

## LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### Work Session Minutes

July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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 Heiney, Commissioner Horton, 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) Presented the proposed rollback millage rate of 10.97.
- b) Reported the largest increase in the budget was the Emergency Medical Contract for a cost of \$66,416.00 a month.
- c) Tax Ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) increased by 5.49%.
- d) Local Options Sales Tax (LOST) collections continue to be higher than the forecasted trends of 17.22%
- e) Expenditures are trending slightly lower due to COVID 19.
- f) Constitutional Officers and Department Heads have exceeded expectations by lowering their expenditures during COVID 19.
- g) The County's Healthcare cost will increase by 7.3% and a new policy will be with Anthem.
- h) The County's Liability Insurance increased by \$30,822.00.
- i) The County received a refund of \$33,764.00 for Worker's Compensation.
- j) Reported that they were unable to make major cuts in expenditures due to an increase in Personal of 62.76%, Contracts increased by 15.03%, Outflow increased by 8.62% and Other Expenditures increased by 11.49%. Supplies decreased by 8.62%.
- k) The Drug Abuse Treatment Fund increased from \$42,000.00 to \$56,000.00.
- l) The E-911 Fund Budget is projected to be balanced with revenues equaling expenditures totaling \$484,540.00, which includes \$139,540.00 subsidized from the General Fund.
- m) The Law Library Fund expenditures for operating expenses are budgeted at \$4,500.00.
- n) Special Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST) and Capital Project Funds are continuing to assist in the construction and improvement of various County infrastructures.
- o) The FY2022 expenditures are estimated to be at least 4.2% under budget.
- p) Reviewed the Mid-Year Expenditures and Trends for all of the Departments and Constitutional Officers. The expenditures at the 5 month mark should be at 41.67% and are actually at 38.7%. The total proposed budgeted amount is \$12,839,543.00.
- q) Reviewed a proposal for Salary increases of 5% to 10%. A 7.5 % increase will cost the County \$5,528,081.61 including FICA and Medicare.
- r) Reviewed a proposal for Insurance-Family Coverage. The 60/40 choice will cost the County a total difference of \$228,840.00 and the employee a total difference of \$114,420.00. The employee cost for family coverage would be \$435.55 per paid period.

- s) Reviewed the proposed PT-32-1 from the Tax Assessor. The proposed rollback millage rate is 10.97. The digest increased by \$53,000,000.00 based on the re-appraisals.
- t) Reviewed the 2022 proposed amended Budgeted Revenues and Trends for a total cost of \$12,658,329.03.
- u) Reported that the County has a new “TextMyGov” program where citizens can text various Departments for certain issues such as potholes, or recreation schedules.
- v) Reported that Hogan is working on the roof bid along with the insulation for the walls that meets code.
- w) Reported that the trees at the new Administration building were taken down because they were rotted.
- x) Reported that American Pie wants to do another 5 year lease. Chairman Glass suggested that they do a market study on rental leases.

### **III. Department Briefings**

#### **Sheriff's Office**

Sheriff White addressed the board.

- a) Reported that the bottom-line budget is fine but they are aware of the expenses that are over budget.
- b) Reported that Pike, Upson, and Butts County's starting pay for their certified deputies is \$46,000.00 a year and their jailers starting pay is \$38,000.00 a year. The starting salary for Lamar County is between \$32,000.00 and \$37,000.00.
- c) Reported that he only has 3 jailers per shift and those jailers need to go to training.
- d) Requested a \$275,000.00 increase across the board for the deputies and the jailers.
- e) Requested more office space.
- f) Requested to purchase body cameras and cameras for the cars.
- g) Reported that they have cameras on poles that can read tags for the purpose of theft and burglary.
- h) Reported that he will need a new control board for E911 and a new radio system.
- i) Discussed needing a new jail and requested that they have a long term planning session. Sheriff White would like to have a new Justice Center with a pod system for the inmates.
- j) Discussed the need for new cameras in the jail for a cost of around \$30,000.00.
- k) Discussed needing new cameras at the Courthouse for a cost of around \$20,000.00.
- l) Discussed the rise in fuel costs.
- m) Discussed that Dodge Chargers have risen in cost from \$24,000.00 to \$45,000.00.

#### **Tax Commissioner**

Tax Commissioner Anthony addressed the board.

- a) Discussed the need for an upgrade with her server that is in real time. Discussed sharing a server with the Tax Assessor once they are in the new Administration building.
- b) Requested a cost of living raise for her employees
- c) Reported that 97,000 tax bills will be ready to go out in September.

- d) Requested a 5 percent increase for the Professional Services Tax System which will go from \$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.
- e) Reported that non-payment of taxes decreased from 200 properties to 23 properties.
- f) Reported that the collection for fees on tags decreased from \$40,000.00 to \$35,000.00.
- g) Reported that the motor vehicle tax decreased from \$134,779.00 to \$108,036.00.
- h) Reported a payment issue of a penny difference with the online payment system.

### **Tax Assessor**

Tax Assessor Haddock addressed the board.

- a.) Reported that she did use security the first four days for the assessment notices and she may have to move funds around to cover this.
- b.) Reported that she is working on the digest.
- c.) Reported that Re-Evaluations will be done again next year because homes are still selling high.
- d.) Reported that in January, February and March the sales ratio was at 38 but then in April and May, with the new schedules, the sales ratio was at 41.
- e.) Reported that the Proposed PT32 is at 10.97 but that it could go up because the inflation growth started out at \$81,000,000.00.
- f.) Reported that the last day to appeal is Friday and she should have new calculations.
- g.) Reported an increase in Timber sales.
- h.) Reported that next year there will be a Flight for a cost of \$14,000.00.
- i.) Reported that the printing of assessment notices went from \$5,500.00 to \$8,000.00.
- j.) Reported that they will continue to use Norman and Associates and re-assessments will begin in the City of Barnesville for Commercial and Industrial Properties and large tracts of property.
- k.) Reported that they continue to use Tinker and Associates for personal property audits.
- l.) Reported that they will continue to use Qpublic.
- m.) Reported that the personal property for Piedmont Greenpower (PGP) came down last year because of COVID 19 but this year they came back up.
- n.) Reported that both of the Rock Quarries values went up around \$41,000,000.00.
- o.) Reported that it would be good for her employees to receive a raise but that she did not need one.
- p.) Reported that she is the only one in her office that would benefit from the Family Insurance coverage.

### **Planning and Community Development**

Planning and Community Development Director Buice addressed the board.

- a.) Reported that her budget is good except for things such as communication; phones and copiers.
- b.) Requested a new line item for Professional Services; for an engineer to review storm water plans.
- c.) Requested that the postage line item be decreased.
- d.) Requested an increase in fuel, and advertising

- e.) Discussed the permit, inspection and building fees being coded incorrectly in the financial system based on how it is being reported.
- f.) Reported that new houses are still being built in subdivisions: Fox Crossings and Oakridge. There are two exempt subdivisions; 5 acres or more.
- g.) Anticipates more commercial home-based businesses.

### **Public Works Department**

Public Works Director Rigdon addressed the board.

- a) Reported increases in Fuel cost and the Grass Cutting contract will need to be renegotiated or re-bid by the first of November.
- b) Reported that the paving on Community House Road is ongoing based on issues that need to be fixed; humps in the road. Reported that Burnette Road paving is complete. Reported that striping has not begun and lower shoulder work is pending.
- c) Reported that the animal shelter has lots of dog and cat issues.
- d) Requested to be compensated for weekend animal calls that he receives from the Sheriff's Office.
- e) Receives lots of complaints for bushes; requested to purchase a new bush cutter.
- f) Reported a shortage of mechanical help due to personnel being on leave.
- g) Requested to get a County Phone for his Assistant Shari Imberger because of after-hours and weekend calls she receives on her personnel phone.
- h) Received an estimate of \$28,000.00 for Harmony Hill Road plus labor and rock of \$60,000.00.

### **Emergency Management Agency (EMA)**

Interim Deputy EMA Director Becky Martin with the Emergency Management Agency addressed the board.

- a) Reported that they are under budget at this point in the year and that PPA funds offset the budget.
- b) Requested that the Department Salary line item for former EMA Director Billy Campbell be eliminated since he has retired.
- c) Discussed that PPA funds will be left over that will need to be spent.
- d) Reported that there are no issues with the Warning Siren system. County Administrator Townsend reported that there is an extra board if one of the sirens go out. Reported that test are being done monthly by Truman Boyle and he makes sure that they are running.
- e) Discussed putting Interim Deputy EMA Director Becky Martin into the E911 Director roll and providing her with training.
- f) Reported that the Fuel cost have gone up because the travel time has increased since she drives from her home on Parker Branch Road.
- g) Reported that CERT training has been eliminated based on non-interest, and training issues.

### **Fire Department**

Fire Chief Matthews addressed the board.

- a.) Presented a tour of the new 2022 HME Fire Truck.
- b.) Reported that a new Fire Station is needed in Milner because they can only house 1 truck and 1 ambulance.
- c.) Reported that he has 3 open positions.
- d.) Discussed the salary issue with surrounding counties having higher pay scales.
- e.) Reported that the growth in Milner and the Northern end of the County is an issue for the Fire Department.
- f.) Reported that more volunteers are needed for the day shifts,
- g.) Reported that fuel cost have gone up.
- h.) Reported that the Maintenance line item has increased due to necessary repairs on some fire trucks.
- i.) Requested affordable family insurance coverage for the Firemen.
- j.) Reported that the cost of Family Insurance coverage is an issue for his employees.
- k.) Reported that he is purchasing air packs with a Grant for a cost of \$17,000.00.
- l.) Reported that he is waiting on a bid for air packs
- m.) Reported that the tower on High Falls Road is up and running but could use a secondary tower on Hog Mountain.
- n.) Reported that there is a shortage of paramedics.

### **Elections**

Elections Supervisor Reid addressed the board.

- a) Reported that they are doing well budget wise based on the fact that they did not have a full period of time for the runoff and 1 week of early voting.
- b) Reported that legal fees increased due to being served a legal suit. Lots of things were wrong with it and it has been turned over to the County Attorney who is working with other lawyers on it. The legal suit was served to all Election Superintendents across the State. The legal suit called for the abandonment of the Republican Primary for the Secretary of State. They have asked for dismissal.
- c) Reported the expenses for the primaries ran around \$25,000.00 overall and the runoff was around \$15,000.00.
- d) Reported that they had about a 25 percent turnout in the primary and about 7 percent turnout in the runoff.
- e) Reported that there will be an election in November.
- f) Chairman Glass requested to see the cost per voter, from the time they got their new machines, so they can take this information to the legislators.
- g) Requested to purchase two faster scanners for the ballots. Requested to purchase 2 new memory cards; which cost around \$4,500.00 apiece. Requested to purchase 2 new ballot boxes that cost around \$1,200.00 apiece.
- h) Reported that the poll pads for next year will be cellular and they will be purchasing cellular poll pads. Milner has 3 poll pads and 2 scanners. The Service Center will have to go to 2 scanners and 3 poll pads. The people in Barnesville like to early vote so they could keep it down to 1 scanner and 2 poll pads but if they do not turn out to Early vote they will have to put in another scanner. They borrowed a scanner for training.
- i) Reported that they are looking for a record turnout for the Presidential Election.

- j) Requested that they do in depth training for poll workers. They will use poll holder funds for this so there will be no increase in funds. They will bring in an outside trainer and cater the event. This is already budgeted.
- k) Requested for Manager training in next years budget.
- l) Inquired about the SPLOST election. Chairman Glass stated that it would be in March of 2023. Elections Superintendent Reid requested that everything for the SPLOST election be finalized by November of 2022 because the ballot builder needs everything now. Proofing will need to be completed.
- m) Reported that the Milner Library has two printers and they do not want to use one of them. It could be sold to raise money for the Milner Library or it could be gifted to the County and designated to Elections. During Elections they use the Administration copier and this could be used for Elections instead of using the Administration copier.
- n) Reported that several hundred people have been added to the election roles because of the growth of the County
- o) Requested to purchase 14 new tables for Elections that will cost approximately \$100.00 apiece.
- p) Requested pay increases for the 2024 budget.

### **Recreation**

Recreation Director Lowe addressed the board.

- a) Reported that they are on track for the 2022 budget.
- b) Reported that they anticipate an increase in Fuel cost.
- c) Reported that they have a full staff.
- d) Requested a part-time position that was actually requested last year. The part-time position is being paid out of the regular position salary line item.
- e) Reported that they can no longer use custodians which leaves them technically short of 3 employees.
- f) Reported that the salary pay schedule is an issue based on the cost of inflation. Employees are getting paid \$13.00 an hour but it is costing them \$5.00 a gallon for gas to drive from Thomaston or Griffin.
- g) Requested to increase the lawn care and maintenance budget for next year.
- h) Reported that they have been lining the fields, painting, replacing the score tower stairs with sponsorship money.
- i) Reported that they put in a yellow topper that goes around the fence at the ball fields.
- j) Reported that they need to put in dirt to level the ball fields and they need funds for this.
- k) Reported that the participation level in the Spring was the best it has been in years.
- l) Reported that fall ball is looking good.
- m) Reported that they will begin allowing baseball to interleague with other counties to keep the kids in Lamar County. These kids only play baseball.
- n) Reported that the uniforms for Spring sports were running behind and they had to push the season back. If someone missed the deadline they were not allowed to play because the uniforms were already ordered. The ones that missed the deadline were the first to sign up the next season.
- o) Reported that they have a shortage of football helmets.
- p) Discussed ways to advertise the recreation program including signs, the newspaper, Facebook and the new program TextMyGov.

- q) Reported that Rock Springs is having an effect on the ball teams.
- r) Reported that there are not enough practice fields for baseball and softball.
- s) Reported that the lights needs to be replaced at the baseball fields but a few years ago they received a quote of \$300,000.00 for LED lights.
- t) Reported that renovations including air conditioning and the repair of the roof will begin next week.
- u) Reported that they increased the fees from \$65.00 to \$70.00.
- v) Reported that the lowest level for Sponsorship is \$250.00.
- w) Reported that they have around 400 to 600 participants in baseball, softball, and soccer. They have around 150 participants in football. Reported that they had a record number of girls who wanted to be cheerleaders; 40 cheerleaders.
- x) Reported that they received the Gator a month ago that was approved last year.

### **Magistrate Court**

Magistrate Judge Kunst addressed the board.

- a) Reported that they will finish out the year underbudget.
- b) Reported that contracts are reported in the budget at the beginning of the year.
- c) Reported that the budget for training was low but before the end of the year he may attend some Civil and Positive Account Fraud training.
- d) Reported that the new software system is setup to allow users access to the Court without having to come into the facility. Request to expand the reach to utilize the service through e-file and to allow card transactions.
- e) Reported that people come into Court and they have no idea what they are doing. They cannot give them legal advise except to tell them to seek an attorney.
- f) Requested that the salaries for the Magistrate Clerks be increased.
- g) Requested that he have a phone for the bench.
- h) Reported he received a monitor for the bench but it is still in the box. He would like for it to be on a rolling cart instead of mounting it on the wall.

### **Maintenance**

Maintenance Director Beverly addressed the board.

- a.) Reported that supplies are high.
- b.) Reported that the roof on the Courthouse is rotted.
- c.) Reported that the roof over the office at the Recreation Department is rotted.
- d.) Reported that septic tanks at Station 1, the Tax Commissioners Office, and Public Works has problems and he is working on bids for septic tanks and a new drainage system.
- e.) Reported that his Maintenance Van is old and having issues.
- f.) Reported that the wood in the Superior Court needs to be repaired and the replacement is obsolete.

### **Probate Court**

Probate Judge Martin addressed the board.

- a) Reported that they are on track for this year's budget.
- b) Reported that they are working on their server because everything is going to the Cloud.
- c) Reported that for next year budget she is not expecting anything new.
- d) Reported that they may need a new cabinet to store everything that will cost around \$600.00.
- e) Reported that she is still having issues with the water coming through the wall. Requested that something be put on the outside of the building.
- f) Requested that salaries for her employees be increased so that they are making a living and not just existing.
- g) Reported that they have an employee in her office about a 7 to 8 percent raise so that she would not leave to go somewhere else. This was done through budget line item transfers.
- h) Reported that family insurance would not matter to her employees. It is the salaries that make the difference.

### **Senior Center**

Senior Center Director Watts addressed the board.

- a) Reported that they had a farmers market where they were able to serve 60 seniors with fruits and vegetables which was sponsored by Three Rivers.
- b) Reported on the Seniors activities and events for this year which included a Hawaiian Luau, Mardi Gras party, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) renewals, and Health Talks.
- c) Reported that the Seniors get 5 chef staple meals in case the Senior Center is not open.
- d) Reported that they have had programs regarding scams.
- e) Reported that they had a Senior Health Fair and they do have someone that comes into the Senior Center weekly to take their blood pressure.
- f) Reported that they offer AARP defensive driving classes for the Seniors.
- g) Reported that they had a picnic at Indian Springs.
- h) Reported that they offer YOGA classes, and exercise classes through Anytime Fitness.
- i) Reported that they had a fun day on Friday with grilled hot dogs and hamburgers.
- j) Reported that the Seniors are growing their own garden in the back of the Senior Center. They are growing cucumbers, squash, peppers and anything that they want to grow.
- k) Reported that they received a Christmas grant for new supplies from Three Rivers.
- l) Reported that they will be offering a Dementia and Alzheimer's class in August.
- m) Reported that they are having a Senior Prom on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Reported that there will be a King and Queen and they will be in the Buggy Days Parade.
- n) Reported that they are having a medication safety class and the importance of not sharing medications.
- o) Reported that they are having a "movie on the lawn" in September.
- p) Reported that they are having a car show in October. Commissioner Thrash suggested that they have the car show along with the Christmas Parade.
- q) Reported that they will have a Thanksgiving dinner in November and a Christmas party in December.
- r) Reported that they have a new TV that has a device for the hearing impaired.
- s) Reported that they have 2 Spanish speaking members that they use as translators.
- t) Reported that they have a Cricut Maker.



- u) Reported that through Three Rivers they are able to provide lift chairs, walkers, wheelchairs raised toilet seats, grab bars in the bathrooms, glucose monitors and strips, canes, high blood pressure machines, and other supplies.
- v) Reported that in the future they will have a technology lab.
- w) Reported that the Health Department provided Flu Shots to the Seniors.
- x) Reported that she still wants to offer a computer class once she gets everything setup.
- y) Requested to have a tent and a grill so that she does not have to bring her own to the Senior Center.
- z) Reported that for next year she is working on new water fountains and a bowling set.
- aa) Reported that she checks on the Seniors that cannot come to the Senior Center.
- bb) Reported that she goes to the funeral services for those Seniors who pass away and takes a flower to the service.
- cc) Reported that they currently have 45 homebound clients. On Monday , Wednesday and Friday they have 25 clients per day. On Tuesday and Thursday, they around 15 clients because they go to different activities.
- dd) Reported that Joy Shirley with Three Rivers would like to do “Project Lifesaver” where the Seniors wear an electronic bracelet that interacts with the Sheriff’s Office. This is like a GPS tracker. They also have a scent kit that the Seniors rubs on them and if they are missing the dogs can sniff the scent to assist in finding them if they get lost.
- ee) Requested to increase her part-time salary line item.
- ff) Reported that Fuel cost have gone up.
- gg) Reported that they have a new refrigerator, freezer, steam table, and an ice cream machine.
- hh) Reported that she received a grant for \$2,800.00 and if anything is left out of that grant, she would like to purchase a new dish washer.
- ii) Reported that the leak by the door has been fixed.
- jj) Reported that they do need to expand the building.
- kk) Reported that Three Rivers is behind her 100 percent.
- ll) Reported that in the future they will need a new bus with a lift. The bus that they have now has issues that could be a liability to the County.
- mm) Reported that there is an issue with the Trip System with the Three Rivers Transit Service and picking up the Seniors. They are saying that the Senior is not in their system, therefore they do not pick them up. Also, if she does not notify them 3 hours before the Senior is to be picked up, the County will be charged. So, she has to be up at 6:00 a.m. to let them know that the Senior is not going to ride the bus.
- nn) Reported that she has waivers at the Senior Center that they sign for liability purposes.

#### **IV. Round Table Discussion**

County Administrator Townsend reported that there is a tentative LOST negotiation meeting scheduled for July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with the City of Barnesville and the Town of Aldora.

Vice-Chairman Heiney said that he appreciates all the people that work for the County. He said that our government does a really good job. Vice-Chairman Heiney said that he has been on the board for 8 years and he believes that we have great people working for the County.

Finance Director Johnston said this sounds pretty typical to her being on this side and not the Department side. They come in and they beg and plead because they all have needs and every year there is something. Finance Director Johnston said that needs are needs and they are every day and everywhere. It sounds typical and it reminds her of Fayetteville back home. You have a lot of good people who are dedicated to what they do and they care because largely she is assuming that for everyone here this is home. You all are from here and you grew up here and you have a vested interest in doing a good job because you go to Church with these people, you grocery shop with them and they are your neighbors. Vice-Chairman Heiney said that this is a small town where everyone knows each other and it is like family and friends because you grew up here. There is more accountability.

Chairman Glass said that he enjoyed hearing everyone's point of view. He said that they have a group that works together without a lot of fighting or bickering and he is glad that it works out this way.

**V. Adjournment**

Commissioner Horton made a motion to adjourn the Budget Workshop meeting at approximately 4:15 p.m. Commissioner Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Charles Glass, Chairman

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Robert Heiney, Vice-Chair

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Bennie Horton, Commissioner

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Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk