

Monday, September 7, 1999

8:30 a.m.

Special Session

Commissioners' Court

Members of the Court present:

Jack Leath	County Judge
Keith Clark	Commissioner Pct. #1
Lynn Smith	Commissioner Pct. #2
Doyle Dickerson	Commissioner Pct. #3
Gene Nethery	Commissioner Pct. #4
Janice McDaniel	County Clerk

Judge Leath called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Agenda item #1-Public Hearing – Discuss Budget

Judge Leath said the proposed budget has been available for the public to view in the County Clerk's office for the required amount of time. The total budget is \$2,701,761.00, which is roughly a 3 percent increase. He asked if there is any questions or comments.

Sheriff Tom Philips said he knows the Court sets the strength of the Sheriff's department and he has to work within this. He said he brought the proposal of the COPS grant before the Court in 1997 and was told he could use \$15,000.00 toward it. He said he has not seen it yet. Tom said he would be remiss if he did not bring this before the Court again. He is asking the Court to hire 1 more officer for the Sheriff's department. He has conferred with Jim Nethery, Tax Appraiser, and Jim said he believes the money will be there in 3 years to support the cost of another deputy. The need has not lessened. If the River Authority takes over the parks, Tom said he believes we will see a lot more people here in the summer time.

Commissioner Nethery asked Sheriff Philips if we would have to buy a new car and he said no. He plans to use the vehicles we already have. We would have to purchase new uniforms and probably a bulletproof vest.

Judge Leath said we have had to take on the full salary of the secretary at the Sheriff's department. The grant was not extended for it.

Commissioner Nethery said on behalf of Tom, if we expect the Sheriff to have a uniformed officer on duty and/or on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, it

would require 4 officers to do this. You would still have a little overtime. We have to rely on what he tells us that he needs. He has the method to get another deputy for 3 years. It will cost the County very little and we will not have this option a year from now. The population of the County continues to grow and this is what we want. The question is not whether we can do it today but whether we can do it in 3 years when the grant runs out. He said we did research and based on history, the tax base will go up. He believes we should listen to the Sheriff closely and take advantage of this grant.

Judge Leath said we did budget for an additional officer.

Sheriff Philips said the cost to the County for the first year will be just under \$4,000.00. It increases the second and third years.

Judge Leath said we have to make a commitment to keep that officer after the 3 years and he takes that seriously. We would have the ability to respond to all calls if we had more officers. It all boils down to whether we can afford the deputy with out increasing taxes.

Commissioner Clark said he has stated this all along that he believes 2 deputies are wasted during the day.

Sheriff Philips told Commissioner Clark that his statement is incorrect. He has tried to get someone to come over and see what goes on in his department. He said the Jail Commission has said we need a full time person to take care of the jail, not a deputy whose responsibility is split. Terry Vaughn is back in the schools. Bruce fills in and works split shifts a lot of the time. A lot of work that is done in the daytime is follow up work. If someone drives by and see 2 cars parked there, they think they are not doing anything. That is not true. If I drive by your precinct barn and see dump trucks parked there, it is not right for me to perceive they are not doing anything. If someone wants to know what is going on, all they have to do is come over there and ask. As far as saying I am not utilizing my people, this statement needs to be made by people that know what law enforcement is all about. Not what you see on television. I deal with the real world and the real world you have to have people to do follow up work in the daytime when you can get a hold of people.

Commissioner Clark said he did not come up with this from watching TV. He said he is talking about the jail administrator. You used to have your secretary doing that work. That is wasting an officer. A secretary could do it then, why can't she do it now.

Sheriff Philips said that is not what the Jail Commission says. You have to be in the office to do reports. You can not do it in the car.

Chief Deputy Sheriff, Bruce White, said he is behind the Sheriff 100 percent. We need at least one more deputy. The Commissioners' Court agreed to let us have \$15,000.00 back in 1997 for the COPS grant and we haven't seen it yet.

Judge Leath said that he doesn't believe the \$15,000.00 was promised to the Sheriff's department in 1997. He said we said there is \$15,000.00 surplus in the budget.

Sheriff Philips said he is not here to argue with the Court. He is just here to tell the Court that more deputies are needed. The need is not going to go away. Can we afford the full cost of a deputy in 1 or 2 years?

Judge Leath asked if it would be more economical to have a jail administrator that is not a deputy. The deputies are the highest paid people over there.

Sheriff Philips said the jail is the worse liability the County has. We have got to have somebody that is qualified. We have one that knows what she is doing.

Commissioner Clark asked if we have to keep the deputy after 3 years.

Sheriff Philips said that it says you have diligently try.

The cost for the COPS grant is \$3,985.92 for the first year. The second year is \$6,886.92. The third year is \$14,136.92. This includes everything except automobile expenses and uniforms.

Commissioner Nethery asked Tom if he wants to force a vote and he said he would like to know how everyone feels.

Commissioner Nethery moved to grant the Sheriff's request for 1 deputy. Commissioner Clark seconded. Commissioners Smith and Dickerson voted against. Commissioners Nethery and Clark voted for. Judge Leath broke the tie vote with a vote against. Motion did not carry.

Agenda item #2-Adopt Budget

Commissioner Clark moved to adopt the proposed budget. Commissioner Smith seconded. All voted for. Motion carried.

Agenda item #3-Discuss & Take Action – County Clerk Fee Increase

County Clerk, Janice McDaniel, is asking the Court to approve the increase of the law library fee from \$10.00 to \$20.00 and the service fee to \$50.00. This is the same increase that was approved for the District Clerk at the last regular meeting.

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Commissioner Dickerson moved to approve the fee increase. Commissioner Clark seconded. All voted for. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nethery moved to adjourn. Commissioner Dickerson seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Jack Leitch COUNTY JUDGE
Reginald Clark COMMISSIONER PCT. #1
Gregory Smith COMMISSIONER PCT. #2
Daryl Dickerson COMMISSIONER PCT. #3
N. Nethery COMMISSIONER PCT. #4

ATTEST:

Janice McDaniel COUNTY CLERK

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