

MINUTES OF THE

COMMISSIONERS' COURT

PUBLIC HEARING - AUGUST 24, 2020

On the 24th day of August, 2020, there was a Public Hearing of the Commissioners' Court in the Commissioners' Courtroom, 2840 Hwy 35 N, Rockport, Aransas County, Texas, with the following members present in person, via ZOOM, or via YouTube: C. H. "Burt" Mills, Jr., County Judge; Jack Chaney, Commissioner, Precinct 1; Leslie "Bubba" Casterline, Commissioner, Precinct 2; Charles Smith, Commissioner, Precinct 3; Wendy Laubach, Commissioner, Precinct 4; and Valerie K. Amason, County Clerk.

Other County Officers present in person, via YouTube, or via Zoom, were Jeri Cox, Tax Assessor-Collector; Pam Heard, District Clerk; Richard P. Bianchi, County Court At Law Judge; Tracy Orr, Administrative Assistant to the County Judge; Jacky Cockerham, County Auditor; Tana Taylor, First Assistant County Auditor; Latisha Murphy, Assistant Auditor; David Reid, Road Administrator/Drainage Engineer/Stormwater Management Engineer; Katherine Comeaux, Development Services Coordinator; Michael Geer, Airport Manager; Valerie Gonzalez, Environmental Health Director; John Strothman, Pathways Project Manager; Rene Butler, Facilities Director; Collin Jackson, IT Director; Linda Doane, Human Resources Director; Elizabeth Guerra, Human Resources Assistant; Michele Carew, Elections Administrator; Lori Cesar, Animal Control Director; Misty Kimbrough, Collections Specialist; John Gutierrez, Chief Deputy Sheriff;

Long-Term Recovery Specialists: Will Whitson; Kim Foutz;

Members of Local City Government, Community Groups and other Interested Parties present:

Aransas County Citizens: Pat Rousseau, Commissioner, Pct. 3, Elect; Amanda Oster, County/District Attorney, Elect; Mark Wagnon; John Jackson; Allen Smith; Mike Fields; Jatin Bahkta; Rhonda Konieczny;

RBC Global Asset Management (U.S.) Inc.: Robert "Bob" V. Henderson, Senior Portfolio Manager;

Del Mar College: Lenora Keas, Vice President of Workforce Development and Strategic Initiatives;

The Rockport Pilot Newspaper: Mike Probst, Editor and Publisher;

The Meeting was convened at 8:45 a.m. at which time a quorum was declared by Judge Mills, WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were had and done to wit:

ITEM FOR DELIBERATION AND/OR ACTION:

1. Public comments will be taken regarding the Proposed Aransas County 2021 Budget.

Pat Rousseau: I just want to remind the court that on August 10th, one of the items on the agenda was to discuss and consider the salaries and expenses for the 2021 year for Elected Officials and there was a decision made for no changes. I would submit that a COLA is a change, and since you all discussed it and said there would be no changes, I think to honor that commitment that you made, it would be wise

for the Elected Officials not to have the COLA that is presently being considered. Thank you.

Jeff Hutt: I would like to know how much the salaries are for both Kim Foutz and William Whitson are for this budget period. I would like to also know if either of them have received a raise or an increase in that salary.

Judge Mills: Anyone else? Well, as I understand it the hearing has to be open for at least a few minutes, so we will wait for someone to have a comment.

Commissioner Laubach: Since it's a public hearing are we allowed to discuss budget issues now, then?

Commissioner Smith: It's on our regular meeting agenda to discuss the budget.

Commissioner Laubach: I'm sure we can discuss it then too, but can we not for the next ten minutes discuss it now, since it is a public hearing?

Judge Mills: It's a public hearing, I guess so.

Commissioner Laubach: I'm interested in a response to Ms. Rousseau's suggestion, which I think actually makes a great deal of sense. I'm also interested in the answer to Mr. Hutt's question.

Judge Mills: I don't have the answer to Mr. Hutt's question right now.

Commissioner Laubach: Do we not know if we are proposing a raise for them?

Judge Mills: No, they're not going to get any raise.

Commissioner Laubach: Ok, and are their salaries not in the budget somewhere, Jacky?

Jacky Cockerham: Yes ma'am, they are in the budget, they are under Long Term Recovery.

Commissioner Laubach: Could we just pull those up and answer his question then?

Judge Mills: I think that's an open records request, isn't it?

Commissioner Laubach: We can refuse, until we get an open records request, but we are allowed to answer it now, it's a public hearing.

Judge Mills: I won't.

Commissioner Laubach: Does anybody object to just answering?

Judge Mills: No.

Commissioner Laubach: Jacky, can you?

Jacky: I don't have their individual salaries, what I have is the total salary for the department and it does include another employee. At this time the total for that department is \$273,592.

Commissioner Laubach: Is that with benefits?

Jacky: No, that is salary, with the benefits it's \$326,780.

Commissioner Chaney: But now, some of that is paid out of the grants and stuff, right?

Jacky: This will all be paid through grants, it's not an expense to the county. It is an expense but all of the revenues will come from grants and FEMA Dac.

Commissioner Laubach: But we pay up front now and then we expect to be reimbursed later?

Jacky: Yes ma'am.

Commissioner Laubach: Shall we talk about COLA? We talked about it some last week.

Judge Mills: That's an action item on the agenda.

Commissioner Laubach: I know, but we have ten minutes and it's a public hearing, and so, can't we just start talking about it?

Commissioner Smith: It's not on the agenda.

Judge Mills: It's not on the agenda.

Commissioner Laubach: But it's a public hearing on a budget and that's a budget issue. Besides, we talked about it last week and asked Jacky to come back this week with information about what it would cost to add a COLA this year. So we are going to talk about it later.

Judge Mills: Alright, Jacky?

Jacky: The budget that you have, or that's actually here right now, takes into account a 2½% on everyone except the Elected Officials. The affect to General Fund, and I say here, what I have created now, so that would be a \$208,000 change to Fund Balance for a COLA, and that's for General Fund. We have a spreadsheet that you should have received last week that shows the different scenarios, there's no COLA; there's a 2 1/2%; no COLA for Elected Officials; no COLA for Elected and Department Heads; and then there's a 1 1/2% COLA.

Commissioner Laubach: I don't have those in front of me, could we just have those total numbers?

Jacky: Sure, in fact I've got it pulled up here. For no COLA, of course there would be no additional effect to the General Fund Balance or any of the Departments, any of the funds; a 2 ½% COLA for General Fund would be another reduction of \$230,014; no COLA for Elected Officials is a \$208,058.16; no COLA for Elected Official and Department Heads is \$194,087; a 1 ½% COLA is an additional \$125,107.

Commissioner Laubach: I think, I remember you discussing last week that there was one way to look at the number, was the effect on the fund balance. And then you also gave us an all-in number that folds all the way through the budget, not just what hits the fund balance? I want to say that was \$310,000?

Jacky: I can tell you real quick, I think what you are talking about, because I don't have anything that gives you, because everything is calculated separately, I would have to go back and add that. But if you look at this spreadsheet, I've got what the effect is for Road & Bridge, Flood, Airport, and Transfer Station.

Commissioner Laubach: Are you not going to be able to give us a number today for the complete, the change all-in budget if we don't do a COLA for anyone?

Jacky: If you don't do a COLA for anyone, not for the whole budget, I can give you what General Fund is, I can give you what Road & Bridge is, but not total. Because every Fund is actually budgeted and separate.

Commissioner Laubach: Right, I'm sorry, I thought that's what we were discussing last week, we needed to see it.

Jacky: No, that was just General Fund.

Commissioner Laubach: So the savings will be larger if we consider everything, and not just the limited effect on the General Fund?

Jacky: Yes.

Commissioner Laubach: And if you just include those departments that you just named, what's the total savings for no COLA?

Jacky: It would actually be the same, it's not really a savings, it just doesn't reduce the fund balance as much as

what you're..., it's not going to change it. I mean, there's not a savings for not giving a COLA, it's a status quo.

Commissioner Laubach: I understand, but I'm comparing it to, I may not be understanding you, I thought the number you were saying you've got a budget worked out there that includes the assumption that we will do a COLA.

Jacky: It has an assumption, what I looked at was just General Fund wise, I told you if we do no COLA that is a savings of \$230,000 on General Fund only.

Commissioner Chaney: That's not correct.

Jacky: I'm sorry?

Commissioner Chaney: It's not a savings, it's...

Jacky: Well, it's not a savings, it would be reducing the fund balance, it would just be...

Commissioner Chaney: It would be, what it is, is what it is.

Commissioner Laubach: I'm looking for the difference in cost between two different possible budgets, one of which includes a COLA and one which does not.

Jacky: Alright, if you do not do a COLA, the General Fund Balance is predicted to reduce by \$249,000. With a 2 1/2% COLA your fund balance would reduce by \$479,000, which is a \$230,000 additional reduction due to the COLA.

Commissioner Laubach: Ok, and that's just the effect on the Fund Balance?

Jacky: Yes, that is just the effect on the Fund Balance and it's just on General Fund.

Commissioner Laubach: Ok, how do we get to the number of the difference between the two budgets, not just the effect on the fund balance, is it all reflected in the fund balance change?

Jacky: Yes.

Commissioner Laubach: Ok, so there's no place else that we need to look to get the full number?

Jacky: No.

Commissioner Laubach: Ok, perfect, that's what I needed to understand.

Commissioner Smith: Just to clarify, it would reduce the budgeted amount, would be a better way to phrase it.

Commissioner Laubach: Right, it's the difference between a more generous budget and a less generous budget.

Commissioner Chaney: What's our total payroll, just off the top of your head, all funds?

Jacky: This number I'm going to give you is with benefits also.

Commissioner Chaney: Well, I really don't want benefits, and the reason I say that Jacky, is because I want a good math on that, it seems to me like 1% or 2% is \$200,000 and that sounds awfully high.

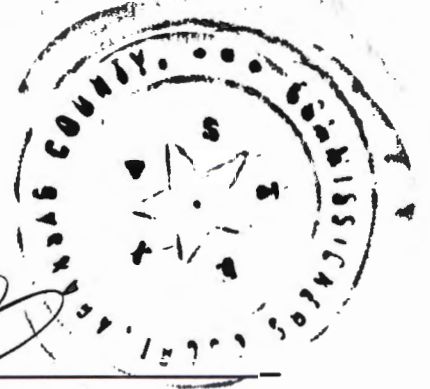
Jacky: Our total without benefits is \$10,867,000.

Commissioner Chaney: Ok.

Judge Mills: Ok, if there's no further discussion, do I have a motion?

No further business presenting, the Court adjourned at 9:57 a.m. on a motion made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Casterline.

August 24, 2020 PH



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. H. Mills, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

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



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Valerie K. Amason", is written over a horizontal line.

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