

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET WORK SESSION II**

May 16, 2017

5:00 PM

Board Members Present: J. Harry Lange, Susan Andrews, Martha Chewning, Becky Langston, Jim Woods. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

Others Present: Bucky Searcy (EMS), Jimmy Carver (EMS), Ronnie Duke (Solid Waste), Vickie Jamerson (Tax Commissioner), Jeff Culpepper (Water Works), Mike Brown (Public Works), Brian Williams (Community Development), Stacy Haralson (Clerk of Superior Court), Bill Lisenby (District Attorney), Thomas Lakes (Probate), Cynthia Nelson (Prison), Robert Larsen (Prison), Christy Searcy (Accounting Clerk), Clint Chastain (Severn Trent Finance Officer)

Chairman Lange called the meeting to order and said the purpose was for the discussion of the proposed budget for FY 17/18. He ask Randy Dowling, County Manager, to review same.

Mr. Dowling said that this is the first of three work sessions regarding the proposed budget, with the next two scheduled for March 23 and March 30; that the Public Hearings are scheduled to take place during the Regular Sessions on June 6 and June 20, with the adoption scheduled for June 20; that the budget is approximately \$45 million; that the local economic climate reflects that the county's population is increasing, new building permits have slightly increased over the past year, sales tax (LOST, SPLOST and TSPLOST) have been flat, tax digest has been decreasing, taxes levied has decreased, General Fund balance has been decreasing, millage has decreased for 7.9 in 2005 to 6.14 in 2008 and has remained the same since, unemployment has been declining, and inflation is beginning to increase to about 2.6%. He said that while a 3% salary increase has been included in the proposed budget, longevity (compression) increases have not been included as well as the increase in health insurance premiums (which the County is absorbing), and that the proposal budget is being balance by using transfers from Jail Fund (\$500,000), Solid Waste Fund (\$1,500,000), Water Works Fund (\$300,000), and a 1.5 mill property tax increase (\$1,950,000).

BUDGET FY 17/18.

General Fund

- ▶ **Administration:** Increase PT position to FT Accounting Technician, the usual annual fees for legal work, audit work, and consulting, random drug test, computer maintenance agreements, and website maintenance, and the addition of the purchase and installation of accounting financial software. This does not included the Commissioners, which are in a separate department.
- ▶ **Animal Control:** Addition of FT Administration Assistant so that someone will be at the Shelter during normal business hours Monday through Friday to handle phone calls, animals coming in, or adopting out animals and a new vehicle with animal box. Also included are the usual veterinary services, general supplies, and animal food. Recommended elimination of paving the driveway and parking area.
- ▶ **Board of Commissioners:** New department, which includes dues and fees related to ACCG and Chamber of Commerce and the addition of funds related to quarterly retreats (planning sessions).
- ▶ **Board of Elections & Registration:** One election scheduled for May 2018 which requires the printing of ballots and paying poll workers. Also includes funds to purchase batteries for voting machines.
- ▶ **Board of Equalization:** Formerly included in the budget of Clerk of Superior Court, but is required by law to be a separate budget.
- ▶ **Clerk of Superior Court:** Includes dues and fees for jurors, jury commissions, general dues. In response to question from Chairman Lange, Stacy Haralson, Clerk of Superior Court, said that the back logged court cases are beginning to clear up.
- ▶ **Community Center:** Includes funding for two computers and small tools, and a transfer to the Public Improvements Authority Fund (\$559,087) to pay annual debt service. Recommended elimination of FT Administrative Assistant and scissor lift.
- ▶ **Community Development.** Increase PT positing to FT Administrative Assistant; continuation of professional services, fees for Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustments, membership fees; addition of office furniture and equipment for GIS purposes. Recommended elimination of vehicle. Brian Williams, Community Development Director, appeared before the Board and said that the credit card fees are causing issues; that the ability to use credit cards was originally set up for business licenses, for which the service fee is a flat fee of \$3.00, builders are charging their permit fees which are much larger and the service fee of \$3.00 is not enough because the bank charges a much higher service fee due to the amount being charged. Discussion included that GIS would be utilized by several other departments (roads, water, solid waste, etc.).
- ▶ **Coroner:** Add health benefits and retirement for Coroner. Includes travel for training and deputy coroner calls, transportation of bodies, and purchase of a stretcher.

- ▶ County Jail (formerly Jail): Includes usual expenses for medical expenses and inmate food expenses; increase in repairs and maintenance for replacement of toilets; and purchase of replacement washing machine.
- ▶ County Prison (formerly Prison): Addition of FT Correctional Officer for the walking litter detail; includes usual expenses for professional services, medical expenses, inmate food expenses; and purchase of mower, two replacement water heaters, replacement washing machine, dishwasher, upgrade of camera system from analog to digital. Recommended elimination of FT Records Specialist, two FT Correctional Officers, and vehicle. Discussion included to determine if the same companies can perform the medical needs and provide the meals for both the Jail and Prison. Cynthia Nelson, Prison Warden, appeared before the Board and said that the security system is desperately needed; that some of the current cameras are in the wrong places and over half don't work; that the mower is needed to maintain the grounds and at other sites; that the water heaters, washing machine and dishwasher are needed; and that she really needs the truck to replace one that is not functioning.
- ▶ District Attorney: No significant changes from last year, but that due to the recent resignation of an employee, there will be a savings of around \$10,000.
- ▶ EMS: Includes the usual expenses related to the private billing service, rental payments for stations at Waverly Hall and Pine Mountain, required license fees, credit card processing fees, and a replacement ambulance (\$160,000) and battery operated jaws of life (\$20,000). Recommended elimination included a replacement ambulance (had requested two), the supervisor vehicle, and the resurfacing of the parking area.
- ▶ Extension Service: No changes.
- ▶ Facilities Maintenance: Includes general building maintenance and cleaning, and repair/replacement to various HVAC systems. Recommended eliminations include FT Maintenance Tech position and the vehicle, uniforms and small equipment for the position; the roof repairs to the current Library and to Community Center; reduction of HVAC repairs (to \$60,000); the repairs to the courthouse walls, interior & exterior painting, pressure washing, and repairs to front balcony & overhangs; the one-person lift; scaffolding; replacement vehicle; and new records storage building. Discussion included that records storage is a recurring theme throughout the County.
- ▶ Information Technology (IT): New department to oversee county-wide computer network and infrastructure, to assist in special internet projects, to assist with 911 upgrade of the CAD and mapping system, relocate and maintain servers, perform routine maintenance on county computers and ancillary equipment (printers and fax machines), upgrade computer software, install network security software, provide training, assist in setting up new computers and troubleshooting. Addition of FT IT Manager, two new servers, software for remote access, and computer tools.
- ▶ Magistrate Court: No changes, but includes software maintenance, interpreter service, and new computer monitors and scanners.
- ▶ Non-Departmental (fka Operations): New name. Includes dues and fees for River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC), Valley Partnership Joint Development Authority (VPJDA), NACO; funds (\$512,473) from federal TE grant for Phase I of Rails to Trails project with remaining cost (\$258,118) from TSPLOST 2013; funds (\$25,000) for communication tower on Hamilton property; and includes indigent burials. Discussion included questions about what benefits the County receives from the RVRC and if there is a need for the County to be a member of the VPJDA for which Chairman Lange may have an answer prior to budget approval.
- ▶ Probate Court: Includes expenses for attorney fees for guardianship issues, technical services for computer, microfilming & GCIC, interpreters, witness fees, and computer equipment. Recommended elimination of PT Administrative Assistant. Thomas Lakes, Probate Judge, appeared before the Board and said that included in expenses is food to provide to court staff and attorneys since it's difficult to go out and get food within the time frame allotted for lunch during court sessions. He reviewed the number of probate estate matters, weapons carry applications, marriage licenses, and traffic cases his office handled during 2016. He said that the salary study last year adjusted salaries in his office and that the minimum rate of \$13.22 was appreciated. He then reviewed the duties of his clerks and stated that their positions should be reclassified and their salaries adjusted because they are more like department heads; that Mrs. Stewart has been employed 18 years and makes slightly more than the other two ladies who have been employed three or four years and make the same rate (due to the salary study); and that he would like to have the requested PT position remain in the budget as that person would act as back-up for his clerks.

NEXT BUDGET WORK SESSION. Chairman Lange announced that discussions regarding the proposed budget will continue, beginning with Public Works, during the Budget Work Session scheduled for Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 5 PM in Commission Chambers (Room 223) of Courthouse.

ADJOURNMENT