

MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNCIL WORKSHOP

MARLBORO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022

5:30 PM

CHAIRMAN

CHARLES P. MIDGLEY, JR.

VICE CHAIRMAN
ADMINISTRATOR
CLERK TO COUNCIL
COUNTY ATTORNEY

JASON STEEN
RON MUNNERLYN
SUSAN RIVERS
ANDREW MCLEOD

COUNCIL:

JASON STEEN
CHARLES P. MIDGLEY, JR.
KENNETH STROMAN
STEVE BLACKMON, AND

DR. DAMIEN JOHNSON
CORRIE H. PLATO
VERD ODOM *
ANTHONY WOODS

- Absent

Others Present: Ms. Doris Sumpter, Administrative Services Director; Mr. Doug Carabo, Public Services Director; Mr. Steve Pollard, IT Director; and Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director.

A copy of the agenda was provided to Ms. Jacqueline Hough of the Herald Advocate prior to the meeting and posted on the front door of the William P. Wallace, Sr. Administration Building.

INVOCATION – Mr. Anthony Woods

FY 2022 – 23 OPERATING BUDGET PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman recognized Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator to discuss the operating budget for FY 2022 -22.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn said this was a budget workshop. He wanted to start with showing where the county is currently compared to last year's budget. This is what he has been doing for the last six to seven years.

Mr. Munnerlyn said that he first wanted to follow up on the Recreation Needs Assessment Presentation held earlier at the Skye. He said there needed to be more work completed before deciding. The budget would be tight. He stated there were various options to look at that Council needed to look at them closely before making a decision for what is best for the county. He said the county will see some revenue growth, however, inflation is high.

Mr. Munnerlyn provided a power point presentation to show the process from the starting point from the previous fiscal year to the current list of request. He showed the Starting Point of the FY 2021-22 current approved budget with Revenues of \$12,193,678 compared to \$12,658,582 in expenditures using \$464,904 from Reserve.

The mandatory expense changes for FY 2022-23 were \$12,658,582 with includes Body Cam Service Agreement (\$30,000); Property/vehicle insurance, miscellaneous expenditures (\$120,000); Retirement Plus prior year compensation adjustments (\$325,000) for a full year; and two additional resource officers (\$130,000) for the Sheriff's Department which will be reimbursed by the School District. This also includes the Sheriff/Detention Compensation (\$380,000) for a full year. Mr. Munnerlyn advised the county cannot control the cost of retirement contributions of insurance rates by the State.

He also stated that Council provided a cost of living increase last year to employees. There have also been fuel cost increases.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated that in looking at the Revenue there has been revenue changes of approximately \$2,300,000. Part of this is due to property taxes increased by people buying more houses. There is also the "Rural Stabilization Fund" of \$325,000 approved by the State Legislature for counties with smaller populations. Also, included in this increase has been when the county has vacancies which are not immediately filled, this saves the county money. Mr. Munnerlyn did reflect that with all the changes that Council has made for the employees which includes fair wages, we are having less vacancies which is a good thing.

Mr. Munnerlyn said the biggest part of the budget is the General Fund. He advised the budget requests are taken out of the General Fund. He said that even though there is other revenue such as Rural Fire and Hospitality Taxes, you cannot take money out of these funds for budget funds. Other possible funding sources are: General Obligation Bond Fund and American Rescue Act Funds. The GO Bond Funds are utilized for asset life items in excess of 10 years. The last refinance was in 2017. There have been no increases on the GO Bond millage already charged which included: Parking lots behind & side of the Administration building (\$200,00); Roofs at museum complex (\$125,000); Rear windows at Administration building (\$100,000); Dump truck at Public Works (\$130,000); and Backhoe at Public Works (\$125,000). From the American Rescue Act Funds, Council has already committed \$4,000,000 to recreation. Mr. Munnerlyn said that left around \$250,000 which may possibly be used for technology including Computer network infrastructure and leased computer buyout and additional computers. He said that computers are very critical for us. We have a lot of computers that are coming off lease and are outdated. These need to be replaced.

Mr. Munnerlyn discussed the General Fund Requests. He advised that 1 Mil brings in approximately \$65,000 in revenue compared to \$5,000 - \$60,000 previously. Adding 1 mil to property taxes costs the citizens approximately \$2.00 for a \$50,000 home and \$3.00 more on additional property such as rental houses and businesses. He provided the power point showing the various general fund requests adding that the Field data collector for the Tax Assessor was very important. He stated that the 2% cost of living for employees was also important with the inflation. He advised council that the last increase they approved was not given until January 2022 which only covered six months of the current budget. He stated the Weather warning siren system may be obtained through possible grant funds and that the Increase in annual budget amount received from the Solicitor's office was sent to all the counties in the district.

Mr. Munnerlyn recognized Sheriff Larry McNeil who discussed the needs of the Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff Larry McNeil said the request they are making are for things they need and needed years ago. His staff is looking for possible grant funds to cover any and all items they can purchase through grants. He was not asking for anything, he did not need. The amounts provided in his requests are annual. Currently he has 30 deputies with 4 sergeants. He said 485 miles are covered each night by 2 deputies. They receive approximately 6,400 calls per year. He said 2 or 3 deputies cannot do this every day. Sometimes it takes 40 minutes or longer to get to a call causing citizens to sometimes call back and cancel the call. He said this is not acceptable. He stated that taking these calls day after day wears on the officers both mentally and physically. They sometimes get into situations without any backup. The ideal situation would to have 4 to 5 officers on every shift with 1 officer in each area.

Sheriff McNeil stated there have been numerous break-ins. Officers have been leaving because they have no hope. We need to give them a reason to stay. The Sheriff's Department needs a dog for tracking. One K-9 is a one-time cost of \$20,000, however, they can perform multiple tasks. He is hoping the School District will help with the costs. Sheriff McNeil said his department is looking for possible grant funds to help with a lot of these costs. However, personnel is not included. The body armor vest only have to be purchased every 5 years. The officers are required to wear them. There has been another party that has volunteered to pay for the vests. If anything happens to an officer and they are not wearing a vest, the county is liable. He said it is easier to write a \$500 check rather than a \$5,000 check.

Sheriff McNeil said drones may be used for basketball games, football games, and for tracking people. One drone and one dog can replace 4 to 5 people. In the past the sheriff department has been spending money on a lot of things not needed. A lot of money has been wasted. He now has a good group of people working to look for things they do need. He said he needs to keep them and they need to be paid enough to want to stay. The K-9 and the drone will help with all of this. He said officers have not been able to take vacations. The Detention Center is not much better. He said the amount of salaries being paid to the Detention Center Staff is not fair. The last transport vehicle was purchased in 2010. A new one is needed. Sheriff McNeil advised they

April 26, 2022 County Council Workshop

would begin handling federal transports. They need 5 more Detention Center Officers. He said that the Warden, Kevin Thomas has been doing the transport with only 8 employees working 24/7.

Sheriff McNeil went over the various requests he had requested in the budget. He said he wants a helicopter, but, what he needs are in the budget request. He said he is not asking for anything they can get through grant funds.

Mr. Jason Steen, Council Member stated that Sheriff McNeil has done an excellent job finding money. However, the salaries cannot be found through grants. He said Council will do everything they can to save the county money.

Sheriff McNeil stated the radios would have to be upgraded the following year. He wants to make sure that the people that work at the Sheriff's Department are proud of what they do. He wants their families to be proud.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman, Council Member asked Sheriff McNeil what was his main need. Sheriff McNeil replied "People".

Mr. Jason Steen, Council Member asked if they have a Task Enforcement. Sheriff McNeil advised they do not do traffic, only check points.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman stated there is a trust issue with officers. Mr. Larry Turner, Chief Deputy advised they have cameras coming in which will show everything.

Sheriff McNeil stated the Highway Safety Committee is continuing to work on the Salem Road/Coxe Road issue. They will continue to do what they can.

Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman thanked Sheriff McNeil for his presentation.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn continued with discussion of the budget for FY 2022-23. He stated the county is limited on how much millage the county can increase each year. The maximum available increase is 8.5 mils. If Council raises the maximum, the worse-case scenario is \$1,089,742 out of reserve. He stated there is room for some reductions in the budget. Mr. Munnerlyn advised he would create a chart with a break-down of costs to the citizens and provide it to council. He advised Homesteaders (65 or disabled) do receive a slight decrease in taxes per year.

Mr. Anthony Woods said the county has a bad situation and that citizens were concerned with the money and where it was going.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman stated the county needed to continue providing the same level of services.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn said Homesteaders do get a lower price on the Solid Waste Roll Cart Service. The service is going along good. He said a separate fund was created for Solid Waste

only. All money from taxes for this service go hear. \$200,000 is transferred from the General Fund here for the Convenience Centers. Mr. Munnerlyn said Council will need to decide whether to subsidize the cost of the roll cart services by the General Fund or increase the roll cart rates. He did recommend a 3 year renewal. Mr. Munnerlyn said that if the cost is passed to the citizens, there will be no need to transfer from the General Fund. Mr. Steve Blackmon agreed that the cost needed to be passed to the citizens, do not go up on the mils. Mr. Munnerlyn advised that with inflation, everything is going up. Mr. Jason Steen stated that he did like not having to charge at the convenience centers.

Mr. Munnerlyn discussed the Restricted (Special) Funds. The Rural Fire revenue is sufficient to cover expenses, with a clear plan for surplus revenue above required reserves. The EMS has some stabilization of billing revenue along with the COVID impact. There has been significant wear on vehicles. Need to look at future capital needs. The Marlboro County Hospital Trust did give \$40,000 in helping to get started with the ambulances. He noted that EMS can only bill if they transport the person. If they go on a call and do not transport, they cannot bill. The Restricted Economic Development Funds plans are to carry forward with the budget for completion of the Delta Site, Spec Building, and grant commitment for an active project. Plans are to revamp the County websites.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated that Council needed to go home and think about everything. He also advised another work session would be needed to discuss the budget. They would also need another meeting to discuss recreation. He said that no matter what anyone said, Council has put their money where their mouth is. They have put \$4,500,000 to the Recreation Department project.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Mr. Anthony Woods, seconded by Mr. Steve Blackmon, to adjourn the meeting. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned.

(SEAL)

ATTEST:



Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Chairman
Marlboro County Council



Susan Rivers, Clerk
Marlboro County Council

Adopted: June 21, 2022