

Highlights of New Hanover County's 2017-18 Adopted Budget



The New Hanover County Board of Commissioners adopted a **\$329.4 million** general fund budget for Fiscal Year 2018, which runs from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. The adopted budget is a 4.2% increase over the FY2017 adopted budget, and – by using money that the county has effectively saved over the years – includes the first property tax cut for county residents in 14 years. The tax rate will decrease by 8.5%, **cutting property taxes by 2.36%**. For the fourth consecutive year, the county has also reduced the landfill tip fee from \$50 to \$48, while continuing to provide innovative services and programs. Below are several funding initiatives in this year's budget.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- **New Hanover County Schools** will receive an increase in funding from the county for the fifth year in a row, raising funding to \$2,700 per student, which is above and beyond state and federal funding for students. The county also funds all public school facilities and new construction. In total, funding to the schools will increase more than \$2.3 million in FY18.
- **Pre-K expansion**, funded by the county, will add 45 new openings – which is the equivalent of three classrooms – for three and four year olds, giving them a structured learning environment and preparing them for kindergarten.
- **Cape Fear Community College** funding will continue to support the operations and maintenance of facilities, including three new buildings that open June 29.

PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- **Sheriff's Office** will receive additional funding for youth intervention and gang prevention initiatives, a crime specialist to work in collaboration with the Wilmington Police Department, and additional mental health resources at the county jail.
- **LINC, Inc. Jail Diversion Program** will receive additional funding after a successful, small-scale pilot program and national recognition for its innovation. The program will expand to assist 20 men and 20 women, redirecting them from the criminal justice system to community-based treatment and wrap-around support.
- **Fire Services District** rate increased for county residents outside of the city limits to help fund increased services like the Quick Response Pilot Program, which decreases response times by having trained responders in vehicles located in target areas during peak times to respond to medical calls.

PUBLIC HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE

- **Health and Human Services Building** is being funded to bring the Health Department and the Department of Social Services under one roof, to improve efficiencies and enhance the customer experience.
- **Developing a bike and multi-use path** along Military Cutoff Extension to provide safe connectivity for residents.
- **Purchasing land on Pages Creek** that will provide parking and easier water access for paddle boards and kayaks, adjacent to an existing county-owned property.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & OUTSIDE AGENCIES

- **Non-county agency funding** will total \$1.468 million, an increase of \$310,000 from FY17, to assist the work of cultural, recreational, economic development, and human services agencies.
- **Economic development funding** will encourage private investment and job creation, with \$690,000 in incentives, \$525,000 to fund fire flow to the water system on US 421, \$60,000 for a preliminary engineering report evaluating water service expansion to Castle Hayne, and more than \$687,000 in various economic development investments.

In recognition that employees are the county's greatest asset, the adopted budget includes funding for market and merit increases to eligible employees. To continue reducing and containing healthcare costs, the county is also enhancing benefits and wellness services to employees.