

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Larry Pritchett, Treasurer
Debbie Williams, Commissioner of Revenue
Mark Cole, Deputy County Administrator
Bonnie Jewell, Assistant County Administrator/Chief Financial Officer

OTHER COUNTY STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jason Irby, Deputy Fire Chief
Jane Reeve, Chief Information Officer
Letecia Loadholt, Deputy Director of Social Services
Annette D'Alessandro, Grants Manager
Murdock Woodard, First Sergeant - Sheriff's Office
Kristel DiGravio, Detective - Sheriff's Office
Erika Snodgrass, Sheriff's Office Program Assistant
Julie Elliott, Budget Manager

New Business:**Use of Contingency for DSS Vehicle Replacement**

Leticia Loadholt, Deputy Director of Social Services, explained that two replacement vehicles are budgeted for Social Services in the FY 2021 budget and are in the process of being replaced. However, a third vehicle has since broken down and Joint Fleet Maintenance has recommended it be replaced as it is no longer cost effective to repair this vehicle. Staff requests that \$19,796 be transferred from the budgeted contingency to the DSS budget to cover the cost to purchase an additional replacement vehicle.

On a motion by Mr. Cole, seconded by Mr. Pritchett and passed unanimously, the Finance Committee recommended approval of the budget adjustment.

Grant Award for Improving Criminal Justice Response for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking

Erika Snodgrass, Sheriff's Office Program Assistant, reported that the County has been awarded a federal grant totaling \$500,000 over a three-year period to support a coordinated community response to hold offenders accountable and serve victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, the Victim Witness Assistance Program, and the Sheriff's Office will partner with Empowerhouse, a local non-profit providing services to victims of domestic violence and their children.

The grant will fund the salary, benefits, equipment and training for one full-time Detective to work domestic violence cases, as well as training for the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office and Victim Witness Assistance Program. Additionally, the County will sub-award a portion of the grant to Empowerhouse to support a three-quarters time

Advocate position and related costs; interpreters; and financial assistance with housing and legal representative.

Mrs. Snodgrass explained that there is no local match requirement for the program. Additionally, while there is no requirement to continue to fund the program beyond the initial period of performance, there may be potential for continuing grant funding, though this is not guaranteed.

In response to a question from Mr. Cole, Detective DiGravio ensured Committee members that there is enough case work to warrant an additional full-time position for this purpose.

On a motion by Mr. Cole, seconded by Mr. Pritchett and passed unanimously, the Finance Committee recommended acceptance of the grant as well as approval of the budget adjustment and appropriation. The FY 2021 budget adjustment and appropriation include only the expenses anticipated to occur during FY 2021. Future years' adopted budgets will include the funding for the second and third years of the grant.

Grant Award for Combating Internet Crimes Against Children

Erika Snodgrass, Sheriff's Office Program Assistant, reported that the County has been awarded \$14,000 by the State for reimbursement of expenses associated with investigations and prosecutions of internet crimes against children. The Sheriff's Office intends to use this funding for overtime and associated fringe benefits costs related to such cases.

Mrs. Snodgrass explained that there is no local match requirement and no requirement to continue funding for the program after the grant award expires. First Sergeant Woodard noted that the County has received this grant for the past eight years and the program has been very successful.

On a motion by Mr. Pritchett, seconded by Ms. Williams and passed unanimously, the Finance Committee recommended acceptance of the grant as well as approval of the budget adjustment and appropriation.

Donation to Swift Water Rescue Team

Jason Irby, Deputy Fire Chief, explained that the County received an unsolicited \$1,000 donation for use towards the work of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management's (FREM) Swift Water Rescue Team. FREM would like to use these funds to purchase an underwater video camera that will allow the Swift Water Rescue Team to return a real time video feed to the surface where it can be viewed by incident commanders and law enforcement personnel and provide them with the ability to view what is occurring under the water's surface.

Ms. Williams asked if there are any costs for the camera that exceed the \$1,000 donation. Deputy Chief Irby and Ms. D'Alessandro explained that the camera itself is

expected to cost slightly less than the full donation, but that with shipping and handling costs and a few accessories, the full donation amount will be used towards the purchase. Deputy Chief Irby noted that future costs to replace the camera could be covered through the annual funding provided to the County strictly for FREM use.

On a motion by Ms. Williams, seconded by Mr. Pritchett and passed unanimously, the Finance Committee recommended approval of the budget adjustment and appropriation.

Other Business:

FY 2021 Edward Byrne JAG Grant Award

Annette D'Alessandro, Grants Manager, reported that the federal government has a new grant award system for which the County is in process of registering. Though the registration process is not yet complete and all documentation is not yet available to her, Ms. D'Alessandro can see in the new system that the County has received an award through the federal Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program. The grant will need to be accepted no later than November 30. Given that there is just one Board meeting in November and that it precedes the next Finance Committee meeting, it was necessary to make the Committee aware of this grant at the October Finance Committee meeting even in the absence of having the information necessary to draft the Board agenda documentation.

Erika Snodgrass, Sheriff's Office Program Assistant, reminded Committee members that a public hearing was required and was held in advance of the County applying for this grant. The Sheriff's Office intends to use the grant funding – which is estimated to be approximately \$25,000 – for a sonar scanner for the patrol boat, back-up air supply dive tanks, and wet suits for the dive team.

On a motion by Ms. Williams, seconded by Mr. Cole and passed unanimously, the Finance Committee recommended approval of the budget adjustment and appropriation (assuming that the grant award documentation has usual and acceptable terms once it is received).

Grant Application for CARES Act Broadband Project

Jane Reeve, Chief Information Officer, briefed the Finance Committee on three grant proposals she is working on in response to the State making available \$30 million in CARES Act funding for broadband grants. Mrs. Reeve made it clear at the beginning of her remarks that the CARES Act funds made available by the State require that projects are completed and paid for by December 30, 2020. If the federal government does not extend that time requirement, it will not be possible to complete the projects for which she recommends we submit grant proposals.

Additionally, timing is critical to these grant proposals. Mrs. Reeve reported that she has heard that about half of the available \$30 million has already been awarded, so

we need to get our applications in quickly before it is all awarded to other localities. As such, given the Board's prior conversations about and support of broadband improvements, Mrs. Reeve has received the County Administrator's permission to move ahead with completing and submitting the broadband grant applications without specific Board approval.

Application 1

DataStream is working to expand its wireless presence on the County's Belmont tower. This will help widen the coverage area in that portion of the County, but will not resolve all concerns. Mrs. Reeve intends to apply for a grant to assist DataStream with expanding to the County's Wilderness tower, as well. Again, this will not resolve all concerns, but will widen the coverage area.

Application 2

Information Services staff has coordinated with the Schools to map reports from families regarding lack of internet service. The map is surprising in that it shows data points within primary settlement district areas where internet service is thought to exist. However, service availability is difficult to gauge because all providers are not forthcoming with precise coverage data, and it is not clear from the family surveys as to which situation each family is in – is the coverage not available to them, or can they not afford the coverage that is available.

Mrs. Reeve intends to apply for a grant to hire a consultant to perform a proper survey of the County to clearly define the problem.

Application 3

There are many instances in the County where internet is available in fairly close proximity to homes, but the providers have not been willing to extend the service to the homes. In these cases, when citizens have inquired about service, the providers quoted the citizens expensive prices to extend the connection to their property. As such, Mrs. Reeve intends to apply for a grant to allow the County to develop a grant program to help citizens fund extensions of existing internet service lines to their homes.

Mrs. Reeve reiterated that if the County is awarded any CARES Act funding for this purpose it will not be possible to complete the projects on the existing legal deadline of December 30, 2020 for use of CARES Act funds. The federal government must extend that time requirement for us to be able to complete these projects with the grant funding.

Given that this was a presentation made to the Finance Committee for members' awareness of the matter and that the grant applications are not going to the Board for approval, the Finance Committee did not vote on these applications. If the State awards the County a grant through this process, a budget adjustment and appropriation will necessarily come before the Finance Committee and the Board at a later date.

Adjournment:

Ms. Jewell adjourned the meeting.