

Hamilton County Commissioner's Court

Budget Workshop

August 29, 2017

9:00 A.M.



Hamilton County Commissioner's Court met in Budget Workshop on Tuesday, August 29, 2017 @ 9:00 A.M. with the following members present: Judge Mark Tynes, Commissioners Johnny Wagner, Keith Allen Curry, Lloyd Huggins and Dickie Clary.

Tynes called the meeting to order.

The purpose of this meeting was to review the proposed budget and to entertain changes in the tax rate.

There was a presentation given by the District Attorney's Office, Shawn Carpenter and Adam Sibley gave a presentation stating that overall they had hit what they had projected last year as to what to what they were going to do this year. From the time it took them to resolve a felony case, fine revenue, bond forfeitures and they are having grand jury meet once a month which is speeding up the indictment process. The court thanked both Adam and Shawn for coming to visit and show the court their progress.

Tynes did let the court know that he was in favor of a contingency. It made more sense to him to have a contingency line item than for each office to have a line item in non-capital for equipment repairs. The courthouse had thirty something computers and each year we do not intend to replace them, so why make a line item just to go back up the general fund when, if the equipment fails each office could request funds from contingency.

Sheriff Caraway spoke to the court about them cutting his budget in the schools and conferences. He stated that he would like the schools and conferences line item in the S.O. and the Jail to stay the same and not be changed. This fiscal year there was \$12,000.00 in the schools and conferences line item on the sheriff's office side and \$3,000.00 on the jail side. He said that there are new mandated laws that require an officer that is going to bailiff to attend forty hour training and another mandatory training for (CIT) Crisis Intervention Training. Caraway has not been told when or where these conferences are going to be held as of yet. He also said that all his jailers/dispatchers will have to have a 24-hour class that is mandatory, and that this doesn't include the classes to get their jailer/dispatcher license. These mandatory schools don't include all the other training that the officers/jailers need. Caraway said with no way of knowing when or where these classes would be he would feel more comfortable without the \$3,000.00 cut on the sheriff's office side and the \$1,000.00 cut on the jail side.

The court was of a consensus that they would leave what was budgeted in the proposed budget and then when and if the S.O. and jail ran out of money in those line items to get everybody's mandatory training that's when the contingency would come into play. Caraway could request the money from there.

Caraway reiterated that he did not think that the budget should be changed, but made sure that the court would not have a problem when and if it came time for him to request money from the contingency for the funds for the training. No one in the court stated that they would have a problem with that.

Hamilton County Auditor Kent Reeves handed out a report to the court that currently year to date.

The court took out the \$10,000.00 daily indexing line item out of the county clerk's budget.

The court also went into discussion about the \$80,000 excess in revenue from the Justice of the Peace budget. Tynes gave a handout to the court regarding spending excess funds in this year's budget instead of the next fiscal year. They can take that excess money and pay off the debt payment for the two sheriff's office vehicles and possible some other expenses at the sheriff's office. Then they will take the \$20,000.00 out of the capital equipment fund for the next fiscal year. Tynes stated that Reeves will get the documentation together and certify to it.

Reeves states that in any budget you don't want to budget for something you aren't going to spend. That's just not good accounting.

The court informed Sandy Layhew the District Clerk that the money for her new computer will be purchased out of her technology fund and they informed Terry Short that the new computers that she is going to have to have for her office will be found somewhere in this year's budget.

Tynes stated that the current tax rate and proposed tax rate is .5606 per \$100.00.

Tynes did say that the revenue on the proposed budget would be reduced by approximately \$19,000.00.

Wagner did state that depending on the status of bridge repairs on CR 101 that the \$30,000.00 in the contingency may be transferred into bridge replacement shortly after the beginning of the new fiscal year.

Tynes then asked the court if there were any other changes that need to be made, and that if everyone was happy with the proposed budget.

Clary stated that he had concerns with the tax revenue being approximately \$56,000.00 short this year. He asked that if we don't collect this amount what will we do? He stated that this time next year we may notice a short fall.

Reeves stated that we should go with what the history shows unless Doyle Roberts, Chief Appraiser from the Appraisal District drops the levy.

Clary is concerned that it doesn't matter how much you levy, that is matters how much you collect.

It was reiterated to look at the historical data.

Tynes recessed the court at 11:00 A.M. to break before they go into the Tax Abatement workshop.

Tynes called the court back to order at 11:05 A.M. for the abatement workshop.

Tynes wanted the court to know that this was an overview. Wanting the court to know that we have received the abatement application from Vista Mountain, LLC and that part of the application is incomplete. He said that County Attorney Mark Henkes would be communicating with them in this regard.

Henkes states that no legal description was attached to the application at all, just a picture. Until we receive that information that we are at a standstill.

Henkes stated that he was waiting to send a letter to the company until he got input from the court.

Tynes also stated that he would be getting with the Hico EDC, Hamilton EDC and the Evant MDD to get their thoughts on this matter.

Huggins stated that the policy assumes as it is written that there will be employment for people in Hamilton County. He thinks the policy should make it more specific to Hamilton County.

Clary thanked Tynes for stating in the previous commissioner's court that we would not be rushed in making this decision. We needed to dot every I and cross every T. Clary had received advice from a county judge that had approximately 400 wind turbines in there county and he said the county needed to be confident in their legal advice.

Clary also stated that he would like to see a financial analysis, some professional advice on how to structure this abatement. Possibly using the third party with the appraisal district. With the next step a workshop with different options. He would also like the Hamilton and Hico EDCs and Evant MDD weigh in on all of this.

Tynes stated that this also comes down to a property rights issue.

Tynes adjourned the court at 11:28 A.M.

W. Mark Tynes
County Judge

Kiesha F. Bagwell
County Clerk