



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS AND MANAGER

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News Release

Commissioners Adopt Budget for FY 2013–2014

June 17, 2013, Monroe, NC – The Union County Board of Commissioners on Monday adopted the FY 2014 Operating and Capital Budget of \$297.9 million. The budget is \$5.87 million or 2.01 percent more than FY 2013’s revised budget of \$292 million.

The adopted FY 2014 Operating and Capital Budget strikes a balance between providing services to county residents and maintaining current tax rates. Referring to his colleagues on the commission and county staff, Chairman Simpson commented, “Our common goal is to provide the most effective and efficient county government possible by being good stewards of the public purse.”

The largest expenditure in the adopted budget, which accounts for more than 86.7 percent of the ad valorem tax rate, is the \$133.1 million funding for Union County Public Schools related costs. These costs include \$82.26 million for current expense funding, \$3 million of capital contributions, \$46.3 million of school related debt service and \$1.55 million for the School Resource Officer program.

The board focused on student needs by fully funding the UCPS funding request for classroom instruction at \$45,573,236, fully funding the UCPS request for payments to charter schools at \$3,520,000, and allowing the Union County Board of Education the flexibility to make the needed reductions in the non-instructional, support services by partially funding the request at \$33,167,172, bringing the total funding to \$82,260,408.

The adopted budget provides the Board of Education flexibility to shift funds to address student needs by allowing transfers of up to 10 percent, without Board of County Commissioners’ approval.

The county’s \$3 million capital contribution to UCPS is focused on student safety. Based on the request from the Board of Education, as expressed in the May 15 joint work session, the board unanimously approved \$1.74 million for the replacement of the Piedmont High School home bleachers, restrooms, press box and parking lot; \$1.03 million for student safety and security projects including fencing, security doors, and host interface devices; and \$230,000 for other facility, technology and ADA compliance projects. Additionally, the commission committed to advancing \$1 million of FY 2015 capital funds for mandated school technology.

“We heard the concerns of the School Board and allocated the available capital dollars to student safety,” said Chairman Simpson, “the capital funding with the eight new school resource officers demonstrates the commission’s shared commitment to student safety.”

Beyond the school funding, the county started the annual budget development process with a \$4 million deficit (difference between budget requests and available revenue), which through belt-tightening and prioritization was eventually eliminated.

“Eliminating our initial deficit was the result of a collaborative effort of staff at all levels, starting with the front-line employees all the way through management,” said County Manager Cindy Coto, “I think it’s a real testimony to the county employee’s commitment to serving the residents.”

Among other key components, several significant budget highlights include:

- To address the dynamic service needs of the county, an additional 31 full-time and part-time positions were added throughout the organization.
- To partially offset the growth in healthcare cost for the tax payers, the budget includes a \$10 per pay period premium for employee health insurance and a 6 percent increase for dependent care coverage.
- To bring development and permitting fees more in line with market rates, fee adjustments were approved, which take effect on Aug, 1, 2013, and will generate approximately \$180,580.
- Provide \$8,532,994 of county funding for the 18 volunteer fire departments, an increase of 17.86 percent or \$1,293,054 from FY2013 revised budget.

The adopted FY 2014 Operating Budget Ordinance will be available on the county’s website (www.co.union.nc.us) on Tuesday.

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