

MINUTES OF THE

COMMISSIONERS' COURT

WORKSHOP MEETING - AUGUST 4, 2016

On the 4th day of August, 2016, there was a Workshop Meeting of the Commissioners' Court in the Courthouse, Rockport, Aransas County, Texas, with the following members present: **C. H. "Burt" Mills, Jr.**, County Judge; **Jack Chaney**, Commissioner, Precinct 1; **Leslie "Bubba" Casterline**, Commissioner, Precinct 2; **Charles Smith**, Commissioner, Precinct 3; **Betty Stiles**, Commissioner, Precinct 4; and **Valerie K. Amason**, County Clerk.

Other County Officers present were **Alma Cartwright**, Treasurer; **Pam Heard**, District Clerk; **Jeri Cox**, Tax Assessor-Collector; **Lezlie Kirk**, County Auditor; **Bill Mills**, Sheriff; **Michele Bennett**, Elections Administrator; **Linda Garcia**, Executive Assistant to the County Judge; **David Reid**, Road Administrator/Drainage Engineer/Stormwater Management Engineer; **Pat Rousseau**, Human Resources Director; **Valerie Gonzalez**, Interim Environmental Health Director; **Iris Sanchez**, Library Director; **Mike Gordon**, Fleet Maintenance Director; **Virginia Easton-Smith**; Agriculture Extension Agent;

Members of Local City Government, Community Groups and other Interested Parties present were **C. J. Wax**, Mayor, City of Rockport; of Directors; **Brian Olsen**, Unopposed Candidate for Precinct 3 Commissioner in upcoming 2016 General Election; **Thea Edmundson**, Resident;

The Meeting was convened at **9:00 a.m.** at which time a quorum was declared by Judge Mills, WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were had and done to wit:

ITEMS FOR DELIBERATION AND/OR ACTION

1. General Discussion of the 2017 Budget with elected officials and department heads as scheduled.

Jeri Cox, Tax Assessor

After comment from Commissioner Chaney, Jeri stated that her budget is down this year, due to Public Official's Bond being purchased for four years in the 2016 budget.

Jeri offered a new calculation of the Effective Roll Back Tax Rate due to a new debt, as the County had refinanced and issued some new bonds. The overall effective rate didn't change because this change is calculated in the roll back rate and as a result the roll back rate was increased by .009, making the new effective rate .384946. If the court proposes anything over this rate the court will have to hold two public hearings on the rate. There was discussion on the different options, past variations, M&O's, adjusted levy's, etc. and the court decided to set the proposed rate at the next meeting set for August 8, 2016 at 9:00 A.M.

Pat Rousseau, Human Resources Department

Pat presented information for the court's review for her department, size-wise & salary-wise for counties in this area. She pointed out that since she started in March of 2012, unemployment and workman's comp claims have dropped dramatically through improved communication and training in the Sheriff's and Road & Bridge departments, and the county has received almost \$121,000 in back in unemployment compensation tax that we had paid in.

In 2015 she corrected a code that we had been using on two Road and Bridge Engineers and we saved about \$4,300 and in

2016 we had a savings of about \$4,000 due to David Vyoral retiring in the middle of the year and hiring another person at a lower salary.

She is working with department heads to make sure that when someone leaves the county we have good documentation and we immediately enter information into TAC program.

Virginia Easton-Smith - Agriculture Extension Agent

Virginia advised the court that her department, at the suggestion of Mike Gordon, is in need of a new Ford Expedition, which they use to transport children in addition to other usual business. She also requested an additional \$1,000 for a cell phone booster, their service has not been good since the tower was changed out. She stated that they received some "free" used office furniture.

David Reid - Road and Bridge

There are changes in this budget due to and a need for and additional \$200,000 for new road equipment, one Track Hoe at \$190,000, two Dump Trucks, one new pickup truck and one new utility vehicle. There was discussion on whether the track hoe should be considered in the Certificate of Obligation and also on the billing between road & bridge and flood control for drainage work.

David Reid - Flood Control

There is a change in this budget due to a need for hiring two additional employees in this department and we have earmarked \$60,000 for this. He also stated that he is expecting that a good amount of drainage work will need to be done in 2017. The court questioned if he was going to do any work for the City and he responded no.

Iris Sanchez - Library Director

Iris stated that she has increased her budget this year by \$500 for books and \$3,000 for a database to provide the public with "Over Drive" which is E-Books, and they are checked out on the customer's computer or phone device and it will automatically be removed from that device when the loan time has expired, so there are no late fees. The court inquired if there is numbers on people that use the library and the type of usage. Iris stated that she does a report every month concerning those numbers.

Valerie Gonzalez - Environmental Health & Sanitation

There is an increase in this budget because James Jackson did not use the County Insurance and the new employee opted to take the insurance. The court questioned the padding in this budget and Lezlie explained that the additional money, left from James Jackson's salary, needs to remain there to allow for the increase in steps employees that earn certifications, because there is not enough money left in the \$50,000 originally set aside for step increases. Valerie also indicated a new line item has been added for Protective Supplies, i.e. Snake guards.

Valerie Gonzalez - Transfer Station - Solid Waste Disposal

Valerie stated that the discount card usage has decreased, due to the absence of previous employee fraud. Commissioner Casterline voiced his concern about not giving out enough cards to compensate for the discontinued free trash days that were offered in the past. Valerie assured him that they allot 80 cards per week on Saturdays and if they are not all gone at the end of the day the remaining cards are given out at the Road & Bridge Department on Monday.

There was discussion on equipment and the need for a new front end loader. Commissioner Smith asked if they were still running two garbage trucks and Valerie replied, yes, we need a new truck and trailer, keep the two we have, one for the yard and one on the route for the other driver. Mike Gordon stated that turnkey on a new truck and trailer is \$233,000 and they try to keep them on a 9 year rotation.

Valerie expressed the need for new fencing around the entire compound, to meet TCQ requirements.

She then requested that the court allow her to move the part-time attendant to full time and allow her to hire a new full time truck driver.

Valerie Gonzalez - Mosquito Control

This budget shows an increase for additional chemicals and a new ½ ton truck & sprayer. Mike Gordon suggested that we keep a newer truck at the transfer station and move the older truck to mosquito control.

Pam Heard - District Clerk

Pam pointed out that her phone expense has increased due to E-File, longevity decreased due to one of her employees retiring and she included a little more in her Conference line item to make up the difference, aside from what Collin had budgeted, for the Tyler conference. She also asked the court to consider allowing her part-time person to become a full time employee and that her office be included in any cost of living increase.

Mike Gordon - Fleet Operations & Maintenance

Mike stated that his budget shows an increase to allot more money for tires and batteries and that he needs money to send a few of his employees to hydraulic training in San Antonio or

Houston. He also requests the court allow him to move the fuel system annual maintenance from the Road & Bridge budget to his.

Michele Bennett - Elections Administrator

Michele came back to the court with a follow-up on new quotes for what the cost would be for going back to paper ballot elections. After speaking with Felice, she has an estimated amount of \$169,000 for equipment, an annual \$6,059 maintenance fee and a one-time software election charge of \$12,000. She also provided the court with the Election Code concerning a Joint Elections Administrator to contract with adjoining counties.

Commissioner Smith suggested that Lezlie key in changes discussed and bring back a new proposed budget for the court to look at before any more discussion or consideration on requests can be made.

Court adjourned for lunch at 11:58 a.m.

The court reconvened at 1:30 p.m.

Lezlie said that she found funds in the Sheriff's salary budget in the amount of \$24,676 and that this money was set aside for stipends and education/certification. The Sheriff has only given a handful of raises out of this fund. There is also \$46,000 in the Jail's Budget.

There was discussion on jail population, Sheriff stated that he thinks he can get the Federal inmate numbers up in 2017, and the court decided to go with a budget based on 90 inmates per month.

Expenses by department:

401. Question - General Administration - Commissioner Smith questioned why the money set aside for step increases, is in this budget under Salary Adjustments. Lezlie explained that it has to be in someone's budget and that she transfers it out to departments when requests are processed.

403. County Clerk - no questions.

405. Veteran's Service - no questions

406. Emergency Management - Lezlie stated that Rick McLester is not going to take the stipend any more for travel and meals. He's been paying for it out of TCLOS money.

409. Non-Departmental - Commissioner Chaney questioned the \$35,000 in Attorney Fees and the projected year end at \$55,605, why is that? Lezlie explained, that is for TAC Claims, we have a \$5,000 deductible every time a potential suit arises on a law enforcement or an elected official's liability claim and right now we are sitting on five open claims. Commissioner Smith asked what Professional Services covers and Lezlie replied, that's what we pay Richard Beck for our Xerox copier contract, \$64,000 a year and we also pay for pauper's funerals, transport bodies, we pay EDC \$3,750 a year and swipe badges.

415. Information Technology - Rewiring for the County Clerk's, Auditor's, Tax Office and Detention Center, at \$39,665.

Commissioner Smith stated that the Capital Improvement projects will be paid out of the CO's. Discussion about the IT budget and actual expenses out of this budget needing to be allocated out to the different departments or Collin needs to keep a detailed record of what he spends.

426. Judicial County Court - The court decided that the additional \$30,000 for Indigent Defense needs to be added to line item 120-426-401 - Attorney Fees. Lezlie stated that the

Juror expense also shows an increase due to Grand Jurors meeting twice a month. Court to leave Part-time help at 29 hours a week.

435. District Court - No to a new attorney, yes to a new clerk.

450. District Clerk - No to making part-time clerk a full time employee.

455. Justice of the Peace, Pct. 1 - No questions.

460. Justice of the Peace, Pct. 2 - No questions.

465. Collections - County Judge said to move the room dividers and the dual monitor stand to the County Clerk's budget.

475. County Attorney - Commissioner Smith said take the \$7,500 off of the overtime pay and the three step increase request out of the 50k for Carrie Arrington is denied, she will get the one step as allowed in the county's original agreement.

490. Elections - Commissioner Smith asked where the revenue from this department is recorded and Lezlie responded, it is in Fund 690 and there is a negative balance because of the equipment purchased. No decision on this budget at this time.

495. County Auditor - No questions.

496. Human Resources - No questions.

497. County Treasurer - No questions.

499. Tax Assessor - No questions.

500. Central Tax Appraisal Office - Lezlie stated that she increased this to \$190,000 and if the court elects to increase the effective tax rate, that amount will change, taxes collected based on total assessments.

510. Public Facilities - Capital Improvements for air conditioning units to be billed out at 50% and they will be included in the CO's.

543. Fire Protection - Lezlie stated the court has already said yes to the request for a 3% increase to maintenance &

operations and there is also a request for 3% on their fire capital, in Fund 700. The court decided that this request should be approved, but each entity will receive 1/3 of the total, about \$44,000 each.

550. Constable, Pct. 1 - No questions.

555. Constable, Pct. 2 - No questions.

565. Sheriff - No questions.

566. License & Weight - No questions.

567. Jail - Request of \$40,000 for vehicle, yes.

569. Dispatchers - Court approved request of \$700 for a new refrigerator.

570. Corrections - No questions.

585. Highway Patrol - No questions.

587. Alcohol Breath Testing - No questions.

590. Health & Sanitation Inspections - All requests, yes.

595. Solid Waste Disposal - All requests, yes, but new fencing will be added on CO's.

600. Fleet Operations & Maintenance - All requests, yes.

622. County Surveyor - No questions.

630. Health and Welfare - No questions.

640. Welfare Department - No questions.

642. Animal Control - \$5,000 to Humane Society, leave this as is, but they should report to the court on what they are spending this money on. Take down to \$46,000 only show \$30,000

655. Historical Commission - Request for \$2,000 increase, yes.

660. Parks - No questions, leave at \$30,000, we are not paying the \$45,000 they have been billing us for the last two years.

665. Extension Office - No questions.

900. Transfers - No questions.

200. Road & Bridge Fund - All requests, yes, but Track Hoe will be added on CO's.

220. Flood Control Fund - No questions.
270. Waterway Restoration - No questions.
280. Hotel-Motel Tax Fund - Discussion on \$50,000 to Chamber of Commerce for advertising, up to \$5,000 to La Mardi Gras, Fulton Mansion? - Suggestion to hash this out later.
290. Venue Tax Fund - No questions.
295. Venue Projects - All below are ok.

General Pathways

App & Web Development

Shellcrete

Rockport Demo Bird/Tule Mars

Ivy Lane

188 Bridge

BPJ House Move

Kiosk & Bridge West Tule

Swan Lake

Connie Hagar

St. Charles Bay Kayak

LS Castro Nature Sanctuary

History Center

Airport Road

Port Bay Road

Fowler Lake

Henderson Habitat

Aquarium Education Center

400. Mosquito Control - No questions.
410. Library Fund - No questions.

(Inserts)

No further business presenting, the Court adjourned at 4:30 a.m.

C. H. "BURT" MILLS, JR., COUNTY JUDGE

VALERIE K. AMASON,
EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE
COMMISSIONERS' COURT