THE MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING ARE AS FOLLOWS:

THE STATE OF TEXAS ~ COUNTY OF GRIMES ~ BE IT REMEMBERED, that on this the 21st day of July 2021 there was a Workshop Meeting of the Commissioners Court of Grimes County, Texas immediately following the Regular Meeting, at the Grimes County Annex Building, 114 W. Buffington, Anderson, Texas with the following members present:

- County Judge, Joe Fauth III
- Commissioner, Pct. #1, Chad Mallett
- Commissioner, Pct. #2, David E. Dobyanski
- Commissioner, Pct. #3, Barbara Walker
- Commissioner, Pct. #4, Phillip Cox

COUNTY JUDGE JOE FAUTH III

1. Call to order.

Judge Joe Fauth called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m.

2. Discuss and review the Grimes County FY 2021 Budget.

The County Auditor passed out a revised preliminary budget to all of the commissioners.

Judge Joe Fauth stated that the revised preliminary budget includes the following:

- 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all employees
- $650,000 in Capital Projects for the storage building and annex renovation.
- One additional DA investigator plus a vehicle
- Two additional full time employees for the Maintenance Department
- $1,600 for training for Emergency Management Coordinator David Lilly
- $1,400 salary increase for County Court at Law Judge Tuck McLain

County Auditor Jessi Murphy stated that the budget is now in the positive by $120,789.14. She also stated that former county auditor Mary Nichols had moved $3 million from fund 10 to fund 49. She also stated that the county has 6 months in reserves. Final numbers from
the appraisal district will be received on July 26th. The appraisal district stated that there were no outstanding protests.

**Building Maintenance**

The budget for Building Maintenance was increased by $75,350. Part of that increase included $33,000 for a new vehicle. This does not include additional funds for maintenance of the hospital in Navasota. Auditors will also need to transfer money from Precinct 3 budget for maintenance into the Building Maintenance department budget.

Commissioner Barbara Walker stated that the St. Joseph facility in Navasota was in need of some upgrades. The generator was damaged during the freeze. Insurance will cover some of the costs to replace the generator and since this was an unforeseen emergency, this will also be covered under the America Rescue Fund Act since this is a healthcare facility that is being affected. The cost of a new generator is $80,000. The hospital also has other maintenance issues that need to be addressed. The parking lot needs repair and there are plans to tear down the morgue at a cost of $90,000.

Al Peeler was asked if he would take over Road and Bridge maintenance and he said “no”. Harry Walker prefers to take care of his own maintenance. Al Peeler is also requesting a part time person to work 29 hours a week to help out in the maintenance department.

**Sheriff’s Department**

Judge Joe Fauth stated that the county needs to look at our Law Enforcement Officers pay. He stated that was opposed to any type of salary reductions or “defunding” of our law enforcement. Judge Fauth asked if the 3% COLA was enough to support the stability of the department. A report from the Texas Municipal Police Association found that Grimes County was 16% below average for salaries of law enforcement personnel. He stated that he was perplexed when he looked at these numbers compared to what the county currently pays law enforcement personnel. He stated that he was in support of raising the pay for law enforcement personnel and asked the other commissioners for their input.

Judge Joe Fauth stated that there are 27 people employed at the Sheriff’s office. The starting salary for a LE1 was $13.26/hr. and ending salary was $18.15/hr. He stated that Grimes County was quite a bit below the other counties. Montgomery County increased their salaries for law enforcement personnel.

Judge Joe Fauth stated that the county needs to be more competitive with our surrounding counties. Based on research the county could commit to a number for law enforcement salary adjustments and look at where the most significant needs are. If you subtract the 3% COLA which is $12,000 then we are looking to add an additional $388,000.

Commissioner Chad Mallett stated that the county was getting further and further behind, and that the county needed to get caught up with the other counties.

Commissioner Phillip Cox stated that the citizens count on our law enforcement personnel to handle dangerous situations and it was time that Grimes County stepped up to the plate and pay them what they deserve. He even suggested that the commissioners look at each department’s budget line by line to see where they can cut the budget to help compensate the law enforcement officers.
Commissioner Barbara Walker stated that she would like to look at other reasons why we are losing personnel in the sheriff’s office besides getting an increase in pay. It may not just be about the money.

Commissioner Phillip Cox stated that numerous things need to be addressed and that law enforcement needed to be compensated fairly. He stated that the law enforcement officers are the least paid person in this courtroom. He stated that people are getting shot, there are car chases and child molesters. He also stated that more money needed to be spent on training. Commissioner Cox stated that Grimes County is nowhere near where we should be.

Chief Deputy Todd Greene stated that the sheriff’s department is asking for a $400,000 increase in salaries for their deputies which represents and increase of 18% to 31%.

Sheriff’s Department = $220,497
Jail = $188,514
Total = $411,000

Chief Deputy Todd Greene stated that law enforcement offices can go to another county and make $10,000 to $20,000 more than working in Grimes County. These officers spend half of their shift downloading videos, doing paperwork and taking phone calls. He also stated that there are a core group of officers that have chosen to stay here.

Commissioner Barbara Walker stated that there are difficult situations in the sheriff’s office and there is a lot of stress on the officers. Commissioner Walker stated that some officers come to Grimes County for the training and then leave to make more money elsewhere.

Commissioner David Dobyanski stated that County Judge Ben Leman gave the Sheriff’s department raises when he took office about 6 or 7 years ago. Commissioner Dobyanski stated that the county needs to raise the salaries in the sheriff’s department to be competitive with the surrounding counties.

Judge Joe Fauth stated that there was a consensus with the court that the county needed to raise the salaries of the law enforcement personnel in the Sheriff’s office. Judge Fauth asked each of the commissioners what their priorities were for this new budget.

Commissioner Phillip Cox stated that he did not want to tap into fund balance and that the county should analyze each department’s budget to see if what is being budgeted for is being utilized. He listed the three main departments that needed to be addressed. Sheriff’s Department, Road & Bridge and Building Maintenance.

Commissioner Chad Mallett stated that he agreed with Commissioner Cox and the Sheriff’s department, Road & Bridge Department, Heath and Safety, and Maintenance should have the tools that they need in the budget.

Chief Deputy Todd Greene stated that they spent $30,000 in maintenance of vehicles and he does not know if they will be able to outfit these vehicles. He has three vehicles sitting and waiting for equipment to be installed. The fleet is aging, and the cost of maintenance has increased dramatically. Chief Greene stated that his department puts a lot of miles on vehicles which averages about 30-40 miles per call out and probably about 400-500 miles per day, plus the potholes and emergency calls on county roads puts a lot of wear and tear on the vehicles. There are currently 3 new vehicles in the budget to be put into the rotation. Three vehicles are the bare minimum, and he is having a hard time getting equipment for these vehicles. He stated that he had hoped the county would get 5 patrol cars and 3 admin cars from Enterprise Leasing.
Judge Joe Fauth stated that the City of Navasota currently has their entire fleet of police cars leased with Enterprise and had only 2 owned vehicles left. Leon County and Waller County also use the Enterprise Leasing Program. Judge Fauth stated that the county might want to take another look at Enterprise Leasing.

Commissioner Phillip Cox stated that Road and Bridge needs to continue with its’ paving and resurfacing projects. Road and Bridge paved 17 miles of road last year.

Commissioner David Dobyanski stated that the county needs a system to keep up with our bail bonds. He stated that everything else had already been covered.

Commissioner Phillip Cox stated that the county should not overlook the sleeping giant in the IT department and maintain that department with everything they need.

Commissioner Barbara Walker stated that everything was covered but did not want to forget the cost of living and the repairs and maintenance.

Commissioner Chad Mallet wanted to add that he wanted to move the traffic enforcement officer to the Sheriff’s department instead of the Constable’s office. This was the weights and measures officer that would monitor the 18 wheelers coming through the county.

Judge Joe Fauth stated that he would meet with the auditors once they got the final numbers from the appraisal district.

3. Adjourn.

Motion by Commissioner Barbara Walker to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner David Dobyanski.

| IN FAVOR | 5 | OPPOSED | 0 | MOTION PASSED |

Joe Fauth adjourned the Meeting at 12:47 p.m.