

*Kevin Austin, Chairman of Board  
David Moxley, Vice Chairman  
Gilbert Hemric, Commissioner  
Marion Welborn, Commissioner  
Frank Zachary, Commissioner*



*Ed Powell, County Attorney  
Lisa Hughes, County Manager  
Tanya Gentry, Clerk to the Board*

## COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

### August 26, 2022

#### **COVID**

Our active COVID cases continue to rise, as of last Friday 352. Of course, these numbers only reflect reported positive cases and does not include any unreported home tests.

#### **Legislative Goals**

It's time to submit Legislative Goals to the NCACC. Goals are due September 12th. So far, I have ones for accreditation, school calendar and CD nurse funding. Please let me know any thoughts you have on these or other potential goals. I intend to have the goals ready for approval at the September 6<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

#### **Fire Departments**

West Yadkin Volunteer Fire Department has requested Board approval of financing to purchase a 3,000 gallon pumper tanker. This will be on the September 6<sup>th</sup> Board agenda.

At the NCACC Conference Cabarrus and Iredell counties made a presentation about Fire Departments and the issues facing fire service with costs and the need for members. I've included a copy of their PowerPoint in Exhibit A. Cabarrus County also provided me a copy of an assessment report they had conducted by NC Fire Chief Consulting. I contacted this company to see how much they would charge. They do offer members of the NCLM contract pricing and extend this to members of the NCACC as well. In response Chief Grayson said for the \$15,000 range, they would address the closest station response modeling and align the modeling with ISO insurance districts and identify where we could include any areas that are currently further than five road miles, along with conducting a general performance analysis of each of our contracting departments. They will get as involved as we are willing to pay. We do have several departments that will grade or regrade in September.

#### **Sound System**

The podium microphone in the Commissioners' Room has been replaced and has a 5-hour battery pack on it. We are also purchasing a back-up wireless microphone and a wired microphone for use if needed.

The timer/clock in the Commissioners' Room has been reset. It was previously programmed, but an automobile accident on Hwy 601 knocked out the power and apparently the clock lost its programming. From now on, it will be checked before each Commissioners' meeting.

### **Solid Waste**

The cost of operating the collection sites and the transfer station has steadily increased since the onset of COVID. We are trying to determine the most efficient means to continue to provide this service at minimal cost to citizens. The cost of recycling is twice the amount of household waste. We encouraged people to recycle and they are, but it is really costing us. We are having ongoing conversations with vendor Republic Services.

### **Brooks Crossroads**

While we did not receive funding during the spring grant cycle, our application will automatically be considered in the fall grant cycle. We scored 49 out of 100 possible points. Michael Goliber has inquired as to where we fell within the rankings to determine what changes we may need to make to the application to improve its performance.

I also talked with Mike Koser about the shelf life of any engineering design. He said to complete it through the design phase, before the permitting and easement phase and it should only minor updates. I recommend letting Davis Martin Powell continue through this point.

### **Yadkinville Hwy 601 Interconnect with Davie County**

Mike Koser submitted a federal grant to connect the county's Hwy 601 waterline to the Davie County waterline to create redundancy for Yadkinville. The grant application made it through its first review, but didn't make it to the final approval. Mike is going to resubmit it for other state and federal grants. Being that we own the system, it does count in our distressed calculation, so I told him to stress that in any state application.

### **Old Coop Building**

The renovations to the Old Coop Building are nearing completion and plan to be ready for Probation/Parole and Pretrial to move in October 1. Mike Koser has told me to submit a modification request to the Town to allow us to paint the exterior of the building. I will do this and get it on their agenda as soon as possible.

### **Flood Mitigation Assistance**

The State is asking all counties to request National Flood Insurance Program data to submit a Letter of Interest to seek grant funding for infrastructure for the BRIC/FMA2022 competition. I sent the letter asking for the data earlier this week. We should receive the data within the next 15 days and the letter of interest is due October 3, 2022.

## **Asset Inventory and Assessment**

In 2019, we received a \$50,000 grant to conduct a Water Feasibility/Regionalization Study. The next step the State looks for counties/municipalities to do is to have an asset inventory and assessment completed. This will tell us how old our lines and equipment are and where they are located to be mapped in GIS. Drew Hinkle submitted a grant application in April 2022 before he left and we were notified last week that we have been awarded two (2) projects (one for water and one for wastewater). This will be completed for all of our County-owned water and sewer lines. Brock and I have scheduled a call with DEQ next week to discuss these projects and the grant.

## **School Grants**

The School Capital Committee met this week and discussed the continued funding for many school projects.

The Needs-Based Grant applications for the upcoming year are due September 1. We intend to submit for roof repairs at Forbush High School, plumbing at Courtney Elementary and plumbing/sewer line replacements at West Yadkin Elementary School. We are also going to submit applications for auxiliary gyms at each of the high schools to offer a comprehensive physical and health education program. The grant submission total is \$6,836,021 and the 5% match is \$359,791.

We intend to submit drawdown requests for the Repair and Renovation Lottery Funds for roof repairs at 6 schools for a total of \$772,220 which is less than the \$800,000 we should receive for FY2022 and FY2023.

The Schools also intend to apply for multiple grants surrounding school safety. Grants include funding for 2 additional School Resource Officers that would be shared 50-50 at the 4 elementary schools that are out in the county jurisdiction. This grant will require a match from the County of \$27,000. Other applications will not require a County match, but including mental health counseling on-site, door safety locks, etc. These grants are competitive grants and they should know of any awards in October.

All of these grants will be discussed more Monday during the joint Board meeting.

# THE FIRE SERVICE

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TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS



# COUNTIES ARE RESPONSIBLE!

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(If you collect a fire tax)

- By law, the county is responsible for providing fire protection to its citizens once it decided to collect a fire tax.
- The county is responsible for ensuring the service that is provided is sufficient to justify the tax.
- What are your standards?
- What is the line between acceptable and optimal?

# WHERE ARE WE?

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- Rising Cost of Equipment and Services
- Increasing Regulations and Expectations
- Staffing Issues
- Options and Solutions



# RISING COST OF EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES

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- Staffing
- General Increase in Cost
  - Apparatus
  - Equipment
- Testing and Maintenance
  - Aging Equipment

# INCREASING REGULATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

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- NFPA Standards and Guides
  - SAFETY
- ISO
  - Push to lower ratings
- Training Requirements
  - Firefighter, EMT, Rescue Technician, Educator, Degrees, Etc.
- Citizens' Expectations and Needs
  - Medical, Fire, Rescue, Public Education, General Public Service
  - Increased Call Volume

# STAFFING ISSUES

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- Decrease in Volunteers
  - Nation-wide issue
- Changes in Sociological Conditions
- Time Demands
- Burnout



# OPTIONS AND SOLUTIONS

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- Supplemental Personnel
- Municipal Contracts
- Alternative Funding Methods



# SUPPLEMENTAL PERSONNEL

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- Manpower Units
  - Highly mobile unit with basic equipment and personnel to service multiple areas
  - Cabarrus, Guilford, Forsyth, Davie
- Paid Staffing of Volunteer Stations
  - Self Provided or Provided by County
  - Forsyth, Wake, Onslow
- County Provided Fire Department
  - New Hanover County



# MUNICIPAL CONTRACTS

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- Contract with municipalities to provide fire protection
- The feasibility of this option is dependent on each county's geography and the ability or willingness of the county's municipalities



# ALTERNATIVE FUNDING METHODS

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- Rural Fire Protection Districts
  - Limited
- Staffing Grant or County Paid Staffing
  - General Fund
- Service District Tax
  - Localized, Regional, or County Wide



# Contact Information

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# QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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