

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ALAMANCE COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS FOR ALAMANCE COUNTY**

**May 30, 2024, 10:00 AM
Commissioners' Meeting Room
124 West Elm Street
Graham, NC 27253**

Board Members Present: Chairman John Paisley Jr
Vice-Chair Steve Carter
Commissioner William "Bill" T. Lashley
Commissioner Pamela Thompson
Commissioner Craig Turner

Call to Order - Chairman Paisley

Budget Worksession Introduction - County Manager York

County Manager York oriented the Board on the layout of the work session.

Alamance Community College (ACC) Request - Dr. Ken Ingle, President of ACC

Dr. Ken Ingle, President of ACC, presented highlights about what has been happening at Alamance Community College(ACC) and the enrollment numbers. He noted that the summer enrollment numbers were up over 15% from last summer, tracking almost 6% for the fall. Dr. Ingle reported that ACC had more than 50 programs of study and over 20 university transfer program agreements. ACC recently submitted adding two new programs, Artificial Intelligence, and Data Analytics. He mentioned that Workforce Development was the biggest growth area for ACC, which had increased by 20% over the past year. He noted the addition of the newest buildings on campus, the Student Services Center and the Biotechnology Center of Excellence.

Dr. Ingle reviewed ACC's budget request, which he had divided into two primary categories:

Capital: \$536,0000

Current Expense: \$5,725,962

Total: \$6,261,962

Dr. Ingle explained that the requested \$5.7 million in operating expenses were due to the increased utility costs, insurance, and the new buildings that had come online.

Board of Commissioners' Discussion & Questions for ACC

Vice-Chair Carter thanked the ACC finance team for their work on the budget for the current fiscal year.

Commissioner Thompson asked about ACC's fund balance. She recalled that their fund balance had dropped and inquired whether they would be in a better situation this upcoming fiscal year. Commissioner Thompson added that he thought Commissioner Thompson was referring to ACC's capital reserves. County Manager York confirmed that the capital reserves for ACC were around \$200,000 since they had earned some interest. She pointed to a slide in her Manager's Recommended Budget Presentation outlining the additional funding components the county was contributing to ACC next year beyond the current expense and capital. She said next year's total contribution to ACC was around \$10.1 million.

Alamance-Burlington School System (ABSS) Request - Dr. William Harrison, Interim Superintendent

Dr. William Harrison, Interim Superintendent of the Alamance-Burlington School System, reviewed the school system's budget request and discussed the following:

Growth in ABSS:

- ABSS has seen a return of students from parochial and charter schools.
- In April alone, ML (Multi Lingual) students increased by 32. For the year, we have had 490 ML students enroll, and many of them are considered Newcomers because it is their first time in a US school.
- It is essential to retain students in ABSS since position allotments and dollars depend on our ADM (average daily membership).

Deficit Corrective Actions:

- Cutting several Central Office positions. No person was losing their job due to retirements and attrition.
- Reduction of Elementary and Middle School Executive Director
- Lead Nurse: Going from 2 Leads to 1 Lead
- Reduction of an Exceptional Children Lead (attrition)
- Executive Director of Human Resources - cut down to 1
- Reduction of a Technology III position (attrition)

- Reduction of identified Central Service Staff who are 12 months that can be reduced to 10.5 or 11.

- School Instructional Specialists

- There were 38 of these. Principals had the autonomy of how they were used in their schools.

- All schools provided one in 2022 - 2023.

- Principal/Assistant Principal Realignment

- Principal Mentor Pay will go away. This was a local decision and not funded by the state.

- Every traditional school will have an AP except for AVS. Due to enrollment, 4 schools will share an AP. No AP will lose their position, but they could be moved to another school or lose months of employment.

- We have also adjusted the months of employment for assistant principals to be aligned with the months given by the state.

- Transportation

- Reduction in Bus Coordinators from 7 to 3. They are also working out of Transportation so we can better align our services for the school.

- Teacher Allotments:

- Utilized the state formula to provide allotments to schools based on their current ADM.

- Realignment of Media Specialists in Secondary Schools

- High schools and their feeder middle schools will share a Media Specialist.

- This will allow us to go down to 7 positions.

- Realignment of months of employment for non-teaching positions

- There are positions in the Academic and Student Support division that will be reduced in their months of employment.

- Counselors will be 10 months at the Elementary and Middle. We make all high school counselors 10.5 months for consistency and state allotment.

- Traditional High School principals will receive an allotment of days to use in the summer using a daily stipend for pay.

- Reduction of positions in the Student Support Division

- To be more aligned with state-allotted positions, we recommend that Social Workers and Nurses serve multiple schools by zone or need. This will allow them to work together with families since they will become familiar with them as they progress in grade span.
- Counselors will also be reduced based on state allotments provided. All elementary and middle schools will receive 1 counselor. Due to size, 4 of our elementary schools will share a counselor. High school counselors were given allotments based on size. They either earned 2 or 3 positions.
- Traditional high school counselors will receive an allotted number of days to be used in the summer with counselors. A stipend per day will be given.
- Graduation Coaches have been cut due to funding. There are 7 of these positions.
 - Reduction of Middle School Guidance Administrative Assistants
- There are 7 part-time positions. These will be cut.
 - Redirection of A+ and Leader in Me: Schools that choose to continue with these programs can use their instructional or Title Dollars.

Continuation Budget:

- Salary Increases, retirement rates, and health insurance are legislative-driven. We are budgeting based on the biennial budget, but as you know, recommendations are being made for a higher increase. If this happens, we will work with the county to address this need. We must remember that any positions paid out of local will also have these same legislative mandates attached.
- Utility Increases: We are running our heat/air year round to avoid mold. With temperatures already rising this spring, we know that our utilities will have an increase. As shared in a previous board meeting, the new high school was not in this year's budget. This increase will cover all buildings that ABSS receives utility bills for each month/quarter.
- The step increase is what our classified employees get each year.
- Charter schools - as shared in a previous board meeting, we are required to send the money for Alamance County students to the charter schools, and they receive 10% of anything we get from the County Commissioners. The number of students going to charter schools has grown over the years. We currently have 2,480 students in 35 charter schools. This number can change each month depending on kids who leave or return to us.

Expansion Budget: We are asking the county for this above and beyond the continuation of what we normally receive.

- Technology Support and Equipment:

- We need to begin replacing our student and staff laptops due to age and use. We want to move to a lease situation and begin with 25% of the devices each year. Keeping them on a cycle will be more cost-effective for the district.
- This division also pays for the software we use such as Google, Canvas, Homebase, etc. They also pay for security software to help prevent our district from virus attacks and potentially dangerous sites for our young people to visit.
- We also need to establish a budget for repairs and parts for damaged computers and equipment used by all staff. This includes replacement of projectors and smartboards that have reached their life span.
- This division also oversees our Telecommunications Network. Equipment replacement and supplies would be funded from this as well.
- When the district has students on homebound, we also need to provide hotspots in order to serve them. This budget would encumber those expenses as well.
 - Operational Increase (preventive maintenance/repairs & custodial supplies)
 - Mr. Hook has shared that when you look at our personnel in the maintenance division, we are understaffed for all that needs to be done. In order for us to do preventive maintenance, we would increase our contracts with outside providers to ensure we are prioritizing and staying on top of needs. We know the lifespan of our equipment and buildings shows that we are in desperate need of repairs and upgrades. The contracts will allow us to prioritize, budget, and repair in a timely fashion.
 - Budget for materials and staffing with our MFM Custodial group will increase due to cost of living adjustment.
 - Materials, rentals, inspections, and software budgets will also increase due to the cost of living adjustment.
 - Alamance Virtual School
 - We will continue the Alamance Virtual School for Grades 6 - 12.
 - We have used state allotment numbers to ensure they have the correct teaching staff.
 - We will have additional costs for staff, computer hardware, and for hot spots.

Summary:

- ABSS will ask for \$8,767,082 to help us continue what we are doing and to expand in areas where funding is needed to operate such as maintenance and technology.

- We added the \$1,576,708 for charter schools after our total to ensure we had the money that we needed to operate. Due to this, our ask will be \$10,343,790.
- ABSS recognizes that to become financially stable, we have to make hard cuts. While we value every staff member we currently have in ABSS, we must be mindful of how many positions we are going above and beyond with our state allotments and dollars.
- By cutting positions, we can begin rebuilding our financial stability to do what is best for all students. With the lack of ESSER dollars and a healthy fund balance, we no longer have a bailout plan if we do not make these tough decisions.
- When making cuts, those in leadership also understand that we have to review what is being asked of our people. Thinking out of the box and making sure all students are at the center of our decisions will be a must and expectation.

Board of Commissioners' Discussion & Questions for ABSS

Commissioner Thompson expressed concerns about lowering the number of assistant principals in the schools, cutting student services personnel, and the conditions of the school buildings.

Commissioner Lashley asked about the total number of teachers in the school system and the teacher-student ratio for K-12. Revonda Johnson, ABSS Chief Academic Officer, said they were only allowed to exceed 3 students per teacher. They could submit waivers to the state to exceed that number only for certain programs and conditions.

Vice-Chair Carter asked whether the Alamance Virtual School was K-12. Dr. Harrison answered it was for grades 6th-12th.

Greg Hook, ABSS Chief Operations Officer, reviewed information on the school system's utility bills and explained the need for additional funding to cover those costs. The biggest utility increase was from Duke Energy at an estimated increase of 4.6%.

Revonda Johnson gave an update on school performance. She reported that 17 out of the district's 38 schools had been identified as low-performing. As a result, they had formed a district improvement team that met twice a month to discuss how to be more intentional in utilizing federal dollars to help student achievement.

Commissioner Turner brought up the Cummings bleachers and whether the school system had a recommendation on that project. Dr. Harrison said they recommended moving ahead with the \$325,000 to repair the bleachers and get the work started. He said that if they went with replacing all of the bleachers, that work would not get started until November. Dr. Harrison commented that the company told them that the \$325,000 repair project would last 20 years but that was not a guarantee. Commissioner Turner asked if there was a deadline to have them ready by the football season. Mr. Hook said the company needed to order the steel and materials to be

fabricated for the repair. The had company asked for a letter of intent and they would go ahead and order materials. Mr. Hook advised that they could not give a letter of intent because the funding was not there.

Commissioner Turner asked if a motion was proper during the work session. County Attorney Stevens opined that as long as it met with the spirit of the purpose of the meeting. He also noted that the statute allowed for new issues to be voted upon as long as all five Board members were present.

Chairman Paisley conferred with County Manager York and Ms. Evans on whether they had a recommendation on funding the bleachers. County Manager York advised authorizing or reallocating bond funds. She indicated there was an available balance of \$1.87 million that could be used to allocate the \$325,000 for the bleacher repair work.

Moved by: Vice-Chair Carter

Seconded by: Commissioner Turner

Vice-Chair Carter, seconded by Commissioner Turner moved to allocate \$325,000 for funding for the bleacher project at Cummings High School. That motion carried 4-1 with Chairman Paisley, Vice-Chair Carter, Commissioners Lashley and Turner voting in favor. Commissioner Thompson opposed the motion.

APPROVED

Moved by: Vice-Chair Carter

Seconded by: Commissioner Lashley

Vice-Chair Carter, seconded by Commissioner Lashley, moved for the authorization to transfer \$357,000 from the Southeast High School project to the Cummings High School project.

APPROVED UNANIMOUS

Follow-up Questions for the County Budget Team - Rebecca Crawford

Deferred to a later meeting due to time constraints.

Upcoming Budget Meetings:

Budget Public Hearing: June 3, 2024 6:30 pm at the Historic Courthouse

Budget Worksession II: June 10, 2024 10:00 am

Budget Worksession III: June 12, 2024 2:00 pm

Adjournment

Vice-Chair Carter, seconded by Commissioner Lashley, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 1:17 P.M.

John Paisley, Chairman Alamance County Board of Commissioners

Tory M. Frink, Clerk to the Board