

Lamar County Board of Commissioners
Special Called Meeting
November 12th, 2024
11:30 a.m.

Chairman Traylor called the Special Called meeting to order at approximately 9:04 a.m. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chair Gilles, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson. County Attorney Mayfield was absent for the meeting.

Meeting Amendment

Vice-Chair Gilles made a motion to amend the meeting adding the addition of the purchase of a Public Works Truck and the Planning and Community Development vehicle as item 3 and item 4. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Insurance Renewal

Discussion Points:

County Administrator Townsend stated he had \$1,233,93 budgeted for group insurance and showed the various differences that it would cost if they changed plans.

The current renewal cost is \$31,908.51. The Cigna Traditional insurance cost is \$274,218.11. The Renewal with everyone on the buy-up plan will cost \$173,697.31. For those not taking the insurance the cost back to them would be \$300.00 a month.

Presented a renewal high plan for step increases in salary from 2.5 % to 12.5% and what the millage rate would cost for each; 10.514 to 11.322. There was a recommendation for a 5 percent increase with a 2.5 percent increase that could be applied to the Buy-Up Plan. For an average home of \$ 250,000.00 it would be a tax increase of \$73.63. He said they are anticipating sales tax going up.

Chairman Traylor noted that the difference between the 5 percent increase and the 7.5 percent increase is around \$150,000.00. He said he did not believe that would solve the problem. He said that Buy-Up would not solve the issue because employees want traditional insurance. Commissioner Thrash said she hoped in the next year, or two inflations would come down and the economy and property values would be reeled back in. She said the numbers may be inflated. Chairman Traylor said that from 2.5 percent to 7.5 percent the 5 percent is about \$320,000.00 which covers going to a traditional plan.

Recommendations and Concerns:

County Administrator Townsend said a few years ago they paid for dental and vision which was \$ 51,677.04. He said they are doing away with the BRELLA Plan which is about

\$29,000.00 and there has only been one claim. highlighted a 70/30 split on employee contributions could increase liability. Commissioner Thrash said she has spoken to a lot of employees, and they would like to go back to traditional insurance.

Chairman Traylor and Commissioner Thrash suggested having an employee meeting to share options and clarify the cost burden. Commissioner Fletcher inquired about other counties paying for employee insurance. He said some places are having the employee pay a percentage of the cost and in return better wages are offered. County Administrator Townsend said in his experience with other places the plans have been 70/30. He suggested doing a 90/10 with a traditional plan.

Commissioner Lovett said since the current plan was started 10 months ago there has not been enough time from a statistical standpoint to determine whether or not this is cost effective or beneficial to the employees. He suggested a 5 percent salary increase with a 2.5 percent salary increase that could be used to purchase the Buy-Up Plan. He also said that for a majority of the employees they will take the 7.5 increase and not do the Buy-Up plan. Commissioner Lovett said he believes it is a high percentage of employees that did not use the insurance at all. He said he knows that the tax base will change next year, and the insurance agent is telling us that we have not been in this pool long enough to get a statistical reality.

Chairman Traylor said when they did the survey in the past the insurance was a lot better, and people tend to pay no attention to things that are important when they are already good. He said if they do the survey now, they will possibly get some different information. The board agreed on the following choices to provide on the employee survey.

Action Items:

Commissioner Lovett inquired about the timeline for the insurance since the concept has changed for the employees. He said if the employees participate in a survey count and those that do not will not count and those that do vote will determine the outcome. Commissioner Fletcher asked if it would benefit to have an employee town hall meeting. Commissioner Thrash agreed that they needed to have an employee meeting. County Administrator Townsend pointed out that they were under a time crunch because of the January 1st renewals.

Commissioner Fletcher pointed out that he was in favor of taking care of employees through wages but also health insurance as well.

Commissioner Lovett suggested that they go with 3 options. Commissioner Lovett said he would like 5 ranked choices. He said he would like a 5 percent salary increase and a 2.5 percent insurance increase staying with the current policy. Chairman Traylor said his option would be to go to a traditional plan with a 7.5 percent increase and a 90/10 split for the insurance. Commissioner Lovett said that \$45,000.00 times .075 would be \$3,375.00 would be the employee's annual raise. He said since insurance this year is predicted to be

\$1,083.00. per employee per month. County Administrator Townsend said that the CIGNA plan is \$1,077.96 per employee per month. Commissioner Lovett said this would cost the employee \$1,300.00 annually to do the 10 percent so the employee would still get a \$2,000.00 raise if you did the 7.5 percent salary increase and a 90/10 split. Commissioner Fletcher pointed out that this would give the employee better insurance. He asked how much the savings would be if the employees do not take the insurance. County Administrator Townsend said for 16 employees not taking the insurance the savings would be \$91,768.32.

Proposals for Employee Insurance Plan Survey:

5% increase + 2.5% Buy-Up Plan (current policy).

7.5% increase with 90/10 split under Cigna Traditional Plan. Does not Include Buy Up Plan.

3% increase for Traditional Plan + Cigna at 100% coverage. Does not Include Buy Up Plan.

The Board of Commissioners decided to have an employee meeting scheduled for a pizza lunch in the Administration Building break room. Vice-Chair Gilles made a motion to table the approval of the insurance renewal until Tuesday at the Regular Business Meeting. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Works Trucks

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve the purchase of a 2025 Kenworth T-280 with a 20-ft dump bed for \$146,344.00. Vice-Chair Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Zoning Vehicle

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve the purchase of a 2024 Nissan Rogue for \$37,386.00. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to adjourn the Special Called meeting at 12:08 p.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

Ashley Gilles, Vice-Chair

Jarrod Fletcher, Commissioner

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: _____ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk