

LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC HEARING
December 12th, 2023
11:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 p.m. on December 12th, 2023. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chairman Thrash, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson.

- II.** County Administrator Townsend provided the FY 2024 Budget Guide Overview. The approved General Fund Revenues for FY 2023 was \$13,998,436.00, and the proposed FY 2024 is \$15,501,742.00 representing a 10.74 percent increase compared to the FY 2023 budget. The amended FY 2024 revenue budget is \$15,501,742 with a 7.19 percent increase. The Revenues for the Fiscal Year 2024 Lamar County General Appropriations Budget are General Fund \$15,501,742; DATE Fund \$70,000; Law Library \$7,500; LCSO \$250,000; E-911 Fund \$496,230; Hotel/Motel Fund \$2,800; ARPA Funds \$190,061; and Capital Projects Funds \$3,389,278. The total of all revenue funds is \$19,907,683.

Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about Licenses and permits for a total of \$206,600.00 and asked if the potential lack of growth had been factored into the budget. County Administrator Townsend responded that he had included this in his trends.

The Driving Factors for the budget increase are as follows:

- The Recreation donation accounts, Contingencies, EMA Siren Grant, Animal Shelter and LMIG funds.
- 5% Salary increase to retain and/or hire new employees since our departments cannot compete with surrounding counties' benefits & salaries.
- Predicts that Gas/ Diesel increased to operate departments has prices are forecasted to increase.
- 32% Liability increase but predicts that it will come down. There is 6 million dollars that will be given back to the County along with the dividend.
- Increase in the County contracts, office supplies, postage, etc.
- Debt Service on the Bond for twenty years for new Administration & Commissioners offices at 790 Veterans Parkway.

County Administrator Townsend shared a breakdown of all of the Departments/Offices expenses by function. Vice-Chair Thrash noted that the EMA has a grant that offsets their expenses/revenues. County Administrator Townsend provided the Expenditures for all funds. The General Fund expenditure is \$ \$15,501,742; ARP Fund \$190,061; Special Revenue Funds \$826,602; Capital Project Funds; and \$3,389,278. The total of all expenditures is \$19,907,683.

Vice-Chair Thrash requested that in January, they put it on the agenda to change the County Logo. She suggested that they look for assistance from the College or the High School and let them design the new logo. County Administrator Townsend noted the sign for the new Administration Building had been ordered and has the current logo on it.

Chairman Traylor said with everything slowing down, and asked County Administrator Townsend if he would need more. County Administrator Townsend replied that he predicted his trend projections were below the average of what was collected therefore he can build up the fund balance as an offset for any major expense or disaster. Chairman Traylor said that biggest impact will be in FY2025.

Vice-Chair Thrash noted that the revenue category for property taxes is listed as 47%.and asked if it had gone down. County Administrator Townsend stated that it had and said it was at 55%. Vice-Chair Thrash said that this is something that needs to be shared because they are growing the industry and businesses to take the liability off of the taxpayers. She said this is one of the promises that they made. County Administrator Townsend said that in 2022 they had 109 employees that were on group insurance and this year they had 126 sign up for insurance which is about \$167,000.00 difference. Chairman Traylor said that he had lunch with the Chairman of Monroe County and their Marketing Director and they talked about publicizing things like this that helps with the concerns of the community. He said if they had someone in this role that could put information out on Facebook, the Website or the newspaper. County Administrator Townsend said that the new position will assist the County Clerk and the Human Resource Director with social media. Vice-Chair Thrash said that they all have someone that says, “ where is my tax money going” and this is a perfect thing for the public to see because there is the small group that twist and turns it to how ever they want it to appear. Chairman Traylor said that he was going to create a QR code for the FY2024 budget book if someone does not want to search for it online.

Vice-Chair Thrash said that when she was elected in 2009 the first thing that they noticed was that the revenues were a swinging pendulum and the Administration never paid attention to this fact. They never focused on looking at the actuals. Vice-Chair Thrash noted that County Administrator Townsend and the staff had done an excellent job looking at this. She said that this is one of the things that has kept them out of the red and said thank you publicly to County Administrator Townsend.

Chairman Traylor requested that as the Commissioners continue to get comments and questions, and all of the things that come out of the community, to share the information with their friends and family and let them know that the County is doing a great job and moving in a positive direction.

III. Public Comments

There were no comments regarding the Proposed FY 2023 Budget.

V. Adjournment

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing at approximately 11:18 a.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chair

Jarrod Fletcher, Commissioner

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Ashley Gilles, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk