

Special Session Commissioners' Court

Wednesday, January 2, 2002 8:30 a.m.

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-Employee Director for Convention Visitor Bureau

Judge Leath said he thinks this is something we need to do but we don't need to rush into anything. The person that we have discussed does need a job but have we done enough investigation? Are we really aware of the circumstances under which she left her last job?

Commissioner Smith said he agrees that we do not need to rush into anything. If we are going to discuss someone's personal history, should we not be in executive session? We have taken the contract back from the Chamber and I assume we are going to try again to hire someone ourselves. If this is the case then we need to secure office space and move the equipment into it. We need to work up some guidelines and do's and don'ts for this employee before we hire someone. He said he has had input from other individuals and thinks that he has his opinion formed but maybe not.

Judge Leath said we probably do need to hire someone or contract out. We don't need to do it the way we did before we contracted with the Chamber whether we hire someone or contract out. We need to coordinate with our surrounding area. Unless you are coming to fish or camp, Sabine County is not a destination by itself. We need to advertise with the surrounding area so that maybe the people will visit Sabine County too. We, as a Court, do not have the time and really the knowledge of how to accomplish this. We need to be selling the County but we can sell it better if we include it in the area that will attract tourism into East Texas rather than into Sabine County.

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Commissioner Nethery said DETA focuses on 12 East Texas Counties and they are doing a lot of work on the subject of combining these Counties into a region for different subject matters. Two of these items are tourism and economic development. An example is how Lufkin and Nacogdoches tourism groups joined together. Every year they go to the Valley area to solicit the people (Snow Birds) who have gone down there for the winter. The purpose is to get them to stop in Lufkin and Nacogdoches on the way down to the Valley or on the way back through. How do we get them to come through Sabine County? You have to sell yourself to the people. He said he believes that the ideal solution to the problem is to have a local representative operating on a minimum budget with the ability to join in some of these efforts that is done on a regional bases. You would have the best of two worlds. I can say that from a professional prospective, other people in this field or business, highly compliment the lady that was hired to do this job.

Commissioner Clark asked isn't the hotel/motel tax money supposed to be spent promoting Sabine County. How do we explain spending it to promote the surrounding Counties?

Judge Leath said it will be placed in a pool to promote the area but it will still be promoting Sabine County. If we are committed to hiring someone, we need to secure office space and move the equipment from the Chamber of Commerce building. The old Sabine County Reporter building has been remodeled and it is for rent. We need to come up with a job description, preliminary budget and a salary scale before we hire someone.

Commissioner Dickerson moved to go forward with employing a person and securing office space. Commissioner Smith seconded. All voted for. Motion carried.

Commissioner Smith moved and Commissioner Nethery seconded to establish a salary between \$20,000.00 and \$23,000.00. The motion and second were withdrawn.

Commissioner Smith moved to set a salary with a cap of \$23,000.00. Commissioner Nethery seconded. All voted for. Motion carried.

Tanya Walker, District Clerk, asked the Court why they would hire someone at a salary that is almost equal to what the Treasurer, County Clerk, Tax Assessor and herself makes. The person will be a County employee and has only 1½ to 2 years of experience. We are elected officials and have a big responsibility. Some of us have as much as 18 years on the job. She said she has no problem with the

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Court hiring her, but our salaries need to be raised to what they should be. It seems that when we ask for a raise, there is no money.

Commissioner Nethery said you pay people based on their education not on years of experience. Experience on the job had nothing to do with the salary at Brown & Root where he came from. He said he agrees that the Elected Officials do not make what they should but the Community will not support a tax increase to pay for it. The money for this position and all it entails will be paid out of the hotel/motel tax money. No ad valorem tax money will be spent on this.

Commissioner Smith said we found out that if we wanted a person with a College degree that we were going to have to pay that person a salary that is more than what some of the Elected Officials make. The road and bridge accounts are in such shape right now that we could double our Commissioner salaries and not cripple our budgets. We would have to raise the other Officials and that would cause a tax increase and the people would not go for that.

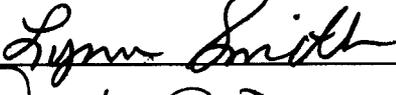
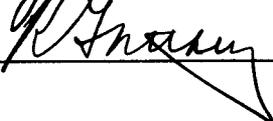
Commissioner Smith said we need to discuss the job description as a Court. One thing is to have this person report to only 1 person.

Commissioner Dickerson moved to have the person hired as Tourism Director report directly to the County Judge. Commissioner Nethery seconded. All voted for. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nethery moved to hire Lisa Owens on a temporary bases with a salary of \$1,900.00 a month for a period of 90 days. This will be until we can advertise and hire a Tourism Director. Commissioner Smith seconded. Commissioner Clark opposed. Commissioners Smith, Dickerson and Nethery and Judge Leath voted for. Motion carried.

The Court discussed items for the job description. No further action was taken on that part at this time.

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

 COUNTY JUDGE  
 COMMISSIONER PCT. #1  
 COMMISSIONER PCT. #2  
 COMMISSIONER PCT. #3  
 COMMISSIONER PCT. #4

ATTEST:

*Janice McDaniel* COUNTY CLERK

State of Texas  
County of Dallas  
HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THESE DOCUMENTS WERE FILED AND  
RECORDED IN THE COMMERCIAL COURT RECORDS OF SAID  
COUNTY, TEXAS.  
FILED \_\_\_\_\_ PAGE 157  
NOTICE OF COMMERCIAL COURT CLERK  
BY *Janice Clark*  
1997



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