

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY RECONVENED ITS REGULAR SESSION OF AUGUST 16, 2021 ON AUGUST 19, 2021 AT 8:30 AM IN THE COMMISSIONERS' ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO CONDUCT A WORK SESSION.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Jason Jones
Vice Chairman Denny Bucher
Commissioner George Liner
Commissioner Thomas Mark
Commissioner Theron McCabe
Commissioner E.T. Mitchell (remote)
Commissioner Beatrice Smith

STAFF PRESENT:

County Manager, Jack Veit
Assistant County Manager, Gene Hodges
Finance Director, Craig Warren
Human Resources Director, Amber Parker
Clerk to the Board, Nan Holton

Chairman Jones highlighted that this reconvened meeting was to address two items, the first one related to the airport.

Airport Director Andy Shorter, Coastal Carolina Regional Airport, informed the Board of CARES Act funding grant opportunities. He explained that the FAA stipulated the funding is to be used for Operations & Maintenance (O&M) and it requires an addendum agreement to paperwork that has not yet been received.

Mr. Shorter stated the first grant is Airport Improvement Project (AIP) 48 for \$416,595 to cover rehabilitation of the airport terminals restrooms. The second grant is AIP 49 for new corporate hangar development for \$808,875. He requested the Board to accept the two grants from the FAA and to authorize the signatures on the addendum agreements when the paperwork arrives.

Commissioner Liner motioned to accept the two grants totaling \$1,225,070 and to authorize staff signatures. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and carried in a 7-0 roll call vote.

County Manager, Jack Veit, stated that conversations with several department heads indicated issues with recruitment and retention, requiring the need to review current policies and create initiatives to address the problem. He indicated it provided an opportunity to talk about recruitment and retention strategies based on the county's inability to get candidates for certain positions, mainly at the entry level currently. Mr. Veit relayed vacancies within departments puts added pressure on existing employees requiring longer work hours, and that needed to be addressed as well.

Human Resources Director, Amber Parker, reported there are currently sixty vacant positions across twenty-six departments, though some of these are new positions created during the budget process. She presented a PowerPoint outlining personnel matters and potential policy changes.

Ms. Parker presented three incentives for consideration:

Certification Bonus for Jailer 1 employees

- Incentive payment
- Detention Officer certification
- Required through the NC Sheriffs' Training and Standards Commission
- 2.4 % increase upon completion of certification
- Applies to all current and newly hired full-time Jailer 1 positions
- Cost is approximately \$34,250
- Personnel resolution amendment is required

Recruitment And Retention Bonus Strategy

- Bonus to attract and retain highly qualified employees in hard to fill positions
- Hard to fill positions criteria examples provided
- Identified on an individual position basis
- County Manager authorization required upon request by department head
- Full time position \$750 after 6 months and \$750 after 1 year
- Part time position \$250 after 6 months and \$250 after 1 year
- Costs \$43,750 as applied to 50 fulltime and 25 part time positions
- Personnel resolution amendment required

Compensatory Time Reduction Strategy

- Policy review
- Allows County Manager flexibility to address compensatory time concerns
- If overtime pay is allowed, with a cap of 8-12 hours per pay period is suggested
- Allows for compensatory time payout when an employee terminates or transfers to an exempt position
- Costs approximately \$75,000; she explained the policy already exists but needs to be funded

There was much discussion over the metrics of defining a position hard to fill, these options being temporary while hiring and retention is a problem, the need to revisit this during the next budget cycle, the starting date of new hires and how it will affect those hired earlier, and comparisons with other counties.

Chairman Jones spoke on the critical situation at the jail being underemployed and the competition from adjoining counties.

He referenced the terribly long hours that child protective services is needed to work due to being understaffed; and the fact that CARTS drivers are required to be up at 5am to perform their work. Mr. Jones spoke in support of showing these employees appreciation and ensuring they are adequately compensated. He invited Sheriff Chip Hughes to expound on the situation at the jail.

Sheriff Hughes reported there are currently 18 vacancies at the jail, with the potential of two more. They currently house 335 inmates in a facility with a capacity for 292. He expressed concern over the legal liabilities this shortage in jailers creates and the inmate and officer safety issues. Sheriff Hughes provided comparative pay rates and benefits for surrounding counties.

After more discussion over the recommendations and the concerns, the Board reached a consensus to move forward.

Commissioner Liner motioned to approve Article IV Pay Plan, Section 16 Jailer-Education Incentive and Article IV Pay Plan, Section 19 Recruitment and Retention Bonus Personnel Resolutions as presented by staff to run through June 30, 2022. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion and it was approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Craven County, North Carolina Local Government Employees Personnel Resolution

Article IV. The Pay Plan, Section 16. Jailer - Educational Incentive

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for recognition and compensation or incentives for those individuals employed in Jailer I positions who complete their North Carolina Detention Officer certification through the North Carolina Sheriffs' Training and Standards Commission.

It is a benefit to the department and the entire county to have employees who possess higher levels of training and/or certification in their respective field. Better trained and better qualified employees are more efficient and thus more productive.

It is not intended that this policy be used for reclassification purposes. Instead the purpose is to encourage employees to increase their technical abilities and to obtain a required certification allowing them to continue to serve in a Jailer I position or to be eligible for promotion into a Jailer II position when one becomes available.

- (a) A request for funding will be included in the Sheriff's Office budget request to the County Manager and County Board of Commissioners for each year the Sheriff wishes the certification incentive to be considered for funding.
- (b) A 2.4% or one-step increase will be given effective the start of the pay period after the employee presents a Certificate of Completion issued by the State of North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission to their department and the department submits the certificate and a personnel action to Human Resources.
- (c) Applies to employees currently serving in a Jailer I position who obtain their North Carolina Detention Officer certification through the North Carolina Sheriffs' Training and Standards Commission during employment as well as newly hired employees hired into a Jailer I position who already hold a current North Carolina Detention Officer certification through the North Carolina Sheriffs' Training and Standards Commission.
- (d) A certification incentive payment in itself will not cause a Jailer I to be ineligible for a merit increase.

This policy is subject to approval by the Craven County Manager and funding by the Board of Commissioners each budget year.

Craven County, North Carolina Local Government Employees Personnel Resolution

Article IV. The Pay Plan, Section 19. Recruitment and Retention Bonus

The purpose of a recruitment and retention bonus is to attract and retain highly qualified employees in positions deemed hard to fill. A hard to fill position is a position identified as a recruitment challenge based upon factors including, but not limited to:

- a) the number of similar vacant positions within Craven County, the local job market, or other comparable governmental agencies where competition exists for the same pool of qualified applicants,
- b) the length of the position vacancy,
- c) an urgent need to fill a vacancy, or
- d) the lack of receipt of qualified applications for the vacant position.

For the purpose of this policy, a "recruitment bonus" is a payment made in exchange for accepting an offer of employment to be paid out the pay period after the successful completion of an employee's probationary period. A "retention bonus" is a payment made in exchange for an employee's continued tenure of employment to be paid out the pay period following one year of continued employment.

The recruitment and retention bonus policy will be applied according to the following procedure:

- a) Craven County may offer recruitment and retention bonuses to full-time or part-time positions deemed by the County Manager, or his designee, to be hard to fill.
- b) Hard to fill positions will be identified on an individual position basis.
- c) The application of a recruitment and retention bonus to a position vacancy must be requested by departments to Human Resources for each position to be considered.
- d) Each recruitment and retention bonus request must be approved by the: 1) Human Resources Director, 2) Finance Director, 3) County Manager.
- e) An employee is eligible to receive no more than one recruitment and one retention bonus from Craven County. This rule applies even if the employee transfers positions or separates from employment and is later rehired into a position where a recruitment and retention bonus is offered.
- f) If an employee begins employment in one position or department and receives a recruitment bonus and within their first year of employment transfers to another position or department within Craven County they forfeit their retention bonus unless their transfer to another position or department is considered to be within the same job family.
- g) Bonus values are:
 - 1) Recruitment bonuses in the amount of \$750 for a full-time position and \$250 for a part-time position will be paid to a newly hired employee in the pay period after successful completion of the probationary period or after the completion of six months of employment for employees not subject to a probationary period such as part-time positions.

2) Retention bonuses in the amount of \$750 for a full-time position and \$250 for a part-time position will be paid in the pay period following completion of one year of employment as long as the employee is currently employed in good standing with Craven County.

h) Recruitment and retention bonus payments will be made through payroll and are subject to all applicable taxes and deductions.

The recruitment and retention bonus policy is subject to the availability of funds.

Consensus was to have staff come back with other plans for consideration at the September meeting regarding start dates for new hires.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to approve the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$153,000 to fund the three recruitment and retention strategies. Her motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and carried in a 6-1 (Mark) roll call vote.

Non-Departmental

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1010000-39901 Current Year FB	\$153,000.00	1014316-41002 FT Salary	\$ 34,250.00
		1014290-41008 Employee Incentive/OT	\$118,750.00
TOTAL	\$153,000.00	TOTAL	\$153,000.00

Commissioner Liner motioned to adjourn at 9:40 am; seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and carried unanimously.

Chairman Jason R. Jones
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Nan Holton
Clerk to the Board