



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

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Contact: Sally Shutt, Public Information Director

Telephone: 910-437-1921

E-mail: [sshutt@co.cumberland.nc.us](mailto:sshutt@co.cumberland.nc.us)

## Cumberland County Commissioners Approve FY2015 Budget

FAYETTEVILLE – The Cumberland County Board of Commissioners voted tonight to approve the FY2015 budget as presented by County Manager Amy Cannon in her recommended budget on May 29. The budget ordinance will be on the June 16 regular meeting agenda.

The countywide budget totals \$484 million, and the general fund budget equals \$312 million, a decrease of \$1.2 million from the FY2014 budget. The property tax rate will remain at 74 cents per \$100 valuation, with one penny earning \$2.2 million in revenue.

During her budget presentation, Cannon cautioned commissioners regarding the economic challenges the county faces, including rising costs for healthcare, federal budget concerns, military downsizing and modest tax base growth. Sales tax collections for 2014 are down \$2.4 million.

County employees will not receive a cost of living increase, but the budget includes \$1.2 million to cover increasing medical insurance costs and the employee health plan will remain unchanged with no increase in premiums for employees. The county is self-insured and its program is administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield.

“All of the commissioners wish we had the funds to provide our employees with a raise, but we can’t add a recurring expense to the budget without having a recurring funding source,” said Chairman Jeannette Council.

“We will look at the next quarter’s sales tax and then the following quarter’s sales tax to see if this decline is the new normal. Then we can see what we can do for employees,” she said.

Cannon outlined four funding priorities in the budget – mandates, repairs and maintenance, technology and economic development.

Some of the budget highlights in the mandates category include:

- Six new positions – an attorney and paralegal to handle foster care cases for the Department of Social Services and four part-time deputies for Courthouse security.
- An additional \$362,744 for foster care services. The number of children in foster care has increased by 23 percent to 755 in the county.
- \$913,120 for salaries and operating costs for the Detention Center expansion.

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Repair and maintenance projects totaling \$1.7 million will be funded from assigned fund balance and include security upgrades in the Law Enforcement Center lobby; repairs to the brick façade of the Headquarters Library; replacement windows in the DSS building and several mechanical repairs to chillers, air and heating systems.

Technology costs total \$1.9 million and will be covered by assigned fund balance. Projects include security cameras and a video visitation system in the original section of the Detention Center; network and server upgrades; upgraded computers, software and mobile data terminals for the Sheriff's Office; and a Voice-Over Internet Protocol telephone system for DSS.

As outlined in a funding agreement between the commissioners and the Board of Education, the Cumberland County Schools will receive \$762,207, a 1 percent increase over the 2014 budget. Fayetteville Technical Community College will receive an additional \$95,524, which is a 1 percent increase in their current expense funding.

Other budget highlights include 24 vehicles, five of which will be hybrids.

Changes in Solid Waste Management fees were approved for illegal dumping and commercial tipping fees, as well as fees for new services such as the sale of crushed stone and bagged compost.

The recommended budget is available at [co.cumberland.nc.us](http://co.cumberland.nc.us).

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