

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Monday, February 3, 2025
5:45 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 the Regular Session.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

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

APPOINTEES ABSENT:

Agenda Item #1: MEETING CALLED to ORDER:

At 5:45 P.M., Chairman Lavern Coleman called the regular meeting to order.

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter CLOSED SESSION IN ACCORDANCE with N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(3) ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE:

MOTION:

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

Agenda Item #2: CLOSED SESSION IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.C.G.S §143-318.11(A)(3) ATTORNEY –CLIENT PRIVILEGE

RECESS CLOSED SESSION and enter into REGULAR SESSION:

MOTION:

At 6:15 P.M. Commissioner Bullard made a motion to recess closed session and enter into regular session, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

GENERAL ACCOUNT:

Attorney Amanda Prince gave the general account as follows:

The board discussed pending litigation, and possible future litigation. No action was taken by the board.

MOTION:

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

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

Regular Session resumes at 6:30 P.M.

Agenda Items # 3 and #4: INVOCATION and PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE:

The invocation was delivered by Vice Chairman Smith. Everyone in attendance stood and pledged Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America which was led by Commissioner Bullard.

Agenda Item # 5: APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION:

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve the Agenda with an Add-on 14c, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

Add-on Agenda Item # 14c– Reduction of salaries

Agenda Item #6: BOARD MINUTES APPROVAL:

A. January 6, 2025 – Regular Session

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Smith made a motion to approve the Board Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #7: PUBLIC INPUT:

Chairman Coleman opened the floor for Public Comment. No comments were made.

Agenda Item #8: ADMINISTRATION – RETIREMENT PLAQUES:

County Manager Eddie Madden recognized the following employees with retirement plaques:

- a) Dorene Evans – DSS Social Worker Supervisor III – 9/20/04 – 10/31/24
- b) Douglas Ward – Tax Administration - Deputy Tax Collector – 9/01/04 – 9/20/24
- c) Kimberly Sellers – Veterans Services Director – 11/7/03 – 9/27/24

No one was present to receive their plaque and Mr. Madden stated that they would be sent to them.

Agenda Item #9: PROCLAMATION – BLACK HISTORY MONTH FEBRUARY 2025:

The Governing Body requested adoption of the Proclamation for Black History Month February 2025.

MOTION:

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

Commissioner Featherson presented the Black History Month Proclamation to Mr. Morris Pridgen on behalf of his mother, Eva Pridgen, a former educator in Columbus County for many years.



Columbus County
PROCLAMATION

Black History Month

Whereas, Black History Month affords special opportunity to become more knowledgeable about black heritage, and to honor the many black leaders who have contributed to the progress of our nation; and

Whereas, such knowledge can strengthen the insight of all our citizens regarding the issues of human rights, the great strides that have been made in the crusade to eliminate the barriers of equality for minority groups;

Now therefore; we urge our residents to join together in making this period of rededication to the principles of justice and equality for all people.

APPROVED and ADOPTED this the 3rd day of February, 2025

Columbus County Commissioners

Agenda Item #10: PROCLAMATION – APPROVAL TO ADOPT THE TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH:

Families First Violence Advocate Lucy Byrd requested adoption of the Teen Dating Violence Awareness Proclamation.

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

FEBRUARY 2025

WHEREAS one in three adolescents is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner; and

WHEREAS the effects of dating violence impact youth in all communities and cuts across economic, racial, gender, and societal barriers; and

WHEREAS respectful, supportive, and non-violent relationships are key to safety, health, and academic success; and

WHEREAS, by providing teens and young adults with education about healthy relationships and relationship skills, and by changing attitudes that support violence, we recognize that dating violence can be prevented; and

WHEREAS, family, friends, teachers, coaches, faith leaders, community members, and other important people in young peoples’ lives have the power to influence youth in positive ways; and

WHEREAS, last year Families First, Inc. provided healthy relationships presentations to approximately 700 teens and young adults; and

WHEREAS, we must work together to raise awareness and promote healthy dating relationships with activities and conversations about mutually respectful and non-violent relationships in our homes, schools, and communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, Columbus County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim February 2025 Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month throughout the county of Columbus and urge our community to work towards ending violence among teenagers.

Agenda Item #11: ADMINISTRATION - APPROVAL OF THE FY 2025/2026 LEGISLATIVE NEEDS LIST:

County Manager Eddie Madden requested approval of the FY 2025/2026 Legislative Needs List to send to NC House Majority Leader, Brenden Jones.

MOTION:

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

January 29, 2025

New Health Department	\$20 million
Two (2) Quick Response Vehicles (QRV's)	\$1 million

Water District II:

1.) <i>Additional Wells (3) to Benefit Water Districts II & V</i>	\$2,400,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">This project would provide additional water supply to Water District II and Water District V.	

Water District III:

1.) <i>Reversible Booster Pump Station</i>	\$600,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">This project would allow water to be pumped into Water District III from Water District II during an emergency event.	
2.) <i>Additional Well (1) to Benefit Water Districts II, III, & V</i>	\$800,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">This project would provide additional water supply to Water Districts II, III, & V.	

Water District IV:

1.) <i>Water Line Extensions/Connections of Dead Ends</i>	\$15,000,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Water Line Extensions would extend water lines to residents within the district and provide connections for dead end roads.Water line extensions to serve customers with failing wells on Delco Prosper Road, Water Tank Road, Lennon Road, and Jennifer’s Lane. The connection would also help eliminate dead ends.The connection between General Howe Road down Hwy 87 to Gus Bryant Road and connect Love Road to Hwy 87 would provide a looped water system. (This cannot be done without the new water line installation down Hwy 87.)	
2.) <i>Additional Wells (4) to Benefit Water District IV</i>	\$3,200,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">This project would provide additional water supply to Water District IV.	

Water District V:

1.) <i>Elevated Water Tank</i>	\$3,600,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">This project would provide additional water supply to system.	
2.) <i>Phase III Project for Master Plan</i>	\$4,170,407
3.) <i>Phase IV Project of Master Plan</i>	\$4,287,607

Water Treatment Plant:

1.) <i>3,000,000 million gallon per day reverse osmosis water plant</i>	\$65,000,000
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Wastewater Treatment Plant:

1.) <i>3,000,000 million gallon per day wastewater treatment plant</i>	\$55,000,000
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Total Needs Request	\$175,058,014
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Agenda Item #12: ADMINISTRATION- APPROVAL OF THE LEASE WITH THE NC FORESTRY SERVICE FOR OFFICE SPACE FOR PORTION OF 2ND FLOOR, A BUILDING:

North Carolina Forestry Operations Section Chief Shane Hardee requested approval of the lease to use office space on a portion of the 2nd floor in the A building. The lease will be in the amount of \$2,850 per month, which includes utilities, housekeeping, and a door swipe system.

MOTION:

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

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF COLUMBUS

LEASE AGREEMENT

THIS LEASE AGREEMENT (hereinafter "Lease"), made and entered into as of the last date outlined in the notary acknowledgments below by and between **COLUMBUS COUNTY**, hereinafter designated as Lessor, and the **STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA** through the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services hereinafter designated as Lessee;

WITNESSETH:

THAT WHEREAS, authority to approve and execute this lease agreement was delegated to the Department of Administration by resolution adopted by the Governor and Council of State on the 1st day of September 1981; and as amended on September 8, 1999 and December 7th, 1999, and April 1, 2003

WHEREAS, the Department of Administration has delegated to the Department of Agriculture the authority to execute this lease agreement by a memorandum dated the 26th day of March, 1982; and as amended on the 26th day of December, 2016: and

WHEREAS, the parties hereto have mutually agreed to the terms of this lease agreement as hereinafter set out,

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the rental hereinafter agreed to be paid and the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, Lessor does hereby let and lease unto Lessee and Lessee hereby takes and leases from Lessor for and during the period of time and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set out certain space in **Building A 2ND Floor of 306 Madison Street, Whiteville, NC, 28472 Township/Whiteville, County of Columbus** North Carolina, more particularly described as follows: Being approximately 1305, net square feet of office space- offices #A, B C, D, E, F space, and further described in "Exhibit A"

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
(NC Forest Service)

THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS LEASE AGREEMENT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. The term of this lease shall be for a period of **EIGHT Months(8)** commencing on or about the **1st** day of **February 1, 2025**, or as soon thereafter as the leased premises are ceded to the Lessee and terminating on the **30th** day of **September, 2025**.
2. During the term of the lease, the Lessee shall pay to the Lessor as rental for said premises the sum of **\$22, 800(Twenty-two Thousand) eight hundred** Dollars per annum, which sum shall be paid in equal monthly installments of **2,850.00 Dollars**. The Lessee agrees to pay the aforesaid rental to Lessor at the address specified, or, to such other address as the Lessor may designate by a notice in writing at least fifteen (15) days prior to the due date. All INVOICES to be mailed monthly to Business Incident Manager 1616 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699- 1600.
3. Lessor grants free and unrestricted ingress and egress to the Premises during the term of this lease and any renewals thereof.
 - A. Heating facilities, air conditioning facilities, adequate electrical facilities, adequate lighting fixtures and sockets, hot and cold water facilities, and adequate toilet facilities.
 - B. Lessor to provide required fire extinguishers and servicing, pest control, and outside trash disposal and recycling, including maintenance of lawns, parking areas (including snow and debris removal) and common areas is required.
 - C. Parking
 - D. The Lessor covenants that the leased premises are generally accessible to persons with disabilities. This shall include access into the premises from the parking areas (where applicable), into the premises via any common areas of the building and access to an accessible restroom.
 - E. All stormwater fees.

- F. Any fire or safety inspection fees.
- G. Daily janitorial service and supplies.
- H. All utilities (electricity, gas, water/sewer) except telephone.
- I. All land transfer tax/fees imposed by the County or City in which the space is located.
- J. The number of keys to be provided to Lessee for each lockset shall be reasonably determined by Lessee prior to occupancy and said keys shall be furnished by Lessor to Lessee at no cost to Lessee.
- K. All other terms and conditions of the signed "Proposal to Lease to the State of North Carolina" Form PO-28 and "Specifications for Non-advertised Lease."

4. During the lease term, the Lessor shall keep the leased premises in good repair and tenantable condition, to the end that all facilities are kept in an operative condition. In case Lessor shall, after notice in writing from the Lessee in regard to a specified condition, fail, refuse, or neglect to correct said condition, or in the event of an emergency constituting a hazard to the health or safety of the Lessee's employees, property, or invitees, it shall then be lawful for the Lessee in addition to any other remedy the Lessee may have, to make such repair at its own cost and to deduct the amount thereof from the rent that may then be thereafter become due hereunder. Lessor reserves the right to enter and inspect the leased premises, at reasonable times, and to make necessary repairs to the premises.

5. It is understood and agreed that Lessor shall, at the beginning of said lease term as hereinabove set forth, have the leased premises in a condition satisfactory to Lessee, suitable for the purposes for which the leased premises will be used by Lessee.

6. Lessee shall have the right during the existence of this lease, with the Lessor's prior consent, to make alterations, attach fixtures, and erect additions, structures or signs in or upon the leased premises. Such fixtures, additions, structures or signs so placed in or upon or attached to the leased premises under this lease or any prior lease of which this lease is an extension or renewal shall be and remain the property of the Lessee and may be removed therefrom by the Lessee prior to the termination of this lease or any renewal or extension thereof, or within a reasonable time thereafter.

7. If the said premises be destroyed by flood or other casualty without fault of the Lessee, this lease shall immediately terminate and the rent shall be apportioned to the time of the damage. In case of partial destruction or damage by flood or other casualty without fault of the Lessee, so as to render the premises untenable in whole or in part, there shall be an apportionment of the rent until the damage has been repaired. During such period of repair, Lessee shall have the right to obtain similar office space at the expense of Lessee or the Lessee may terminate the lease by giving fifteen (15) days written notice to the Lessor.

8. Lessor shall be liable to Lessee for any loss or damages suffered by Lessee which are a direct result of the failure of Lessor to perform an act required by this lease, and provided that Lessor could reasonably have complied with said requirement.

9. Upon termination of this lease, the Lessee will peaceably surrender the leased premises in as good order and condition as when received, reasonable use and wear and damage by fire, war, riots, insurrection, public calamity, by the elements, by act of God, or by circumstances over which Lessee had no control or for which Lessor is responsible pursuant to this lease, excepted.

10. Lessor agrees that the Lessee, upon keeping and performing the covenants and agreements herein contained, shall at all times during the existence of this lease peaceably and quietly have, hold, and enjoy the leased premises free from the adverse claims of any person.

11. The failure of either party to insist in any instance upon strict performance of any of the terms and conditions herein set forth shall not be construed as a waiver of the same in any other instance. No modification of any provision hereof and no cancellation or surrender thereof shall be valid unless in writing and signed and agreed to by both parties.

12. Any hold over after the expiration of the said term or any extension thereof, shall be construed to be a tenancy from month to month, and shall otherwise be on the terms and conditions herein specified, so far as applicable; however, either party shall give not less than sixty (60) days written notice to terminate the tenancy.

13. The parties to this lease agree and understand that the continuation of this lease agreement for the term period set forth herein, or any extension or renewal thereof, is dependent upon and subject to the appropriation, allocation or availability of funds for this purpose to the agency of the Lessee responsible for payment of said rental. The parties to this lease also agree that in the event the agency of the Lessee or that

body responsible for the appropriations of said funds, in its sole discretion, determines, in view of its total local office operations that available funding for the payment of rents are insufficient to continue the operation of its local offices on the premise leased herein, it may choose to terminate the lease agreement set forth herein by giving Lessor written notice of said termination, and the lease agreement shall terminate immediately without any further liability to Lessee.

14. All notices herein provided to be given, or which may be given by either party to the other, shall be deemed to have been fully given when made in writing and deposited in the United States mail, certified and postage prepaid and addressed as follows: To the Lessor at **Columbus County Manager 306 Madison Street Whiteville, NC 28472** and to the Lessee at **NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Attn: Real Property Agent, 1001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1001**. Nothing herein contained shall preclude the giving of such notice by personal service. The address to which notices shall be mailed as aforesaid to either party may be changed by written notice.

15. N.C.G.S. § 133-32 and Executive Order 24 prohibit the offer to, or acceptance by, any State Employee of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of any response in this procurement, you attest, for your entire organization and its employees or agents, that you are not aware that any such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of your organization.

16. Lessee shall not assign this lease or sublet any part of the Leased Premises without the written consent of the Lessor.

17. Lessor agrees that the Lessee's decision to self insure satisfies all insurance requirements of this lease applicable to the Lessee.

18. The State of North Carolina is an immune sovereign and is not ordinarily subject to suit. However, the State has enacted the North Carolina Tort Claims Act, pursuant to which the State may be liable for the torts of its officers and employees, within the terms of the Act. Accordingly, the Lessee will be primarily liable for any claims within the coverage of the Tort Claims Act.

19. This Lease Agreement shall be binding upon and enforceable against, and shall inure to the benefit of, Lessor and Lessee and their respective legal representatives, successors and permitted assigns.

20. It is understood and agreed that Lessee shall have the right to remove from the Premises all items of personal property and other items used in connection with Lessee's operations on the Premises belonging to Lessee at the end of the term.

21. If Lessee is unable to secure all necessary permits or governmental approvals to construct or install its desired improvements on the Premises, then Lessee, at its option and in its sole discretion, may terminate this lease without any further obligation hereunder.

Agenda Item #13: EMERGENCY SERVICES – APPROVAL OF THE RESOLUTION TO CHANGE COLUMBUS COUNTY'S FIRE DANGER RISK RANGE FROM MODERATE HAZARD TO HIGH HAZARD:

Interim Emergency Services Director Kay Stephens requested approval of the resolution to change Columbus County's Fire Danger Risk Range from Moderate Hazard to High Hazard.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Smith made a motion to approve, Seconded by Commissioner Floyd.

DISCUSSION WAS HELD WITH NORTH CAROLINA FORESTRY OPERATION SECTION CHIEF SHANE HARDEE REGARDING THE COUNTY'S FIRE DANGER RISK RANGE:

Commissioner Watts - With a regular burning permit, the Forest Service won't need to come out to a wheat field and assess it before a farmer can burn it?

Section Chief Shane Hardee – You have to have a permit now to burn a wheat field.

Commissioner Bullard - No you don't have to get a permit.

Commissioner Byrd - We've never had to get a permit to burn a wheat field.

Section Chief Shane Hardee - You actually are required to have a burning permit to burn away.

Commissioner Watts - I've always gotten mine online.

Section Chief Shane Hardee - If it's between the hours of midnight and 4:00 p.m. in Columbus County, which is a non-high hazard county, you are required to have a permit.

Commissioner Byrd- But after 4:00 p.m., you could burn anything you wanted?

Section Chief Shane Hardee - Before you can burn what you want, you do need to have a permit. However, if you have those permits, there are air quality guidelines to follow. If you look at those guidelines, they recommend not burning after 4:00 p.m. due to the impact of smoke, which is why the 4:00 p.m. trigger exists in non-high-hazard counties. Now, is it legal to burn after 4:00 p.m.? By criminal law, it is illegal in a non-high-hazard county without a permit. The only difference between a non-high-hazard county and a high-hazard county is that permits are required 24 hours a day in the latter. Permits are free, you can get them online, and it takes about a minute to do so. If you've ever gotten one, it's pretty easy. After that, you'll know how to do it, or you can get them from a forest ranger. Any forest ranger or a burning permit agent can issue the permit. So, the only difference is that a permit is required 24 hours a day in high-hazard counties.

Commissioner Byrd - Last year, while picking wheat, the combine set the field on fire two or three times because it was so dry. While harvesting, I'd just look back and see that it was on fire.

Section Chief Shane Hardee - That is a wildfire, so it's not an intentional fire. You don't need a permit for an unintentional fire. If a combine catches on fire, it's considered a wildfire. In that case, we have to investigate every wildfire. If we determine it was caused by a machine, we issue what's called a waiver. In other words, the farmer or landowner will not face legal action unless there is a significant lack of maintenance. If a lack of maintenance caused the fire, we can take legal action. We run into that more with loggers using skidders in the woods than with machinery catching fire due to a lack of maintenance or abuse. If it's just a circumstance that happens, we issue a waiver for it. I personally sign all waivers, and we generally approve them.

Commissioner Byrd - Several years ago, some farmers were putting out fertilizer in bags, and the bags were set on fire in a field. Typically, when applying fertilizer to tobacco or other crops, the field is clean. However, a forest ranger came by and issued a ticket. Now, if we have a situation where farmers don't properly dispose of these bags and seed bags, it could cause a real problem throughout the county. The bags could blow around, clog ditches, and people would complain about them blowing into their yards. There are pros and cons to this, especially when it comes to distance. The farmer won't get a permit to burn 20 bags or just 5 bags.

Section Chief Shane Hardee - The only time a permit is not required before 4:00 p.m. is if the fire is more than 500 feet from woodlands or bushland and less than 100 feet from an occupied dwelling. In that case, the fire marshal's jurisdiction comes into play. If the fire is in the middle of a field and more than 500 feet from woodlands, bushland, or grassland, then you don't need a permit between midnight and 4:00 p.m. However, if the area changes to a high-hazard designation, a permit will be required 24 hours a day.

Commissioner Watts - So, my question is, if we go to a high-hazard designation, is that permanent, or is it just for now?

Section Chief Shane Hardee - No, it is a permanent designation. Let me quickly give you some history on this.

Commissioner Watts - Let me ask you a question before you get to the history. I want to know if it's permanent, and could you also tell me the benefits of going to a high-hazard designation?

Section Chief Shane Hardee - Yes, it is a permanent change. It's a legislative change right now. You're governed under Article 78 of General Statute 106-943. You would be changing to being governed under 106-942, and the difference is that the former is a non-high hazard designation, while 942 is a high-hazard designation. Originally, Columbus County was a high-hazard county due to the amount of organic soil present, as were all the counties in Southeastern North Carolina that I manage. At that time, there were concerns about future development. Things were starting to grow, especially in our coastal counties, and some politics got involved. The designations were changed back to non-high hazard because it was believed that a high-hazard designation could negatively affect future development potential.

In 2002, Brunswick County changed back to high-hazard, and this year, New Hanover County and Pender County are changing back to high-hazard as well. The benefit of this is—bear in mind that as an agency, we are neutral—I am neutral. I'm simply explaining the differences. So, I wouldn't necessarily call it a benefit; you would need to decide that for yourself.

Land clearing above five acres requires us to go out and issue a land clearing permit. For regular permits, we have to issue you a permit if you request one. Commissioner Byrd, by law, we can't deny issuing a permit for regular burning. A land clearing permit is different. We have certain conditions we must ensure are being met, or we will not issue that permit.

Originally, the land clearing permit was written for agricultural purposes, but now it applies more to development. When people clear land, they often push a lot of dirt and organic materials into piles. These materials can smoke for a very long time. We are not going to issue a permit for that because we have the discretion to ensure certain elements of the law are met before issuing the permit. One of those elements is ensuring that the fire will not cause smoke impacts on roads, municipalities, or groups of dwellings.

There are other nuances in the law as well. For example, we must ensure that the fire will be consumed before a stagnant air advisory or inversion sets in. In that case, the piles need to be much smaller so they burn more quickly and don't create long-term smoke impacts for residents. In Brunswick County, we deal with smoke complaints frequently, especially where development is more prevalent. New Hanover County also has significant complaints, and Pender County has seen this more over the past seven or eight years. As Hampstead has developed, we're starting to see more land clearing burns in the south end of our county.

This puts more responsibility on us when issuing those permits. The purpose of the regulations is to ensure that the developer, farmer, or anyone clearing the land doesn't create long-term smoke problems and negatively impact the surrounding community.

Commissioner Bullard - It looks to me like the permit issued to the developer would be monitored in a way that doesn't penalize farmers or others who aren't involved in land clearing. They still need to go on with their daily activities on the farm, like burning ditch banks, woodlands, and other things.

Section Chief Shane Hardee - You don't need a land clearing permit to burn ditch banks on your farm.

Commissioner Bullard - I understand that, but when the county designates it as high or moderate burning, it affects the farmers.

Section Chief Shane Hardee - The only effect it would have is that they'd have to get that permit after 4:00 p.m.

Commissioner Bullard - Yep, and now we don't.

Section Chief Shane Hardee - Now you don't, and the permits are free.

Commissioner Bullard - It's just another inconvenience.

Commissioner Byrd - But with farmers, as you're talking about clearing land, if you're talking about burning a tract before you start clearing it, say the timber has been harvested, and you're going to replant it, you go in there and burn all that. But if a farmer has gone to the trouble of stumping the property and cleaning it up, then pushing it into a pile, I don't see why the farmer should be put to this extra trouble. He's going to be more careful than a developer or anyone else because he's going to look after it. Most of the time, he's got timberland around it that belongs to him, and it's his house. He's probably going to be worried about it getting smoked up or whatever. My point is, I think farmers should be exempt from this.

Now, I have a farm down on Lakeshore Drive, and it was a farm before any houses were built around it. Last year, it was so dry that they called in complaining about the dust. Well, it was a farm there before they built houses around it. They should have known that. I don't appreciate the fact that they're coming in and trying to inconvenience me from being able to work my own land and plant my crops, which are very time-sensitive, just because it's dusty. I can't agree with that kind of control.

Now, I understand that you're pushing development in certain areas and small properties, and a lot of property owners are involved, but I'm clearing land right now, and we have a pile where they chipped the timber. We've had to deal with all the debris they left from chipping it into bark. One pile has been burning for two weeks, and it hasn't burned through yet. What am I going to do with this control? Haul it off with a truck and take it somewhere?

I think if you really wanted to benefit the county—and I know you said this came through legislation—why do we have to approve it if it's already the law? It shouldn't even be before us.

But there's another point. The loggers are filling up old ditches in the environment, and it's hard to get environmental people to agree to go back and open them up, or even get the landowners to do it. Most of the time, they just insert the debris and clean off the timber without caring about the environment. I know of several cases. One farm that's not mine, but I leased it, had timber logged all around it, and now there's water standing on most of it because the ditches were ruined by the logging.

That's where the focus needs to be—on drainage and environmental issues—rather than on making exceptions. Because if we've got wheat planted, we have a short window to get it harvested, about 10 days, before we need to get the next crop in, or it's too late."

Commissioner Watts -Is there a way to exempt farmers from this? I understand the need for it, especially in my district. Gary Lanier can attest to this, as well as Ms. Gail and Mr. Madden. I've received a lot of complaints about the land clearing in Dothan, with the smoke and ashes. We've gone through all of this before, right, Gary? It's terrible. I think the county is aware of it, and maybe Shannon Blackman has been out there. But is there a way to separate farming activities from development in this case?

Section Chief Shane Hardee - No, in short, the answer is no. There's one point of confusion here: these laws don't need to change. Both of them have been on the books for a long time, and some counties have always been classified as high-hazard. Columbus County originally was, but it was quickly changed back to non-high-hazard for reasons I don't know. It may have been due to farmers at that time. Most of our coastal counties were considered high-hazard because of development potential. However, this doesn't affect you replacing crops. For example, burning wheat fields and the limited amount of time before the next crop does not change at all. That's a regular burning permit, and you can get those for up to 30 days at a time. There's no exclusion in the law for agriculture. In fact, this law was originally written because of land clearing for agricultural purposes. The reason it was written was due to the organic soils and the amount of turf in the coastal plain area, which causes smoke to linger longer than in other areas with less turf and organic soils. The reason this is being addressed again this year is that New Hanover, along with some other counties, wanted to return to being high-hazard. Since we're revisiting this legislation — something we don't often do — we want to make sure that each county originally classified as high-hazard has the opportunity to go back to that status. If this goes through, five other counties in my district will be classified as high-hazard. Three of them already were, and two are returning to it. You would be the only non-high-hazard county remaining in Southeastern North Carolina.

Commissioner Bullard - I understand that, but I also know that Columbus County is a farming county. It's not like Brunswick County, and I live on a farm as well. However, everything gets pushed down to the smaller farms. I can't burn my ditch banks without getting a permit. Sometimes I do things when I have the time, and it may not be after 4:00 p.m. It might be during the day, just out of convenience for doing little tasks. As a farmer, I pretty much know how to burn a field as well as anyone else.

Commissioner Floyd –So, they're free and available online, right? You just go to the internet?

Commissioner Watts – So back to my questions. Back to the 30 days, so say me Ricky, Buddy or any of us, we get a permit for 30 days, correct yes, but if I draw a permit and I have 500 acres of wheat that's scattered from my house to Reeves Ferry does that permit cover every one of my fields for 30 days or I have to get a permit for each farm?

Section Chief Shane Hardee - To be technically correct under the law, you would need to obtain a permit for each farm. That being said, if you hold the permit for the location and provide a description that includes multiple areas, our Rangers will honor that. We understand that farmers, especially those burning wheat fields, may need to burn in different areas. What this allows us to do is notify our staff each time you obtain an online permit. This way, when someone calls with a concern, they can inform them that, yes, Commissioner Watts is burning his wheat field. It's fine—if he needs us, he'll call us. This system helps us be aware of the situation before receiving any complaints or concerns.

Commissioner Byrd - When you mentioned organic soil in your comment, you kept bringing it up.

Section Chief Shane Hardee - Yes sir, all right

Commissioner Byrd – A farmer can't clear that soil, because its deemed wetland. You know by it being deemed as wetland. Now you can clear it and put a blueberry farm on it or you can build buildings on it, a house or whatever, but you can't plant a row crop. You can't plant like we grow here corn soybeans or wheat or anything like that. It's just not allowed. But now if you want to clear it up and build on it you can build on even if it's Zoned Wetland and I mean we don't have that much organic soil here except in the green swamp. Most of our good sandy soils don't just burn continuously. If it's really hot and dry, it might, but you can stir it, and it'll go out. If you go back and stir it again, it might flare up, but personally, I'm not in favor of that change.

Chairman Coleman - all got a motion second got Vice Chairman Smith second question Scott Floyd Scott

Commissioner Watts – Commissioner Featherson got a question.

Commissioner Featherson - How many farmers do we have how many active?

Commissioner Byrd - A lot of active farmers are not tobacco farmers, but there are only five tobacco farmers.

There is a lot more wheat being grown now than there was 20 years ago because they didn’t grow it back then.

Chairman Coleman - We had a motion in and a second?

Attorney Prince - To approve the motion.

Commissioner Watts - Commissioner Byrd made a motion to leave it the same.

Chairman Coleman – Vice Chairman Smith made the motion

Commissioner Byrd – Vice Chairman Smith made the first motion, and I think Commissioner Floyd seconded it but, we haven't voted on it.

Mr. Madden – Is that to leave it as a moderate designation?

Commissioner Floyd - No to approve the change.

Commissioner Byrd – Or to disapprove it? we don’t have to approve it. We can disapprove it.

Chairman Coleman – The motion was made to approve the change.

Commissioner Byrd – I make a motion to amend the motion to deny the change.

Commissioner Bullard – I seconded Commissioner Byrd’s motion.

Commissioner Coleman – I have an amendment. Do we need to vote on the amendment?

Attorney Prince - You have to vote on the first one first because the amendment significantly changes the motion. It’s essentially the opposite, so it wouldn't really qualify as an amendment. You would need to do a roll call on the first motion.

Commissioner Watts – Okay, so the first motion is a motion to approve it as a high-hazard.

Commissioner Byrd - So, how would the amendment need to be worded for it to be approved first? If it's denied, it's just denied.

Attorney Prince - If it's not approved by the vote of the board, it is denied.

Commissioner Byrd - So, that person we have voted on.

Attorney Prince - She’s got to have a roll call. No, you’ve got to have the vote first. You need to call for the vote first.

Chairman Coleman - All in favor.

Commissioners – All in favor

Attorney Prince – Made the roll call

A roll-call vote was taken with the following results:

AYES: Chairman Coleman, Vice Chairman Smith, and Commissioners Floyd;
and **NAYS:** Commissioner Featherson, Commissioner Byrd, Commissioner Bullard, and Commissioner Watts.

The motion was denied on a four (4) to three (3) vote.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A HIGH HAZARD CLASSIFICATION FOR
COLUMBUS COUNTY REGARDING LAND CLEARING BURNS

WHEREAS, Chapter 106, Article 78 of the North Carolina General Statutes regulates open burning to protect the public from the hazards of forest fires and air pollution, particularly in areas with organic soils that pose a greater risk of forest fires and air pollution; and

WHEREAS, Columbus County has areas with high percentages of organic soils; and

WHEREAS, Columbus County is experiencing significate land-clearing operations in areas with these organic soils; and

WHEREAS, Columbus County requires additional oversight of lot-clearing burns to manage their impact on air quality, protect remaining forest land, and reduce air pollution; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 106-942 of the North Carolina General Statutes allows certain counties within the state to be classified as high hazard; and

WHEREAS, the high hazard classification provides additional safety measures and oversight through the North Carolina Forest Service for lot-clearing burns.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Columbus County Board of Commissioners request that the Commissioner of Agriculture seek an administrative correction to General Statue Chapter 106-942 to include Columbus County as a high hazard county in accordance with General Statue 106-940.

Agenda Item #14: APPROVAL OF FINANCE REPORT AND BUDGET AMENDMENT:

Interim Finance Director Heather Woody requested approval of the following Finance Report and Budget Amendment. One motion approved all of the following:

- a) YTD Finance Report
- b) Sheriff’s Office – Insurance Proceeds - \$33,492 Increase
- c) Reduction of Salaries - **Agenda Add-On #14c**

MOTION:

Commissioner Floyd made a motion to approve the Finance Report, seconded by Vice Chairman Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

COUNTY OF COLUMBUS FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT DECEMBER 2024		Percent of Year Complete: <div><div></div></div> 50.00%						
GENERAL FUND (Annual Operating Budget)	FY 24/25 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS	BALANCE REMAINING	% COLLECTED YTD	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS AS OF 12/31/23	% COLLECTED YTD AS OF 12/31/23	DIFFERENCE OF YTD TOTALS	DIFFERENCE OF % COLLECTED YTD
REVENUES								
AD VALOREM TAXES	44,826,509	26,747,173	18,079,336	59.67%	27,759,910	70.5%	\$ (1,012,737)	-10.83%
COURT	125,000	42,368	82,632	33.89%	42,960	34.4%	\$ (592)	-0.51%
SALES TAX	14,255,878	4,902,657	9,353,221	34.39%	3,619,762	25.8%	\$ 1,282,895	8.59%
TAX ADMINISTRATION REVENUES	37,675	-	37,675	0.00%	295	0.8%	\$ (295)	-0.80%
NC JCPC PROGRAM - TEEN COURT	77,477	38,407	39,070	49.57%	38,306	49.4%	\$ 101	0.17%
ELECTION FEES	150	588	(438)	391.93%	2,315	1929.4%	\$ (1,727)	-1537.47%
REGISTER OF DEEDS	417,600	309,078	108,522	74.01%	388,091	92.7%	\$ (79,013)	-18.99%
SHERIFF	1,950,316	845,415	1,104,901	43.35%	262,723	12.0%	\$ 582,692	31.35%
DETENTION CENTER	615,000	184,322	430,678	29.97%	146,412	18.3%	\$ 37,910	11.67%
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	251,166	101,801	149,365	40.53%	6,408	3.5%	\$ 95,393	37.03%
FIRE DEPARTMENT REVENUES	34,000	5,630	28,370	0.00%	-	0.0%	\$ 5,630	0.00%
INSPECTION	667,000	402,613	264,387	60.36%	256,356	42.7%	\$ 146,257	17.66%
ANIMAL CONTROL	47,500	6,414	41,086	13.50%	20,063	57.3%	\$ (13,639)	-43.80%
AIRPORT	526,000	210,012	315,988	39.93%	263,852	50.4%	\$ (53,840)	-10.47%
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING	13,500	12,795	735	94.56%	5,255	11.4%	\$ 7,510	83.16%
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION	3,000	640	2,360	21.33%	2,207	183.9%	\$ (1,567)	-162.57%
SOIL CONSERVATION	32,350	2,844	29,506	8.79%	2,862	9.3%	\$ (18)	-0.51%
DEPARTMENT OF AGING REVENUES	1,832,020	425,960	1,406,060	23.25%	562,443	32.4%	\$ (136,483)	-9.15%
HEALTH DEPARTMENT	3,286,759	1,306,436	1,980,323	39.75%	1,503,842	39.0%	\$ (197,406)	-0.75%
SOCIAL SERVICE	7,996,435	2,240,939	5,755,496	28.02%	2,475,109	29.4%	\$ (234,170)	-1.38%
VETERANS SERVICE	2,000	-	2,000	0.00%	-	0.0%	\$ -	0.00%
PUBLIC SCHOOLS	21,000	8,165	12,835	38.88%	8,625	41.1%	\$ (460)	-2.22%
LIBRARY	167,037	85,439	81,598	51.15%	74,221	32.4%	\$ 11,218	18.75%
RECREATION	45,825	14,545	31,280	31.74%	31,391	99.3%	\$ (16,846)	-67.56%
LEASES-GASB 87	-	-	-	0.00%	-	0.0%	\$ -	0.00%
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES	1,829,604	1,335,243	494,361	72.98%	1,242,367	98.1%	\$ 92,876	-25.12%
INVESTMENT EARNINGS	-	-	-	0.00%	-	0.0%	\$ -	0.00%
TRANSFER FROM REVENUES	689,827	-	689,827	0.00%	-	0.0%	\$ -	0.00%
FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED	6,716,703	171,253	6,545,450	2.55%	-	0.0%	\$ 171,253	2.55%
Total General Fund Revenues	86,467,331	39,400,707	47,066,624	45.57%	38,715,765	50.10%	\$ 684,942	-4.53%

GENERAL FUND (Annual Operating Budget)	FY 24/25	ACTUAL YTD	BALANCE	% EXPENSED	ACTUAL YTD	% EXPENSED	DIFFERENCE OF	DIFFERENCE OF %
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	BUDGET	TOTALS	REMAINING	YTD	TOTALS AS OF 12/31/23	YTD AS OF 12/31/23	YTD TOTALS	EXPENSED YTD
GOVERNING BODY	267,268	133,487	133,781	49.9%	132,903	43.1%	\$ 584	6.8%
ADMINISTRATION	592,008	240,313	351,695	40.6%	1,027,955	98.6%	\$ (787,642)	-58.0%
PERSONNEL	313,937	138,320	175,617	44.1%	439,865	68.4%	\$ (301,545)	-24.3%
FINANCE	829,639	518,912	310,727	62.5%	307,634	34.0%	\$ 211,278	28.5%
TAX DEPARTMENT	1,965,934	763,674	1,202,260	38.8%	880,932	46.1%	\$ (117,258)	-7.3%
LEGAL DEPARTMENT	441,718	310,190	131,528	70.2%	481,394	83.2%	\$ (171,204)	-13.0%
NC JCPC PROGRAM - TEEN COURT	77,477	36,634	40,843	47.3%	32,471	41.9%	\$ 4,163	5.4%
COURT FACILITIES	491,446	243,773	247,673	49.6%	198,450	45.7%	\$ 45,323	3.9%
ELECTIONS	638,810	343,719	295,091	53.8%	217,062	41.1%	\$ 126,657	12.7%
REGISTER OF DEEDS	556,607	281,435	275,172	50.6%	294,732	52.0%	\$ (13,297)	-1.4%
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM	607,619	289,769	317,850	47.7%	255,637	51.9%	\$ 34,132	-4.2%
CENTRAL GARAGE	241,875	112,658	129,218	46.6%	89,046	67.5%	\$ 23,612	-20.9%
NON-DEPARTMENTAL	1,764,921	1,208,334	556,587	68.5%	-	0.0%	\$ 1,208,334	68.5%
PUBLIC BUILDINGS - ALL OTHER	2,166,436	899,116	1,267,320	41.5%	808,024	33.6%	\$ 91,062	7.9%
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT	10,389,260	5,327,684	5,061,576	51.3%	4,962,864	47.9%	\$ 364,820	3.4%
GOVERNER HWY GRANT	338,620	154,289	184,331	45.6%	-	0.0%	\$ -	45.6%
LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER	5,766,282	2,339,167	3,427,115	40.6%	2,137,414	48.5%	\$ 201,753	-7.9%
EMS	31,000	15,000	16,000	48.4%	15,000	48.0%	\$ -	0.4%
EMERGENCY SERVICES	916,643	331,177	585,466	36.1%	1,351,260	36.0%	\$ (1,020,083)	0.1%
FIRE MARSHAL	210,216	109,195	101,021	51.9%	-	0.0%	\$ 109,195	51.9%
CORONER MEDICAL EXAMINER	30,000	16,850	13,150	56.2%	22,250	74.2%	\$ (5,400)	-18.0%
ANIMAL CONTROL	728,323	310,183	418,140	42.8%	319,732	45.1%	\$ (9,549)	-2.5%
FIRE & RESCUE	2,767,440	1,576,104	1,191,336	57.0%	-	0.0%	\$ 1,576,104	57.0%
NC 911 OPERATIONS	1,170,204	614,309	555,895	52.5%	-	0.0%	\$ 614,309	52.5%
AIRPORT	705,069	226,420	478,649	32.1%	322,248	47.0%	\$ (95,828)	-14.9%
INSPECTIONS	585,139	230,284	354,855	39.4%	205,645	43.7%	\$ 24,639	-4.3%
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING	387,004	189,335	197,969	48.9%	188,013	34.7%	\$ 1,322	14.2%
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION	708,855	223,304	485,551	31.5%	139,170	22.7%	\$ 84,134	8.8%
SOIL CONSERVATION	351,593	162,649	188,944	46.3%	154,740	46.1%	\$ 7,909	0.2%
DEPARTMENT OF AGING	2,988,977	1,458,946	1,530,031	48.8%	1,269,642	44.8%	\$ 189,304	4.0%
HEALTH DEPARTMENT	6,582,991	2,383,689	4,199,302	36.2%	2,421,700	35.0%	\$ (38,011)	1.2%
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION	10,468,704	4,450,426	6,018,278	42.5%	4,529,788	42.5%	\$ (79,362)	0.0%
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS	3,697,024	1,175,939	2,521,085	31.8%	1,246,882	51.4%	\$ (70,743)	-19.0%
VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER	178,450	85,814	92,636	48.1%	85,349	49.4%	\$ 465	-1.3%
EDUCATION	17,056,693	8,649,498	8,407,195	50.7%	7,559,462	45.5%	\$ 1,090,036	5.2%
LIBRARY	1,578,087	741,269	836,818	47.0%	772,753	44.0%	\$ (31,484)	3.0%
RECREATION	548,110	224,184	323,926	40.9%	254,591	43.3%	\$ (30,407)	-2.4%
SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS	687,704	196,300	491,404	28.5%	560,198	64.8%	\$ (363,898)	-36.3%
TRANSFER TO	6,639,248	502,950	6,136,298	7.6%	-	0.0%	\$ 502,950	7.6%
Total General Fund Expenditures	86,467,331	37,215,299	49,252,032	43.0%	33,684,607	43.6%	\$ 3,376,404	-0.6%
Total Revenue over/(under) Expenditures	-	2,185,408			5,031,158			

50	HUD SECTION 8 RENTAL ASSISTANCE	FY 24/25	YTD	BALANCE	% Collected	ACTUAL YTD	% YTD AS	DIFFERENCE OF
		BUDGET	TOTALS	REMAINING	YTD	TOTALS AS OF 12/31/23	OF 12/31/23	YTD TOTALS
	<u>REVENUES</u>	2,318,493	1,188,937	1,149,556	50.4%	1,047,411	54.0%	\$ 121,525.88
	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	2,318,493	1,125,271	1,193,222	48.5%	1,121,200	57.0%	\$ 4,071.47
	Excess revenue over/(under) expenditures		43,665			(73,789)		
68	TRANSPORTATION	FY 24/25	YTD	BALANCE	% Collected	ACTUAL YTD	% YTD AS	DIFFERENCE OF
		BUDGET	TOTALS	REMAINING	YTD	TOTALS AS OF 12/31/23	OF 10/31/23	YTD TOTALS
	<u>REVENUES</u>	1,660,355	295,009	1,365,346	17.8%	307,160	24.0%	\$ (12,151.07)
	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	1,660,355	527,979	1,132,376	31.8%	364,598	29.0%	\$ 163,381.30
	Excess revenue over/(under) expenditures		(232,970)			(57,438)		
30	DEBT SERVICE	FY 24/25	YTD	BALANCE	% Collected	ACTUAL YTD	% YTD AS	DIFFERENCE OF
		BUDGET	TOTALS	REMAINING	YTD	TOTALS AS OF 10/31/23	OF 10/31/23	YTD TOTALS
	<u>REVENUES</u>	4,750,651	1,281,051	3,469,600	27.0%	-	0.0%	\$ 1,281,050.75
	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	4,750,651	652,982	4,097,669	13.7%	653,024	1.0%	\$ (42.11)
60	WATER DISTRICTS I-V	FY 24/25	YTD	BALANCE	% Collected	ACTUAL YTD	% YTD AS	DIFFERENCE OF
	<u>REVENUES</u>	BUDGET	TOTALS	REMAINING	YTD	TOTALS AS OF 12/31/23	OF 12/31/23	YTD TOTALS
60	WATER DISTRICT I	890,600	474,099	416,501	53.2%	428,486	49.0%	\$ 45,612.64
61	WATER DISTRICT II	1,484,761	681,582	803,179	45.9%	654,257	45.0%	\$ 27,325.03
62	WATER DISTRICT III	820,724	393,594	427,130	48.0%	380,385	49.0%	\$ 13,208.89
63	WATER DISTRICT IV	1,420,082	475,825	944,257	33.5%	431,394	47.0%	\$ 44,430.98
64	WATER DISTRICT V	882,571	519,494	363,077	58.9%	501,594	59.0%	\$ 17,899.94
	COMBINED WATER DISTRICT TOTALS	5,498,738	2,544,593	2,954,145	N/A	2,396,116	N/A	\$ 148,477.46
60	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>							
60	WATER DISTRICT I	890,600	216,832	673,768	24.3%	249,590	29.0%	\$ (32,757.67)
61	WATER DISTRICT II	1,484,761	336,529	1,148,232	22.7%	319,975	22.0%	\$ 16,553.97
62	WATER DISTRICT III	820,724	239,276	581,448	29.2%	210,254	27.0%	\$ 29,022.45
63	WATER DISTRICT IV	1,420,082	675,565	744,517	47.6%	248,599	27.0%	\$ 426,965.59
64	WATER DISTRICT V	882,571	227,062	655,509	25.7%	237,614	26.0%	\$ (10,552.23)
	COMBINED WATER DISTRICT TOTALS	5,498,738	1,695,264	3,803,474	N/A	1,266,032	N/A	\$ 429,232.11

		Total Net Revenue		\$33,492	
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This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County Finance Office:

This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County County Manager:

XXX

This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on:

Signature

Date

Explanation of Increase or Decrease:

SHERIFF OFFICE INSURANCE PROCEEDS & OTHER MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE PAYMENTS TO BE USED FOR MAINTENANCE & REPAIR FOR VEHICLES

Agenda Add-On #14c –

BUDGET AMENDMENT

FY 24/25

Name of Department:

FINANCE- PAYROLL REDUCTION

Agency Head Signature:

Date Prepare / Submitted to Admin:

February 3, 2025

Date Received in Admin:

Budget Code			EXPENDITURES	Requested	
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)	
10	4110	512100	SALARIES & WAGES - REGULAR	\$1,511	GOVERING BODY
10	4110	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	\$126	
10	4110	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$2,500)	
10	4120	512100	SALARIES & WAGES - REGULAR	\$5,840	ADMIN
10	4120	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$151	
10	4120	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	\$72	
10	4120	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$12,000)	PERSONNEL
10	4121	512100	SALARIES & WAGES - REGULAR	(\$30,000)	
10	4121	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$112	
10	4121	518100	FICA	(\$1,500)	
10	4121	518200	RETIREMTNT CONTRIBUTION	(\$3,000)	
10	4121	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$6,000)	FINANCE
10	4130	512100	SALARIES & WAGES - REGULAR	\$41,000	
10	4130	512600	SALARIES & WAGES - PART-TIME	(\$40,000)	
10	4130	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$2,000)	
10	4140	512100	SALARIES & WAGES - REGULAR	(\$35,000)	TAX
10	4140	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$255	
10	4140	518100	FICA	(\$2,000)	
10	4140	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	(\$3,000)	
10	4140	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$15,000)	ATTORNEY
10	4140	518301	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION RETIREE	\$25,515	
10	4150	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$16	
10	4150	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$15,000)	MIS
10	4210	512100	SALARIES & WAGES - REGULAR	\$4,165	
10	4210	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$4,300)	
			Total Net Expense	(\$92,537)	

Budget Code			REVENUES	Requested	
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)	
10	3100	411100	CURRENT YEAR TAXES	(\$92,537)	
			Total Net Revenue	(\$92,537)	

XXX

This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on:

Signature

Date

Explanation of Increase or Decrease:

FROZE POSTITONS AND PAYROLL REALIGNMENT AS OF JAN 31 2025

Version 1.0

Budget Amendment.xls

Created:12/15/04

BUDGET AMENDMENT

FY 24/25

Name of Department: FINANCE- PAYROLL REDUCTION

Agency Head Signature:

Date Prepare / Submitted to Admin: February 3, 2025Date Received in Admin:

Budget Code			EXPENDITURES	Requested	
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)	
10	4330	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	\$7,645	EMS \$9,003
10	4330	512200	SALARIES & WAGES - OVERTIME	\$939	
10	4330	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$2,781	
10	4330	518100	FICA	\$216	
10	4330	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	\$1,520	
10	4330	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$12,000)	
10	4330	518301	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION RETIREES	\$7,902	FIRE MARSHAL \$9,702
10	4331	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	\$12,881	
10	4331	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$29	
10	4331	518100	FICA	\$962	
10	4331	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	\$1,830	
10	4331	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$6,000)	
10	4391	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	\$100,000	911 CALL CENTER \$205,700
10	4391	512200	OVERTIME	\$100,000	
10	4391	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$145	
10	4391	518100	FICA	\$17,200	
10	4391	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	\$31,307	
10	4391	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$42,952)	ANIMAL CONTROL (\$73,310)
10	4380	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	(\$40,000)	
10	4380	512101	SALARIES & WAGES - PAYOUT	(\$773)	
10	4380	512600	SALARIES & WAGES - P/T	\$2,127	
10	4380	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$42	
10	4380	518100	FICA	(\$3,200)	
10	4380	518101	FICA - PAYOUT	(\$6)	
10	4380	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	(\$6,500)	
10	4380	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$25,000)	
10	4201	512107	SALARIES & WAGES - COLA	(\$151,095)	
			Total Net Expense	\$0	

Budget Code			REVENUES	Requested	
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)	
			Total Net Revenue	\$0	

XXX This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on:

Signature

Date

Explanation of Increase or Decrease:
FROZE POSTITONS AND PAYROLL REALIGNMENT AS OF JAN 31 2025

Columbus County, North Carolina

BUDGET AMENDMENT

FY 24/25

Name of Department: FINANCE- PAYROLL REDUCTION

Agency Head Signature:

Date Prepare / Submitted to Admin: February 3, 2025Date Received in Admin:

Budget Code			EXPENDITURES	Requested	
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)	
10	4310	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	\$436,629	SHERIFF-PATROL \$492,574
10	4310	512101	SALARIES & WAGES - PAYOUT	\$115	
10	4310	512200	SALARIES & WAGES - OVERTIME	\$81,635	
10	4310	512211	SALARIES & WAGES - SRO OVERTIME	(\$100,000)	
10	4310	512600	SALARIES & WAGES - PART TIME	\$45,492	
10	4310	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$598	
10	4310	512800	LEO - SEPERATION ALLOWANCE	(\$12,000)	
10	4310	518100	FICA	\$33,888	
10	4310	518101	FICA - PAYOUT	\$8	
10	4310	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	\$48,667	
10	4310	518201	RETIREMENT - PAYOUT	\$17	
10	4310	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	\$7,725	
10	4310	518301	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION RETIREES	(\$50,200)	
10	4320	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	(\$300,000)	DETENTION (\$578,513)
10	4320	512101	SALARIES & WAGES - PAYOUT	(\$655)	
10	4320	512220	JAIL OVERTIME	\$9,942	
10	4320	512600	SALARIES & WAGES - PART TIME	(\$50,000)	
10	4320	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$469	
10	4320	518100	FICA	(\$30,000)	
10	4320	518101	FICA - PAYOUT	\$1,820	
10	4320	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	(\$70,000)	
10	4320	518201	RETIREMENT - PAYOUT	(\$89)	
10	4320	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$140,000)	
10	4316	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	(\$50,000)	GHSP (\$75,000)
10	4316	518100	FICA	(\$3,500)	
10	4316	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	(\$7,500)	
10	4316	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$14,000)	
			Total Net Expense	(\$160,939)	

Budget Code			REVENUES	Requested	
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)	
10	3100	411100	CURRENT YEAR TAXES	(\$160,939)	
			Total Net Revenue	(\$160,939)	

XXX This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on:

Signature

Date

Explanation of Increase or Decrease:
FROZE POSTITONS AND PAYROLL REALIGNMENT AS OF JAN 31 2025

BUDGET AMENDMENT

FY 24/25

Name of Department:

FINANCE- PAYROLL REDUCTION

Agency Head Signature:

Date Prepare / Submitted to Admin:

February 3, 2025

Date Received in Admin:

Budget Code			EXPENDITURES	Requested	
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)	
10	4160	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	(\$10,000)	FACILITY SVCS (\$20,548)
10	4160	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$19	
10	4160	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$15,000)	
10	4265	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	\$3,829	
10	4265	512200	OVERTIME	\$9,755	
10	4265	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$151	
10	4265	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	\$698	REG OF DEEDS (\$28,000)
10	4265	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$10,000)	
10	4180	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	(\$20,000)	
10	4180	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$8,000)	EDC \$49
10	4920	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	\$1,973	
10	4920	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	\$76	
10	4920	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$2,000)	DSS (\$289,815)
10	5301	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	(\$150,000)	
10	5301	512200	OVERTIME	\$1,812	
10	5301	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	(\$4,000)	
10	5301	518100	FICA	(\$20,000)	
10	5301	518200	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION	(\$30,000)	
10	5301	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$150,000)	VETERAN'S (\$5,887)
10	5301	518301	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION RETIREES	\$62,373	
10	5820	512100	SALARIES & WAGES REGULAR	(\$4,000)	
10	5820	512700	SALARIES & WAGES - LONGEVITY	(\$2,047)	
10	5820	518300	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION	(\$8,000)	
10	5820	518301	INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION RETIREES	\$8,160	
			Total Net Expense	(\$344,201)	

Budget Code			REVENUES	Requested	
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)	
10	3100	411100	CURRENT YEAR TAXES	(\$344,201)	
			Total Net Revenue	(\$344,201)	

XXX

This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on:

Signature

Date

Explanation of Increase or Decrease:

FROZE POSTITONS AND PAYROLL REALIGNMENT AS OF JAN 31 2025

Version 1.0

Budget Amendment.xls

Created: 12/15/04

Agenda Item #15: APPOINTMENTS/RE-APPOINTMENTS/REPLACEMENTS:

Staff is requesting appointments, reappointments 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
Economic Development	VII	Jonathan Williams (Replaced John Blosser – Resigned)	6/2028	Appointed

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

At 7:30 P.M. a motion was made by Commissioner Bullard and seconded by Commissioner Watts to recess regular session and enter into Columbus County Water and Sewer District I, II, III, IV and V.

Agenda Item #16: APPROVAL of WATER and SEWER COMBINATION MINUTES:

- January 6, 2025 Regular Session Combined Minutes

MOTION:

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

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

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

Agenda Item #17: COMMENTS:**A. Board of Commissioners****Commissioner Watts commented:**

- I would just like to say that on this budget stuff, I'm a very conservative person and we need to be conservative and run flat by the end of the fiscal year. I know it's going to be tough. I've had some calls from different people wanting to know what we are going to do? Well we have look out for the tax payers. We've got to be conservative with their money. I feel confident that finance and admin will make it work.
- The second thing, I want to congratulate Ms. Gail Edwards on winning the Sol B. Mann Community Spirit Award. I think that is a great honor. Especially, with her being an employee of the County and I appreciate what she does.

Commissioner Bullard commented:

- I would like to say this past Saturday I went out to the Roseland Fire Department Community Fundraiser and that department really impresses me. They work hard getting things ready for the fundraiser. That community came together and they had a good fundraiser. They put it back into the community by making their fire department a little bit better. My hat is off to them and could we send them a letter of appreciation? They don't have to do the fundraiser, and I want them to know it was not unseen.
- Cerro Gordo Fire and Rescue have remodeled their building. They have been working on it for about 6 months. It's very beautiful and I'm proud of it! They have some sleeping quarters that accommodate nighttime firemen to stay that have to pull calls. I would like for this board to send them a letter of support. They didn't have to do the work they have done, but they did and they are making their community proud of them.
- I would also like to thank the department managers for working with the county manager to tighten our belts. Every business has to do it and it's not uncommon for county government to have to do it. It's good for us to have to tighten our belts every now and then. You might find you can live that way for a couple of months and save the tax prayers a little bit of money.
- Again, I'll piggy back off of what Mr. Watts said, they couldn't have picked a better person for the Sol B. Mann Award than Gail Edwards. Thank you!

Commissioner Byrd commented:

- I would like to concur that I'm glad you got that recognition Ms. Gail.
- As all of you know, since I've been on the board, I have tried to be very conservative. Now we all have got to join in and be that way to make it through without making a whole lot of increasing. I've always said you can't spend more than you take in and you never spend on projects. Because you never know what the end answer is going to be.
- Mr. Madden, on the letters that were sent out on some of the parks that the County has throughout the rural communities requiring them to get a substantial insurance policy; is there any lease that the County can give them where they would be covered under the County's

blanked policy? Most of these parks are family owned and they just can't afford it or it's left in a family trust. We could put in the requirements where they can't have the bouncy houses or put the restrictions necessary. These folks just can't pay that high insurance. They will lease them to the County for \$1. They just don't want to see them closed.

- Mr. Madden stated he would refer that to the County Attorney, but let me say this before I do that, we do have an interlocal agreement that we do enter into with each park owner, property owner and it is similar to a lease instrument where the property owner provides the property to us and we maintain it. The insurance is for the benefit and protection for the landowner and the County. So, we have our own policy and we require the landowner to have their own and name the County as additional insurer.
- Per Attorney Prince, it is standard for all lease agreements that all property owners have their own insurance and they cannot be included in the County's insurance policy.
- Another thing, I mentioned to Mr. Pridgen that I had been contacted by some people from the library on the eastern end of the county about alternating the library hours. Maybe open later in the mornings, so it could stay open a little later at night for the convenience of the families. Mr. Pridgen said he will check into it and work it out.
- At the end of the meeting, Commissioner Byrd also commented on receiving a call regarding the Beaver Control Program. 'I received a call about promoting the Beaver Control Program. What is the process for someone getting paid to participate in the Beaver Program that has been budgeted? Interim Finance Director Heather Woody, stated that if a warrant is issued for payment by 5:00 P.M. on Monday, by that Friday they can issue a check.
- Ok Mr. Chairman I rest with that.

Vice Chairman Smith commented:

- I just want to congratulate Ms. Edwards on her Sol B. Mann Award, and I rest with that.

Commissioner Floyd commented:

- I am going to piggy back off of what Mr. Watts said, and I think all our fire departments are doing good. I know my districts are doing good and I think everybody's are doing good!

Commissioner Featherson commented:

- I too want to congratulate Gail on her most recent recognition.
- I want to thank the staff and all the workers that worked during the snow and for the constant updates and for keeping things rolling during that time. Also, I want to thank the Department of Transportation for getting the roads cleared up really good.
- I appreciate Heather and the finance department for finding a way to dig us out of this hole. Thank you so very much!
- She thanked the warming centers that opened up during the cold nights.

Commissioner Coleman commented:

- I would like to thank the county staff and the people that worked during the snow.
- He thanked the sheriff's office for the time they put in during the snow.
- He thanked the rescues squad and EMS that worked during the snow.
- He thanked staff for helping to make the County what it is today.

B. County Manager

County Manager Eddie Madden commented:

Dates to Remember:

- Valentine's Day is February 14th.
- The Schools & College Budget Retreat is March 4th.
- The Commissioner Planning Retreat is March 12th.
- The Sheriff's Budget Presentation is March 17th.
- Also, just like the rest of you, I would like to congratulate Gail on receiving the Sol B. Mann Award.

Chairman Coleman commented before the meeting ended that he wanted to thank county staff, sheriff's office, rescues, and EMS for working during the snow storm and to the staff that helped make this County what it is today.

Agenda Item #23: ADJOURMENT:

At 7:43 P.M., Commissioner Watts made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Featherson. The motion unanimously passed.

Intentionally

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