Grimes County Commissioners Court

Chad Mallett
Commissioner, Precinct #1

David E. Dobyanski
Commissioner, Precinct #2

Barbara Walker
Commissioner, Precinct #3

Phillip Cox
Commissioner, Precinct #4

Joe Fauth III, Grimes County Judge
P.O. Box 160
Anderson, Texas 77830
936-873-4476

THE MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Vanessa Burzynski, County Clerk
Joe Fauth III, County Judge

THE STATE OF TEXAS ~ COUNTY OF GRIMES ~ BE IT REMEMBERED, that on this the 7th 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

POW
Present
Present
Present
Present

COUNTY JUDGE JOE FAUTH III

1. Call to order.

Judge Joe Fauth called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m.

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

The County Auditor passed out a preliminary budget to all of the commissioners. Judge Joe Fauth stated that he wanted to just go over some basic information. The preliminary budget includes a 3% COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) to all employees including elected officials and also includes travel subsidies for the commissioners. This preliminary budget also includes the increase cost for health insurance including the increase for retirees. The preliminary budget does not include additional requests from the department heads except for the following:

- Additional investigator for the District Attorney's office.
- New vehicle for the additional DA investigator
- Crime victim services agent covered by the previous grant.
- Two additional full time maintenance positions.
The additional maintenance personnel will be for the New Justice Center. The Maintenance Department also plans to take over the maintenance at the hospital. The previous maintenance person at the hospital retired and cannot continue to take care of the current load.

The breakdown of the additional expenses are as follows:

- New Vehicle for DA Investigator - $37,000
- Property Insurance Increase - $30,000
- Tax Appraisal Increase - $51,000
- Salary Increases - $531,228

Judge Joe Fauth indicated that he instructed the auditor to take out all possible grants for now since we do not know if we will get the grants or not.

County Auditor Jessi Murphy stated that all expenditures were removed from the Capital Projects line item. The new building will be completed by the end of this budget year. Commissioner Barbara Walker reminded the auditor that we will still need funding for the storage building and the renovations for the Annex building. Jessi Murphy indicated that she would add those expenses back to the budget for next budget year. Also, the new phone lines are already included in this year's budget. Commissioner Walker stated that we need to budget for items we know won't be completed by the end of September. With all of the rain delays, there is no guarantee when the building will be completed.

County Auditor stated as long as we stay within the $2 million budgeted for this project, we will be okay. She also stated that the Voters Department reduced their budget in machinery and equipment to $20,000.

Investigator John Wren discussed with the commissioners the additional investigator position and the additional Crime Victims' Services Liaison. There was some confusion as to exactly how many investigators the county was going to hire and how many were going to be paid through the grant, if received. The preferred outcome was for the county to fund three (3) investigators and if the county receives the grant that grant will pay for the 4th investigator and the Crime Victim Liaison (Gilverta Diaz) who is currently being paid by the county since we did not get the grant this year.

Commissioner Chad Mallet suggested that the county employ three (3) full time investigators and two (2) full time case workers in case the county does not receive the grant. The grant will fund two case workers. The grant will not pay for an investigator. Adding two (2) new positions would double the number of investigators we currently have. We should not have to hire a person for only 1 year and then have to let them go when we do not get the grant renewed. To make sure we get the grant we need to follow all of the procedures.

Investigator John Wren stated that the DA's office really needs to have a second case worker to handle the volumes of DVD’s, videos, and phone call recordings that is received as evidence.

Judge Joe Fauth stated that he would prefer that the county hire a 3rd investigator with a vehicle. Commissioner Barbara Walker commented that was not what she remembered from the budget hearing. She stated that the county needed three full time investigators with a vehicle for each one and an additional case worker, not an additional investigator. The grant can cover Gilverta's position plus an additional case worker.
Commissioner Phillip Cox stated that we just spent $10.5 million on a new Justice Center. There will be an increase in case loads with three (3) assistant DA’s and three (3) investigators plus a clerk. With the anticipated growth of the county, it is reasonable to assume that the crime rate will increase as well, and that the county will need additional staff to prosecute these criminals. Mr. Cox also stated that the county should not minimize the Sheriff’s department’s needs as they have some significant requests in their proposed budget and that law enforcement is a priority issue. Mr. Cox asked if there will be further discussions about the budget and the answer was “Yes.”

Auditor Jessi Murphy stated that if the grant is approved, it will only fund that employee for one (1) year. Gilverta would be paid thru the Grant instead of the county. She also stated that we will not know what the county revenues will be until July 25th when the appraisal district presents their report. Ms. Murphy also stated that the proposed 3% COLA for retirees is an additional $24,791.21 for a total increase of $319,454.04. She also mentioned that we are currently at a deficit of $579,600.48 with this proposed budget.

3. Adjourn.

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

IN FAVOR 5  OPPOSED 0  MOTION PASSED

Joe Fauth adjourned the Meeting at 11:15 a.m.