Medicaid Transportation (NEMT)

Number of Medicaid Transportation Trips: 1,412

Amount Requested for Reimbursement: \$43,643.58

Family & Children's Medicaid

Applications Taken: 230

Applications Processed: 360

Redeterminations: 761

Total Medicaid Cases: 14,806

Total Individuals Receiving: 22,426

Child Support

Absent Parents Located: 40

Orders Enforced: 718

Active Cases: 3,592

Collections: \$393,214.00

Respectfully Submitted,

Dwella M. Hall, Interim Director

Agenda Item #19: APPOINTMENTS/RE-APPOINTMENTS/REPLACEMENTS: STAFF is REQUESTING APPOINTMENTS, REAPPPOINTMENTS or REPLACEMENTS to the FOLLOWING BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS.

Legend: EB =Entire Board
Listed Zone # =Individual Commissioner

Zone I: Barbara Featherson Zone V: Brent Watts
Zone II: Chris Smith Zone VI: Ricky Bullard
Zone III: Giles E. Byrd Zone VII: Scott Floyd
Zone IV: Lavern Coleman

COMMITTEE	ZONE/EB	PERSON(S)	EXP. DATE	BOARD ACTION
Cape Fear Aging Advisory Council	EB	Jerome McMillian	06/30/2022	Barbara Featherson appointed MOTION: 1-Byrd 2-Watts

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V.

MOTION:

At 7:30 P.M. a Motion was made by Commissioner Floyd and second by Commissioner Smith to recess regular session and enter into Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V.

Agenda Item #20: WATER and SEWER DISTRICT IV – APPROVAL to PURCHASE PROPERTY for a WELL SITE for the EDA PROJECT:

Assistant County Manager Gail Edwards requested approval to purchase property located on Old Lake Road for the EDA Grant Project’s second well site in the amount of \$24,000

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Coleman. The motion unanimously passed.

The Copy of the Well Site Purchase is housed in the Clerk’s Office

ADJOURN COMBINATION MEETING OF Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV AND V BOARD MEETING.

MOTION:

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Coleman. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #21: COMMENTS:

A. Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Watts commented:

- Just want to make people aware that it is going to be really cold next week and if you know any elderly people that may not have heat contact someone at Social Services to help.
- I want to recognize Mrs. Anne Ferguson for receiving the highest honor you can receive for Fairs in North Carolina. We are thankful for her and all the volunteers.

Vice Chairman Byrd commented:

- I saw in the paper last week where the Department of Insurance wants to increase the rates by 67% and our Brunswick County Neighbors are sending a letter opposing it and I think we should as well.
 - *Vice Chairman Byrd wanted to make sure a letter was sent to oppose the increase.*
- I know we have a time on paying taxes but I had a gentleman call about the \$3.50 charge for using his card.
 - *County Manager Eddie Madden responded by saying that it is policy that if you use your debit card you do have to pay the processing fee for that transaction.*
- Have you Mr. Madden been able to come up with any alternate plans for the Historic Courthouse?
 - *County Manager Eddie Madden deferred this answer to the Chairman Ricky Bullard*
 - *Chairman Ricky Bullard stated there has been a lot of talk regarding the Historic Courthouse in the last month and I have had an open ear to all of it because I think everyone's opinion matters, however, the plans that we approved several years ago (2021) and has not been changed had the Clerk of Superior Court's Office to be on the second floor and no remodeling to the bottom floor. So our plans are to be as they were approved, with the Judge using the upstairs and the Clerk of Superior court use the 2nd. I have spoken to the board members and the majority consensus is to keep it as is.*
 - *Vice Chairman Byrd stated that he wanted to vote on it because all board members have the right to oppose spending all that extra money for no purpose and I remember Jess coming to us so many times about how dangerous it is when they had to cross the street and carrying the court jackets from one courthouse to another. So now just because we have redone the courthouse and it is going to cost all that extra money to secure it, I want to go on record opposing it.*
 - *County Manager Eddie Madden responded to and said that yes he has looked into alternate uses for the Historic Courthouse which was prompted by the Sherriff Rogers due to the cost of securing it, and I met with Court Officials last Friday, and I have pages of notes regarding that meeting and I can share that with you at a later date, yes there are alternate uses but I am happy to agree with the wishes of the board.*

- *Vice Chairman asked if those alternate plans could be available for the public to view because the public needs to know what we are doing because we are spending a whole lot of money that we really shouldn't spend.*
- *Chairman Bullard stated let us remember that Representative Brenden Jones secured money for that courthouse and helped lighten the burden of funds in order to make that a beautiful building and I think the majority of our community is happy to see that building being used again. As the county grows needs for judicial offices becomes greater and we have a public defender now that will be starting and the extra room will be used.*
 - *Vice Chairman Byrd stated that he agreed with all that but I think if we moved the superior court judge and all the district court judges in to have all that security and then the public defender's office could use our old building and that would be a major cost saving to the county.*

Commissioner Coleman commented:

Thanks to all the county staff and citizens for putting up with us like you do and we are working hard for you and will continue to do so.

Commissioner Featherson commented:

- I would like to formally recognize former commissioner, Amon McKenzie.
- Thank the Sheriff and Emergency Services for outfitting the vehicles with those defibrillators

Chairman Bullard commented:

I just like to say I appreciate the things everyone is doing and it is good to have you brother Amon. Thank you very much.

B. County Manager

County Manager Eddie Madden commented:

I have nothing to add tonight.

Agenda Item #22: ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION:

At 7:49 P.M., Commissioner Floyd made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Watts. The motion unanimously passed.