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Contact: County Manager's Office
336-753-6001
info@daviecountync.gov



DAVIE COUNTY MANAGER PRESENTS RECOMMENDED BUDGET FOR FY 2015-16

*Adequate funding for education, Needed technology improvements,
Capital Improvements Plan implemented, County service gaps addressed,
County employee compensation and benefits addressed, Water and Sewer Rates addressed,
Increase of 10.8-cents in real estate property tax rate for new Davie High School*

Mocksville, NC – Davie County Manager, Mike Ruffin, presented a \$56.1 million General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16, focusing on adequate funding for education, implementing funding for key projects pertaining to infrastructure, allocating compensation to retain and attract great county employees, and adjusting the tax rate to cover the construction of the new Davie County High School.

“This Budget addresses areas that have been neglected over the past few years. Residents have made it evident that they want to see these areas re-prioritized, bringing us back in line with prior commitments but also illustrate that Davie County is committed to providing the services necessary to make our county attractive,” said County Manager Mike Ruffin. “We have been fortunate over the past several years to attract new industry that will soon begin building our tax base, and lessen the tax burden on residents. It is a period that can be described as one with ‘growing pains’, but also very positive because it puts the county in position to lessen the burden over time on tax payers.”

The next steps will be for Commissioners and the County Manager to participate in budget reviews with all county departments on June 3; host a Public Hearing for the Proposed Budget on June 15; and, adopt the FY 2015-16 Budget between June 15 and 30.

Adequate Funding for Education (both Davie County Schools and Davidson Community College)

Ruffin proposes an increase of \$775,000 to Davie County Schools and \$48,411 for the College of Davidson and Davie Counties. “Our Board has heard the community and recognizes that it is their priority to make education in Davie County among the state and the nation’s finest. Under the proposed budget, Davie County’s support for our students would exceed \$1,600 per pupil, putting us near the top in per pupil funding compared to other school districts in the region.”

Needed Technology Improvements

Under the proposed 2015-16 budget, approximately \$2 million in technology improvements will include various server and network upgrades, but also the purchase of Viper/800 radios and 911 consoles. These improvements will not only allow the county to provide services more efficiently, but will specifically enable law enforcement and other emergency agencies to communicate with one another via improved communication channels.

Capital Improvements Plan Implemented

The county's Capital Improvement Plan, adopted at the May 2015 Board of Commissioners meeting, is included in the proposed budget recommendation. For FY 2015-16, \$46.4 million is recommended, with \$43 million specifically earmarked for the funding that was approved by voters in 2014 for the new Davie High School. The remaining \$3.4 million is designated for the VIPER communication system, courthouse renovations, Central Davie Education Center renovations, Davie Little League, Brock Auditorium and Gymnasium renovations, Senior Services Canopy, East Davie Pump Station and Administrative Building renovations.

County Service Gaps Addressed

Ruffin proposes approximately \$300,000 to address gaps in service—an area where funding has not been allocated for needs that are necessary in Davie County. For example, current gaps that have been identified include funding for mandatory direction from the State Board of Elections to fund not only a May primary election, but a Presidential Preference Primary; help desk staff needed in the County Technology Solutions Department; county water line extensions; and, Department of Social Services/Foster Care Support which will provide support and shorter wait times for public assistance.

County Employee Compensation and Benefits Addressed

Ruffin proposes a staff-wide 2% salary increase, an overall proposed budget line item of \$300,900. In addition, the county has allocated an additional \$500,000 for improved benefits and enhancements for Davie County Government employees. This includes improved dental and life insurance, along with necessary funds to cover increased health insurance costs for employees.

Water and Sewer Rates Addressed

The FY 2015-16 Proposed Budget is based upon a Board-reviewed rate study that was done to address current cost of operations and future capital improvements. The study revealed the need to increase water and sewer rates throughout the county, ranging from 3-20%. Customers can anticipate bi-monthly increases on the average water bill to be between \$1 and \$4. Again, these increases will be reflected bi-monthly beginning in the September Public Utilities billing cycle.

Increase of 10.8-cents in Real Estate Property Tax Rate for New Davie High School

A 10.8-cents real estate property tax increase is included in the FY 2015-16 Proposed Budget. This is required to repay bonds that were sold to pay for the construction of a new Davie County High School. Voters approved the issuance of up to \$54.5 million in GO bonds in May of 2014 and in April of 2015, the full amount of \$54.5 million was issued. This debt will be serviced over 17 years. This tax increase is the ONLY tax rate increase recommended in the proposed FY 2015-16 Budget. Taxpayers can anticipate seeing the property tax increase in their August Real Estate Property Tax Bill. For more information on how this determined tax increase will specifically impact property owners, visit www.daviecountync.gov/daviecountyschoolbonds.

For More Information

Davie County Government has established a number of channels for residents to stay up-to-date on what they hope will be one of their most transparent budget years. “One of our Commissioner’s top priorities was to make the budget process transparent—allowing all residents to have up-to-date access to budget information and a better understanding of the process as a whole. We have established a 2015-16 Budget Page on our county website (located on the home page), and have made a commitment to communicate this process through use of the county government’s Facebook page and e-newsletter, the *County Connection*. Residents are also encouraged to utilize a new email address that has been established specifically for budget questions, budgetquestions@daviecountync.gov,” added Ruffin.

“The budget process is a tedious job, but one that is necessary to move communities in a positive direction—a direction we feel confident Davie County is heading in,” said Ruffin.

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