



Chatham County, NC

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Title: Approve a one-time payment to permanent employees in consideration of FY21 budget's elimination of employee pay adjustments and in recognition of employees' efforts during pandemic response

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Approve a one-time payment to permanent employees in consideration of FY21 budget's elimination of employee pay adjustments and in recognition of employees' efforts during pandemic response

Action Requested:

Vote on a request from the County Manager to approve a one-time Pandemic Response Payment for permanent Chatham County employees.

Introduction/Background:

On March 10, 2020, Governor Cooper, through Executive Order 116, declared a state of emergency to prevent the spread of COVID-19. On March 27, 2020, Executive Order 121 imposed a statewide Stay at Home Order, which directed people to stay at home except to visit essential businesses, exercise outdoors or help a family members. The Order also banned gatherings of more than 10 people and directed everyone to physically stay at least 6 feet apart from others.

This order, and additional executive orders issued in connection with the pandemic, dramatically impacted the way County services were provided and the expectations of the Chatham County employees delivering those services. During this time, County staff demonstrated creativity, flexibility, and perseverance in ensuring the continued delivery of services in a safe manner.

Additionally, due to the uncertainty surrounding the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of reductions were made to the FY2020-2021 annual operating budget in order to preserve the County's solid financial footing. Included in these reductions were the elimination of any employee pay adjustments. Upon the adoption of the FY2020-2021 annual operating budget, the Board of Commissioners asked staff to investigate any ways that the County could do something for employees should the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic not be as severe to the financial well-being of the County as initially projected.

Given the adjustments that County employees had to make in order to continue operations during the pandemic and the generally positive budget outlook (through 6 months of FY2020-2021), the County

Manager is recommending a one-time Pandemic Response Payment for permanent Chatham County employees.

Discussion/Analysis:

The County Manager is recommending that a one-time Pandemic Response Payment of \$100 for each month worked from March 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. If approved, permanent employees who were employed by Chatham County for the entire period will receive a one-time payment of \$1,000. Employees hired during the course of the pandemic will receive \$100 for each calendar month in which they were employed by Chatham County and permanent part-time employees will receive a pro-rated amount based on their percentage of time. Employees must be employed as of February 15, 2021 to receive this payment.

At this time, Budget and Finance are confident that currently budgeted expenditure savings can offset the entirety of this cost. If additional unbudgeted expenditures occur during the remainder of the fiscal year and savings in currently budgeted expenditures cannot offset the entirety of this cost, staff is confident that revenues that are performing higher than budgeted can supplement expenditure savings. Staff will bring forward a budget amendment to the Board of Commissioners later in the fiscal year if it becomes necessary to do so.

How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan?

This item does not have a direct correlation to the Comprehensive Plan; however, County staff are vital in implementing the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Budgetary Impact:

The total budgetary impact for this one-time payment is projected to have a total County cost of \$595,000.

Recommendation:

The County Manager recommends that the Board of Commissioners authorizes a one-time Pandemic Response Payment of \$100 per month to permanent Chatham County employees who have been on the payroll from March 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, prorated for regular part-time employees based on their percentage of time.