

LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session Minutes

July 7th, 2021

9:00 A.M

I. Call to Order

Chairman Glass called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. Present for the meeting was Vice-Chairman Horton, Commissioner Heiney, Commissioner Traylor, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Townsend, and County, Clerk Davidson.

II. Budget Review

County Administrator Townsend presented a mid-year budget review book to the board and reported the following:

- a) FY2021 budget was approved for \$11,619,980.00 in November.
- b) The budget amendment for the E-911 fund was done in January amending the budget to \$11,394,000.00. The collection rate for the General Property Tax was 91 percent.
- c) Title Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) increase by 21.8 percent.
- d) Local Option Sales Tax increased by 18.3 percent.
- e) Healthcare insurance increased to \$76,083.19.
- f) Personnel increased by 63.6 percent, contracts increased by 15.1 percent, outflows increased by 5.7 percent, and capital outlay increased by .1 percent.
- g) Supplies decreased by 15.3 percent.
- h) Special Revenue funds remain the same and all of the budgets are running 3.5 percent under what was forecasted.
- i) Risk Management increased from \$251,700.00 to \$260,956.00.
- j) Water heaters will be replaced at the jail for \$9,576.25 each.
- k) The projection for the expenditures is \$9,593,311.68.
- l) The projection for the revenues is \$10,490,733.74 which includes a one-mill decrease.
- m) Presented tentative rollback rates for 2021 showing a mill rollback rate of 12.457.
- n) Reported 120 Appeals were received and appraisals went up by 121 million dollars.

III. Department Briefings

Sheriff's Office

Sheriff White addressed the board.

- a) Reported that the bottom-line budget is fine but they were working on the line items that are over budget.
- b) Reported that two water heaters busted at the jail and will cost \$9,576.25 each. Funds will come out of the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Installation will cost \$10,000.00.
- c) Purchased new locks for cell doors from SPLOST
- d) Requested a 14 percent increase in pay for jailers and dispatchers taking them from \$13.33 to \$14.26 an hour.

- e) Requested a \$202,612.66 increase across the board for all employees except for a 14 percent increase for the dispatchers.
- f) Requested more office space
- g) Discussed purchasing a modular type building for patients that have to be quarantined due to illnesses such as tuberculosis.
- h) Discussed have no internet at the training center and plans to acquire satellite service.
- i) Discussed hazard pay for public safety, jailers, and dispatchers that would be funded through ARP.

Clerk of Superior Court

Clerk of Superior Court Tyson addressed the board.

- a) Reported that the judicial emergency order ended in June of 2021 and criminal jury trials are beginning.
- b) Reported that Jury summons has begun and stated that Monroe County used deputies to summon jurors who were no shows.
- c) Discussed being able to use the merit system to give employee raises even though he is a Constitutional Officer and manages his employees.
- d) Requested additional software from ICON for a case management accounting system for a cost of \$21,000.00.
- e) Requested to purchase a system for digitizing historical property records from 1970-1989 for a cost of \$194,000.00. Kofile is the company that is a State vendor and does most of the digitizing for the County Governments in the State of Georgia.
- f) Reported that computers fees and licensing in his budget are over budget due to the uptick in the property transactions.
- g) Addressed the new Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system regarding multiple lines ringing at the same time.

Tax Commissioner

Tax Commissioner Anthony addressed the board.

- a) Requested a 5 percent increase for Professional Services Tax System \$7,500.00 to \$7,875.00. Requested a \$2,500 increase in case there are any problems with the judicial and real estate sales.
- b) Reported that non-payment of taxes decreased from 200 properties to 23 properties.
- c) Reported that the collection for fees on tags decreased from \$40,000.00 to \$35,000.00.
- d) Reported that the motor vehicle tax decreased from \$134,779.00 to \$108,036.00.
- e) Reported a payment issue of a penny difference with the online payment system.

Public Works Department

Public Works Director Rigdon addressed the board.

- a) Reported no major increases for next year other than repair and maintenance on equipment.

- b) Requested that the 320 Caterpillar excavator is going to have to have some rotors on the undercarriage which will cost around \$7,500.00.
- c) Requested that the mini excavator needs to be replaced for a cost of around \$58,000.00 for a new one.
- d) Requested to purchase a new tire machine.
- e) Requested to update their scan tool because the Fire Department has new fire trucks and the Sheriff's Office has new cars for a cost of around \$7,000.00.
- f) Reported he needs an experienced paver.
- g) Reported that he may need to increase the fuel budget from \$50,000.00 to \$80,000.00.
- h) Reported that the communications line item is up based on services.
- i) Reported that the price of gravel goes up \$1.00 every year.
- j) Reported that the price of asphalt goes up and down because it is a commodity.
- k) Reported that the City of Barnesville and the City of Milner would both like to use the paver to patch their roads.
- l) Reported that Silver Dollar Road cost \$5,600.00 to pave instead of \$12,340.00 that it would have cost if they had used a paving company.

Maintenance

Maintenance Director Beverly addressed the board.

- a.) Reported that there was an increase in cleaning supplies due to COVID.
- b.) Reported he purchased two water heaters for the Sheriff's Office for a cost of \$9,576.25.
- c.) Reported that he is working on replacing 12 air conditioner units for the jail and the funds will come from ARP.
- d.) Reported an increase in general repairs on all of the buildings due to the age of each one.
- e.) Reported that Maintenance is providing lawn care to the Administration Office, and the Courthouse.
- f.) Reported that they purchased a new lawn mower and are requesting to purchase a new one.

Planning and Community Development

Planning and Community Development Director Buice addressed the board.

- a.) Reported that a part-time Code Enforcement Officer was hired.
- b.) Requested that the postage line item be increased.
- c.) Requested that dues and fees be increased.
- d.) Requested to purchase a 4-door extra cab truck to store equipment.
- e.) Requested that a new payment system be implemented in the future that could automatically connect to the financial system.
- f.) Reported that the Planning and Community Development Administrative Assistant will begin Level 1 Financial training from the Carl Vinson Institute.

Tax Assessor

Tax Assessor Haddock addressed the board.

- a.) Reported that she is working on the digest.

- b.) Reported that they received 120 appeals and that 9400 notices had been sent.
- c.) Reported 9400 notices were sent and 6000 were evaluation changes.
- d.) Reported that they will be finished with re-evaluating the entire County by the end of the year.
- e.) Requested a part-time building inspector.
- f.) Reported that in 2018 they reevaluated the commercial properties and will review commercial properties again in 2022.
- g.) Reported that the digest increased by 127 million dollars.
- h.) Reported that 70 million of this was re-evaluations and 50 million of it was new construction.
- i.) Reported that 10 years ago the digest went down 46 million dollars and they had 359 appeals.
- j.) Reported that houses are still selling and builders are still building.
- k.) Reported that the most issues with evaluations had been on the North end of the County. Explained that the Georgia Constitution allows the appraisers to go onto someone's property and they have more rights to be on the property than a Deputy Sheriff does.
- l.) Reported that the appraisers were announced in the legal organ, Qpublic, and on their Facebook page. Reported that this includes the person's name, vehicle, and they all have a yellow vest and wear id's. Reported that they honk the horn before they get out of the truck and knock on the doors.
- m.) Reported that Woodall Estates has been issued 117 permits.
- n.) Reported that Vintage Park has over 100 houses in that subdivision and 50 to 60 homes in Fieldcrest subdivision that the building inspector is responsible for entering into the system.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Matthews addressed the board with a list of things that his department needs.

- a.) Reported that Station 1 and Station 6 are doing very well.
- b.) Reported that they are a little over halfway through EMT classes with the firemen and once they are finished, they will start with Fire School and then all the new firemen will be 100 percent certified.
- c.) Stated that they need to focus on increasing the part-time pay from \$9.49 to \$12.00 an hour.
- d.) Requested four new recliners for a cost of \$3,500.00.
- e.) Requested new uniforms that include 2 pairs of pants and a shirt for a cost of \$650.00 plus shipping.
- f.) Requested that they purchase a phone app for pinpointing real-time information including finding fire hydrants for a cost of \$625.00 a year.
- g.) Requested to purchase 20 buckets of foam to diminish explosions and fires.
- h.) Requested to purchase a 5-inch fire hose for the ladder truck for a cost of \$6,780.00.
- i.) Requested to purchase fire hoses for the fire trucks for a cost of \$4,700.00.
- j.) Requested to purchase 26 sections of hand lines used to fight fires for a cost of \$2,730.00.
- k.) Requested to purchase a new ladder truck for a cost of \$40,000.00 from the Peachtree City Fire Department. Reported that the greatest need for the ladder truck is in the North end of the County and Milner, Georgia.
- l.) Requested to purchase \$25,000.00 worth of equipment for the ladder truck.
- m.) Reported that he is working on a grant for \$13,000.00 and another grant for \$5,500.00.
- n.) Reported that more volunteers are needed for the day shifts.
- o.) Requested affordable family insurance coverage for the Firemen.

Recess for Lunch

Vice-Chairman Horton made a motion to recess for lunch at 12:00 p.m. until 1:00 p.m. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Reconvene the Planning Session Meeting

The board reconvened the Planning Session Meeting.

Elections

Elections Supervisor Reid addressed the board.

- a) Reported that this year is an off-year and they will know whether or not they will have an election in November after the qualifying, which is the week of August 16th, 2021, for both municipalities.
- b) Heard from Chairman Glass that there will be a Joint meeting to discuss the TSPLOST with all of the cities on July 21st, 2021.
- c) Heard that the cost for the special ballot paper, that the State mandates, should not warrant an increase since they already have the paper.
- d) Reported that Elections cannot apply for grants but the Board of Commissioners can apply for grants for Elections and then allocate that money to them.
- e) Reported that the ballot box has to be moved inside due to the new laws that are in place now. Explained that the ballot box can be inside the building but it has to be monitored by human eyes which means hiring someone to sit at the door to see the person that comes in and puts the ballot in the box. Reported that the ballot box can only be used during early voting.
- f) Reported that the warranties on the equipment with the State will expire on December 31st, 2021, and the warranties on the equipment will cost around \$15,000.00.
- g) Reported that the work schedule for elections will go to 10-hour workdays and reported that during elections they worked 9 to 12 hours days and they earned a lot of comp time.
- h) Reported that if they have a December run-off, a January election, and then a March run-off, putting a cap on the comp time is not fair because even though they are off they are still working which is what she has been doing when she was supposed to be off even with a full-time person.
- i) Reported that they had not received the funds owed to Lamar County from the Board of Education from the last elections.
- j) Reported that the funds for training in the budget will roll over to next year but does not know when or how much training they will need to have in the future.
- k) Reported that the tech that the State supplied to manage their equipment is no longer available and they have to depend on County resources. Reported that they use Kimbra Dean to manage the server who has been around forever and Amelia Dutton who is Mr. Dean's backup. Reported that if they used a company to manage the server it could cost them \$10,000.00.
- l) Requested an increase for the poll workers due to their increased workload.
- m) Requested that attorney fees be increased due to the increased number of Open Record requests.

Recreation

Recreation Director Lowe addressed the board.

- a) Reported that she inherited a huge mess and said that it is hard to keep up with things.
- b) Reported that things have been neglected for a lot of years.
- c) Reported that the transmission on the work truck is about to go out.
- d) Reported that the GMC truck cannot be driven over 25 miles an hour or it starts to shake. Reported that the GMC 2004 and the Dodge 2006 truck needs to be surplus along with 2 Chevrolet vans that were used to transport kids.
- e) Requested to purchase two new decent regular size trucks.
- f) Requested to purchase a work utility vehicle.
- g) Requested that they look into the major electrical problems with the ball fields. Reported that the City of Barnesville Maintenance Director Glen Allen fixed several lights at the ball fields.
- h) Reported that a quote for LED lights and repair of the electrical issues at the ball fields was received for \$300,000.00
- i) Requested that they re-do the skate park, the basketball court, and the tennis courts for a potential cost of \$80,000.00.
- j) Reported that the tennis courts were re-painted and because they were not re-surfaced, the cracks are still there.
- k) Reported that \$6,000.00 was spent to re-paint and build a small pickleball area.
- l) Reported that they received a Lamar Gives 365 Grant and the equipment that they purchased has not come in.
- m) Reported that they have a short crew and need two positions.
- n) Reported that the employees have earned over 120 hours of comp time and they have been taking that time off in June and the rest of the summer before they begin earning comp time days in the fall.
- o) Reported that they increased the fees for soccer from \$65.00 to \$85.00.
- p) Reported that a coach will receive only 1 Lamar County jersey no matter how many sports they coach.
- q) Reported that fees have to be paid before a kid can play a sport.
- r) Reported that they are working with the school coaches to host a baseball tournament to bring in Revenue
- s) Reported that 400 to 450 people pay the \$65.00 fee throughout the Spring season and then 250 people pay the fees charged in the Fall season. She said that about 100 people pay for basketball.
- t) Heard a suggestion from Commissioner Heiney that they raise the fee by a dollar a year.

Probate Court

Probate Judge Martin addressed the board.

- a) Reported that this past year they did Zoom training instead of going to the location and spent on food, lodging and hotels.
- b) Requested that they keep the training funds from last year in the budget due to Zoom meetings no longer being offered and conferences starting back up.
- c) Reported that Probate fees have increased.
- d) Requested to purchase banker boxes to store traffic citations.
- e) Requested to have useable shelf storage for their records room.

- f) Reported that they like the new VoIP phone system but requested that they fix the number of lines that are ringing in their office.
- g) Requested a raise for the Chief Probate Clerk.
- h) Reported that not being able to charge for a gun permit fee could decrease revenues.
- i) Reported that the water in the Probate Office is coming through the brick on the outside requested that it be repaired.

Magistrate Court

Magistrate Judge Kunst addressed the board.

- a) Requested that training be increased from \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00.
- b) Requested that his office go through Civil and Criminal Training.
- c) Requested to decrease Office Supplies.
- d) Discussed making the Magistrate Court secure.
- e) Discussed using ARP funds for video conferencing.

Senior Center

Senior Center Director Watts addressed the board.

- a) Reported that they have purchased an ice cream machine, table tennis, pool table, treadmills, and 4 laptops.
- b) Requested that a computer program that the Seniors have been paying for called “My Senior Center” be put in the budget.
- c) Reported that carpets had been replaced
- d) Reported that crafts and supplies had been purchased for the Seniors.
- e) Requested a larger sink for the kitchen.
- f) Reported that baseboards had been painted and the floors had been stripped, waxed, and polished.
- g) Requested to have the computer program “Word” put on all of the new laptops and that this be added to the budget.
- h) Reported that they are working on having a Veterans Café and are seeking help and suggestions for this.
- i) Requested grab bars be installed in both the women's and men's bathrooms for safety reasons.
- j) Reported that they are continuing to have Senior day trips.

Emergency Management Agency (EMA)

In the absence of EMA Director Campbell, due to illness, Deputy EMA Director Becky Martin with the Emergency Management Agency addressed the board.

- a) Reported that 40 percent of their budget had been used thus far and did not anticipate any issues.
- b) Requested that they keep the training in the budget the same.
- c) Reported that air conditioners in the EMA were not working.

- d) Reported that files are being purged with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and records are kept for the last five years according to the State record retention policy.
- e) Reported that they have been waiting on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation check since February.
- f) Reported that the last two sirens that they applied for have been delayed due to COVID. Reported that the sirens are supposed to go on Bush Road and the corner of Barnesville Road.
- g) Reported the need for generators and is looking for a grant to purchase them.

Library

Chairman Glass reported that he got a text from Librarian Hughes. Librarian Hughes said that their audit is going to be more expensive next year. She said that the Library Board meets on July 20th, 2021.

IV. Board Discussion

Commissioner Thrash said that she would like to do something in Lamar County where Lamar cares and they put together a group that will fix food when someone is sick and take it to that person. She said that when an employee is sick or in the hospital, or there is a death in the family that the group does something for them. Commissioner Thrash said that the wives of the pilots, when she was at Delta, did something like this. She said that she does not like knowing when one of the County employees is in need, in the hospital, or sick. Commissioner Thrash said that some people do not like to be bothered but said she would like to form something like this. Commissioner Traylor suggested that they send them a card or something.

Chairman Glass said that the County auditor Mauldin and Jenkins did have some findings for the County. He said that part of this is that they are auditors and they have to justify their jobs with findings. Chairman Glass said that most of the findings deal with having one person do something. He said that they suggested that one person receive the money, one person makes the deposit, and another person takes the money to the bank so it reduces the risk of fraud. Chairman Glass said that they suggested that the person that opens the mail is not the person that counts the checks. County Administrator Townsend said that it is all about internal control. He said that Clerk of Superior Court Tyson reconciles his bank account and then he writes the checks. County Administrator Townsend said that the auditors want there to be more internal controls in that office so there is a check and balance. He said that the same thing is happening at the Sheriff's Office and in the Probate Court. Chairman Glass said that this finding is more serious than having one person open the mail and one person counting the checks. He said that internal controls have been put in place over the last two years but recognized that there are not enough people to do these types of things. County Administrator Townsend said that they want them to get better control on the fixed assets. He said that every year they need to do an inventory. County Administrator Townsend said that it is hard to get a report back from the Constitutional Officers regarding their inventory.

Commissioner Thrash said that the Constitutional Officers are going to have to do this because it is the law. Chairman Glass said that they are working on it and a few years ago the Administration Office was not where it needed to be based on the rules of the Governmental Accounting Standards board.

(GASB). County Administrator Townsend said that the issue is with internal controls and fixed assets. He said that once the Constitutional Officers see this maybe they will start to help the County out by working as a team versus working against the County. Chairman Glass said that it is in the County's best interest to take the auditor's recommendation but said that a lot of it is based on the changes with GASB.

Chairman Glass said that the books are good and they are in good financial shape. County Administrator Townsend said that they are now breaking out 911 from the General Fund and they do this every month. Commissioner Thrash asked what the hold-up was with moving the 911 center. County Administrator Townsend said that moving the Tax Commissioner out of that building is the next step.

Commissioner Thrash inquired about the Worker's Compensation Policy. She said that several years ago an audit was done on the various codes and they were paying outlandish prices based on how the departments were classified. County Clerk Davidson said that everything in the system was corrected based on the classification of the codes. She reported that a Worker's Compensation audit was being done on July 10th.

V. Continued Board Briefings.

County Extension Office

County Extension Agent Jackson addressed the board.

- a) Reported that there are conferences for herself and the Agricultural and Environmental Science Agent that will be held in October that are already budgeted.
- b) Reported that she is looking forward to getting back into their regular programs and has a meeting with the Elementary Principal coming up.
- c) Reported that a Lamb Showing is coming up and last month they had a kid's Cattle Camp for those in Upson and Lamar County.
- d) Reported that due to a water heater bust and excess flooding at the Service Center and she is working from home.
- e) Reported that the building is in bad shape and is not healthy for people to be in.
- f) Requested a new place for the County Extension to locate.
- g) Reported that she attended Rock Eagle with a group of kids.
- h) Reported that things are slowly coming back to doing larger things but they are still very cautious about keeping the kids safe.
- i) Reported that the Ag Agent Jackson will continue with "Lunch and Learn" every month and they just got the approval from the University of Georgia to serve food.
- j) Reported that during the pandemic everything had to be packaged.
- k) Reported that the lunch and learn topics will vary from month to month.
- l) Reported that volunteers worked virtually and that they had to follow the CDC guidelines.
- m) Reported that Buggy Days in Barnesville, Georgia is their main event and they use lots of volunteers.

VI. Administration

County Administrator Townsend said that he is still working on training and salaries. He said that the biggest thing he may try to do is to have a Finance Department and then an Administration Department but said that we do not have enough people for that. Commissioner Traylor said that he likes the way that he has been proactive in moving the EMA and the 911 center to another location. He asked if he had thought about having a Receptionist or Administrative Assistant that could help multiple people. County Administrator Townsend said that when he did the drawing there was one window with the offices going down the hallway. Commissioner Traylor said that they had one Receptionist in the common area for multiple people when he worked at the hospital. County Administrative Townsend said that he would look into this.

Commissioner Heiney said that he is impressed with the quality of work that the department heads are doing. He said that they are proactive, and really great hard-working people.

VII. Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Horton made a motion to adjourn the Planning Session meeting at 3:30 p.m. Commissioner Traylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Charles Glass, Chairman

Bennie Horton, Vice-Chair

Robert Heiney, Commissioner

Ryran Traylor, Commissioner

Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk