

Special Session Commissioner's Court

Tuesday, August 19, 2003 8:00 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
Fayne Warner	Commissioner Pct. #4
Janice McDaniel	County Clerk

Judge Leath called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and went immediately into recess until 8:35 a.m. to allow Commissioner Warner time to get here. Commissioner Warner had a matter he had to take care of before coming to Court.

Court went back into regular session:

Agenda item #1-Discuss Tax Rate- (if proposed rate exceeds the rollback rate or 3% above the effective rate whichever is lower) Take Record Vote & Schedule Public Hearing

Judge Leath said District Judge Charles Mitchell is requesting a \$900.00 pay raise for his Court Reporter. He said she did not get a raise last year. Judge Mitchell has talked with Judge Watson from Shelby County and has gotten him to raise their contribution for the insurance increase.

Judge Leath said the insurance is up about \$30.00 per employee per month. The insurance increase is figured into the budget for 2004 and it is approximately \$40,000 less than last year's budget. He said we need to discuss a pay raise for employees. The reason he is hesitant for any pay increase is the unknown about the Sheriff's lawsuit. There is no question we are going to have to pay and his guess is a minimum of at least \$100,000. The most pay raise we could consider is \$25.00 a month or \$300.00 per year per employee. The cost would be about \$15,000.

Commissioner Smith told the Court about a couple that has retired here and recently the gentleman told him that they are having trouble paying their taxes because of his wife's illness and now the penalty and interest is making it worse. Commissioner Smith said he asked Tammy if there is

anything set up for situations like this and she said there isn't. Everyone is the same.

Tammy Reeves, Tax Assessor/Collector, said the man's property is valued at about \$100,000 and it would be cheaper for him to go to the bank and borrow the money rather than pay the penalty and interest. She said she has advertised that property owners can pay their taxes monthly. The tax statements go out in October but the penalty and interest does not start until February of the following year. Texas government is set up in the way that our local government is funded through property taxes. Our County taxes are one of the lowest tax rates in the State. She said she believes that our officials are doing a good job of staying within our guidelines and doing the best job possible for the public while maintaining our budgets.

Commissioner Smith said the school taxes are just eating us alive and our school district right here is trying to buy Hemphill. We get the blame but rightfully Austin should be getting it. He said he doesn't understand why Jim Nethery does not write an article for the paper explaining that laws set by Legislators in Austin are the reasons for the increases.

Commissioner Dickerson said we have some good employees and he would favor a little raise.

The four tax rates are as follows:

Effective	.37466
Effective + 3%	.38589
Current	.39445
Rollback	.41693

Judge Leath said the only two that he thinks should be considered are the effective and effective + 3%. He proposed that we grant Judge Mitchell's request.

Commissioner Smith agreed with Judge Leath.

Commissioner Clark proposed the effective rate + 3% (.38589).

Commissioner Smith is in favor of the effective rate (.37466). He is not in favor of any pay increases for County employees.

Commissioner Dickerson said he is not in favor of an increase in taxes but is in favor of a pay increase for employees.

Commissioner Warner said he is in favor of a pay increase for the employees but not for the elected officials.

Commissioner Clark moved to set a proposed tax rate of .38589 (effective + 3%). Motion died for lack of a second.

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Commissioner Smith moved to set a proposed tax rate of .37466 (effective tax rate). Commissioner Dickerson seconded. Commissioner Clark opposed. The rest of the Court voted in favor. Motion carried.

Judge Leath moved to increase the salary of Judge Mitchell's Court Reporter by \$900.00 a year. Commissioner Smith seconded. All voted for. Motion carried.

Commissioner Warner moved to give County Employees a pay raise of \$25.00 a month but not including Elected Officials. Commissioner Dickerson seconded. Commissioner Smith voted against. The rest of the Court voted in favor. Motion carried.

Public Hearing with Possible Action

1. For Proposed Pay Increases for County Employees

No one was present in the Courtroom besides the Court, County Clerk and the Tax Assessor/Collector.

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

Jah Leath COUNTY JUDGE
Keith Clark COMMISSIONER PCT. #1
Lynn Smith COMMISSIONER PCT. #2
Doyle Dickerson COMMISSIONER PCT. #3
Fayne Warner COMMISSIONER PCT. #4

ATTEST:

Janice McDaniel COUNTY CLERK

The State of Texas
County of Sabine

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THESE DOCUMENTS WERE FILED AND
DULY RECORDED IN THE COMMISSIONER COURT MINUTES OF SABINE
COUNTY, TEXAS.

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JANICE McDANIEL COUNTY CLERK

BY *Pam Cavender*
Deputy



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