

The Russell County Proposed Budget Review
September 22nd, 2017
9:30 A.M. EDT

An adjourned meeting of the Russell County Commission was called to order. Members present were: Chair Peggy Martin, Vice Chair Larry Screws, Carl Currington, Ronnie Reed, Cattie Epps and Chance Corbett. Gentry Lee was absent. Also present were the County Administrator LeAnn Horne and Assistant Administrator Vicki Perry.

A quorum was established.

Overview of County's financial 2016-2017 position presented by County Administrator Horne:

In this year's budget (2017-2018); projections are that county departments will return \$1.6M out of a budgeted \$16M general fund budget as of today. The County has met its budgeted revenue for this fiscal year, except for ad valorem revenue. This is the first drop in Ad valorem revenue in many years which is one of the County's major funds and a key market indicator. As you know property taxes are collected in arrears. The projected revenue for 2018 ad valorem revenue indicates a 1.3% increase based on the report provided by the Revenue Commissioner. In 2017, there were 68 new homes constructed. In 2016 report there were 170 homes constructed. In 2015; 204 new homes constructed and in 2014; 262 new homes. As the housing report for Russell County unincorporated indicates; new home construction has decreased.

One of the major revenue sources comes from property taxes (roughly 35% of general fund revenues); sales taxes (roughly 30%) and the remainder is through other revenue sources such as business licenses and charges for services. Russell County maintained it's A+ credit rating as reported in the 2017 financial review by Standard and Poors credit analyst in New York. There were a team of underwriters who reviewed the past three years of financials and found Russell County to be stable and financially secure.

The County's expenditures are under the budgeted revenue at this time. The proposed General Fund Budget presented today is \$16,375,816.00 before any other proposed changes.

The goal for this year was to reduce the general fund expense through transfers-out to other departments with their own revenue sources. This was a recommendation by the underwriters. We historically have used the general fund reserves to support other departmental special projects such as Engineering. However my recommendation to the Commission is to reduce the burden on general fund and allow the reserves to rebuild. The draw-down on the reserves and transfers to engineering was largely due to ATRIP the Governor's program. Our records reflect, the County matched ATRIP projects over \$1.8M to-date. If I understood the County Engineer correctly, this is our last transfer

for ATRIP that is being carried over for the 2018 year. This will assist in reducing the draw-down on general fund reserves for next budget year at least by that amount and hopefully more.

A general overview of the items included in the 2017-18 proposed budget are:

This upcoming year are several plans for county building improvements such as new carpeting in areas of the courthouse; extension service building plans for new counter tops, carpeting; maintenance has scheduled to upgrade several of existing HVAC units for county buildings; painting of offices both exterior and interior; renovation of the Hurtsboro Sheriff's precinct; replacement of the County Courthouse roof; and several repairs/upgrades at the Old Seale Courthouse. The recreational buildings have ongoing improvements at both parks Seale Sports Complex and the Ladonia complex.

Some of the other recreational items included, if approved, are funds for a walking trail in Hurtsboro; fencing at the new Fort Mitchell Community Center park area for fencing, swing-set, zip line and merry-go-round for kids; pic-nick tables for Fort Mitchell Community Center park, Ladonia Sports Complex, Crawford, County Courthouse and Seale Sports Complex; tarps to cover ballfields during rain storms and other minor equipment to support the sports leagues. A proposed basketball court for Ladonia and possibly Hurtsboro (a site is yet to be determined / approved). Crockett and Crawford Park have on-going renovations and developments.

In the proposed budget, there are plans for a few new vehicles and various types of equipment which are included in the departmental budget(s) which were provided to you by the Elected Officials and Department Heads budget submittals. Parks and Recreation have requested two (2) trucks that are large enough to pull the trailers and equipment required to maintain county grounds and sports complexes; a maintenance truck to replace the oldest truck in the fleet. In the proposed budget are plans to purchase a garbage walking floor trailer, replacement for the garbage truck that burned, a tractor trailer truck, and new Sanitation Department software that the state examiners recommended at their last exit conference last year.

The State Legislature has allowed for the County Commission to approve a one-time salary adjustment for retirees. This will be included in the proposed budget and the amount project to cover the one-time adjustment estimated at \$33,000 if approved from the report Mrs. Robinson provided. There are 63 retirees this increase will apply according to the report.

As you know this is the only time of the year generally when salary adjustments are addressed. Throughout the departmental budgets some proposed changes include corrections to salaries, educational adjustments, promotions and changes with personnel, classification changes and requests for additional personnel. Generally those will be addressed at the Salary Schedule presentation or during the departmental review by the respective department head or elected official.

I am proposing and included in this budget is a 2% COLA for all regular county employees. This is consistent with the Sheriff's new pay plan chart and the average increases he provided for the Sheriff's Department and Jail. I wish that we could have provided for a larger increase; however, with the decline in Ad Valorem revenue along with increases, supplies / materials, workman's compensation, liability insurances and health insurance plus supporting the transfers to other funds the COLA 2% is being proposed.

I also will present a reorganizational proposal later on the agenda for the Building Inspections / Code Enforcement and Parks and Recreation for your consideration.

Appropriations to area civic and social agencies are basically level funded. These are funds that are returned to area civic and quasi governmental agencies. The amount in this proposed budget as presented (2018) budget total is: \$627,020.00. That is a decrease from last year of \$776,020. The indigent lawyers fund did not submit a request this year.

Funding for Volunteer Fire Departments is included in the proposed budget in the amount of \$ 90,000 for their insurance premium. A good note is that the Volunteer Fire Departments through the local legislation supported by the Commission and voted on by the residents of the County has generated an estimated \$650,000 in revenue for the volunteer fire departments this year. They receive funding through the Beer Tax, Tobacco and the new fire fee legislation for an estimated total of \$875,000 in revenue to-date.

Included in the appropriations are continued funding for both Juvenile and Adult Drug Court programs; District Attorney, County Health Department and many other area civic and social agencies.

Funding from General Fund transferring to support county engineering projects total: \$1,039,099 for the 2017-2018 budget year (this includes the ATRIP match). If the budget is adopted the tag fees will be placed in the Engineering budget to support dirt road paving.

Also included in the proposed budget is capital improvement funding for the renovation of the Old Post Office and/or depending on your generation the old Library.

I want to thank you all for working with Vickie and me on the budget this year. I know this is not an easy process. The budget presented today to the Commission is one that we can financially support and continue providing services to the citizens. Thank you, again for working with me.

Commissioner Screws requested copy of job descriptions and salaries for employees in the Commission Office.

Probate Judge Harden presented his budget. He stated that he has reduced the budget for the Probate Office to the best of his ability. Normally, he returns back to the County approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000 thousand dollars, but this year it is only \$21,000. This is a reflection of his reduction of the budget each year.

Revenue Commissioner Naomi Elliott stated she was fine with what was returned to her and with her request.

Motor Vehicle Commissioner Paulette Colbert stated that her budget ended up with a total net reduction of \$5,000. She had several people retire which helped her have a surplus in her budget. She is requesting a part-time employee.

The Board of Registrars was not present, but Jimmy Adams had stated to Administrator Horne that he was fine with what was submitted.

Administrator Horne reported the Maintenance Budget and announced that Richard Sellers will be retiring at the end of the month Mr. Bryan Sharpe is being recommended to fill Mr. Seller's position as director. Mr. Sharpe has stepped in while Mr. Sellers has been out recovering from surgery. Included in their salary is Mr. Sharpe be placed in Mr. Sellers position, a part-time position was added, because Mr. Sellers would like to remain part-time for a few months, or as needed because he knows all the systems in the county buildings and will be available for any training and questions that may arise. There is also a 2% increase in the salary lines. She has reviewed maintenance projects with Mr. Sharpe including regular maintenance duties and the sports complexes.

Sheriff Taylor acknowledged that last year was a good year and was able to return close to \$700,000 from last year's budget. \$400,000 was from the Jail and was due to inmates being out of the Jail and the cost of food and supplies going as low as possible. Also, they have been able to keep medical cost down. The line items do fluctuate if the money isn't there and they have one bad medical case the funds are used up. The only project that he has is fixing the old Hurtsboro Water Authority building for an annex.

Sheriff Taylor has requested for 2 part-time employees for Animal Control, since the City of Phenix at Police Jurisdiction has pulled out. The other position is for a part-time deputy that he intends to put in patrol and work drug interdiction.

Sheriff Taylor also discussed his Holiday pay change request. He has 12 hour shift workers. Their benefit package is completely different from the 8 hour workers. If a 12 hour shift worker's schedule falls on a holiday, they only get half of the holidays or half of the benefits package that the rest of the county gets. If they are off they do not get anything for that day if the holiday falls on their regular off day. To make it fair, he spoke with County Attorneys at Webb & Ely and they suggested doing 8 hours across the board for each of his employees. That way, there would be no complaints and it would be fair for everyone. Sheriff Taylor requested to make that change based on the Attorney's recommendation.

The pay plan that was implemented a couple of years ago is working and has saved money. Increases across the board to everyone and felt that was not the proper way to do base on work ethics of different employees. There was barely over \$100,000 for the Sheriff's Department pay increase this year to include the 2 part-time employees he is asking for.

EMA Director Bob Franklin presented his budget. He stated that there was an increase in the equipment and furnishings over \$5,000; this is for the community storm shelters that have been planned through the county. Two (2) have already been funded by FEMA, but require a county match.

Mr. Franklin requested to change the job description for Samantha Cato. Presently she is listed as an Administrative Assistant Planner, which is not what she does. Her job description should reflect what she does do and will come with a small increase. Her job description will be changed to Operation Specialist.

Coroner Sumbry has been satisfied with his budget over the past few years. He has been grateful for that. He asked if he was considered a department head. Several Commissioners told him he was an elected official.

Coroner Sumbry stated that being a Department Head and an Elected Official; he would like to know what the base salary is for a Department Head.

Commissioner Corbett stated that he has been a department head and he thought it began at \$30,000. He had to get degrees and request increases based on completion of certifications. Sometimes they approve the increase; sometimes not.

Commissioner Corbett discussed issues he had about Coroner Sumbry's increase request because after his research of the position, he has found that historically the Coroner's job is a part-time position. It was actually stated to be when the law was passed in 2002. The law did give the Coroner the ability to have benefits, but it also stated that the Coroner's salary was \$15,000. The Coroner had the ability to appoint 2 Deputies at the amount of \$3,000. Sumbry's current salary is almost \$38,000. Commissioner Corbett also has a breakdown of all the Coroner salaries across the State of Alabama and he found it hard to compare from county to county. There are only two counties in the state that pay their coroner more than we do. Lee County has three times the population that we do their coroner is \$12,000 less and their deputies as well. Commissioner Corbett said that Coroner Sumbry is also requesting a full-time Deputy Coroner. He can't seem to track this and justify it. He is unable to do that because there is no other Alabama County that has this.

Coroner Sumbry informed him that Lee County's Coroner is full-time and he is retired or about to retire from another full-time job. As far as his benefits, he does not want to place those in jeopardy with what he is about to have. Shelby County is the other County referenced by Commissioner Corbett. The Coroner in Columbus, Georgia does

approximately 5 to 6 hundred cases a year. He has (3) full time deputies whose starting salaries are around \$50,000. Russell County is doing over 400 cases.

Coroner Sumbry questioned the Commission: If Department Heads salaries are at \$47,000 and I'm considered a Department Head, why his salary not already at \$47,000 if that has been the standard for the last three or four years.

Commissioner Corbett stated: That is not the standard. There are some making more than that and some that are making less than that.

Coroner Sumbry stated that he is in his 3rd term as Coroner. I am also serving as one of the Representatives in our area. I am asking for the increase which will bring this position in line with my peers and other Department heads in Russell County and then my salary will be closer to an experienced coroner's pay. Information has placed in the Commission's packets for review. Based on the research within the state of Alabama, there are currently 21 coroner's salaries with an average of \$62,500; which, is about \$30 per hour. Currently his office has one full-time employee, which is Coroner Sumbry, and his staff covers the entire county. The position consists of more than himself showing up with his Deputies, making the necessary responses and filing documents. They are there basically 24 hours a day 7 days a week along with the other department heads that are working as hard as his department. He feels like his department works just as hard as other departments. His office is seeing a death increase as the county's communities develop and it deserves the same attention as other departments and department heads.

Coroner Sumbry thanked the Commission for their consideration.

Commissioners asked other questions related to his duties and salary before moving on to the Juvenile Office.

Administrator Horne presented Judge Collins' budget request for Juvenile Probation which was level funded for this year. This budget includes paying for a juvenile bed at the East Alabama Regional Detention Center in Opelika, Alabama, as well as accepting a Long Term Detention Subsidy Contract from the Alabama Department of Youth Service for another bed at this detention center.

Special Enforcement Officer Bill Friend: I request for an enforcement officer to be added to my section. I'm not going to be here forever. I will have to train someone to know the job before I leave as far as revenue, taxes, mobile homes, etc. Gary Leeds, who works with me now, has a request that he be kept on as a temporary hire. Normally, he works 4 days a week. What he is budgeted, he never uses all of it anyway, so there is usually some of it given back at end of the year. I think that is around \$25,000 for the new Enforcement Officer to start out. Other than that, everything else is the same for the Enforcement Office.

Mr. Friend also presented the Building Inspection and Code Enforcement budget.

The status on what the department use to have to do and what they do now is down below 50%. I feel that the department can be run with one inspector instead of two. That is just a suggestion. They kept it the same way. I did ask for an additional new vehicle, being that I have two inspectors. If they decide to go with one inspector, then I won't need that new vehicle. We did get a new one last year, a small jeep that works great. We have another one that has approximately 300,000 miles on it.

Commissioner Screws; How long have the two employees been there?

Mr. Friend: Mr. Smith has been there for over 11 years. The other employee has been there for approximately 4 years and Bernice has been there at least 10 years.

Commissioner Screws: Where would we place them, because both of them have been there long enough to have what I call a tenure or permanent employment?

Bill Friend: Several times I have talked to one employee about putting in for medical retirement. He has had several operations and is out quite a bit. He will meet all requirements because he has had six, seven or eight operations. I'm scared to send him out into the field because you have to walk into areas that have not had a sidewalk cut yet. He has to walk across boards, rocks and such. I'm afraid he will hurt himself, such as back injuries, neck injuries, arms and shoulders.

Commissioner Screws: Before we hired this individual, did we do a background.

Mr. Friend: To the best of my knowledge, they did. I don't know.

Commissioner Screws: That was before the Personnel Department was developed, Right?

Administrator Horne: Madam Chair, I don't mean to interrupt, but we are getting into HIPPA Laws and private information of an employee. We can't discuss that in public. I don't mean to be rude. I would not recommend discussing it anyway,

Commissioner Reed: Get with Ms. Horne and you can work something out. We need to move on.

Mr. Friend: I have no problem. I wanted to just mention it though, I have talked to the gentleman about it.

Chair Martin asked; if they were ready to discuss Parks and Recreation.

Administrator Horne: In my opening statement as you remember I discussed that I was reviewing options that were presented. One option was presented late yesterday from the Sheriff's Department regarding Building Inspections and Enforcement. However, I'm not ready to present that option to the Commission.

Another one is what Mr. Friend suggested as he submitted to me in his budget request. As of October 1st, Mr. Friend has been managing these two departments, but he wanted to focus on what he was actually hired to do which is to generate revenue for the County. He does an exceptional job collecting revenue that with the business license, nuisances and with the Sanitation Department Collections.

Therefore, I have been reviewing options on what to do with Building Inspections, and Enforcement at a long term approach. I plan to bring that recommendation once I look at it further and research the laws.

With that being said, moving on to Parks and Recreation, as you know Mr. Friend who has done an outstanding job in the interim position that you appointed him to. However, I know the Commission has not had an opportunity to discuss what direction they want to go with in Parks and Recreation with the position of the Director or Coordinator, whatever the Commission wants to do.

Mr. Friend gave me a notice that as of October 1st, he did not want to continue with the interim position with of Parks and Recreation. Therefore, we have looked at assisting Mr. Friend with his suggestion.

I would like to propose to the Commission today to consider and approve that Building Maintenance will continue to help support Parks and Recreation with the facilities maintenance and any repairs needed.

They will turn in work orders and Building Maintenance will make the repairs. The ground maintenance portion of Parks and Recreation I have talked with Engineering and Shawn indicates that his department can oversee the ground maintenance crew which is three employees. Shawn can help communicate and coordinate the league schedules, which is what Mr. Friend has been doing with the Leagues and League President. One action that has helped Mr. Friend and the County is the Leagues have consolidated boards. They have one person now, rather than the two boards, who will be scheduling the games or notifying changes. Shawn will disseminate. Information to the employees. The budgets will remain separate. We will have an accounting to the Commission of the budget and it will not be placed under the Engineering budget. Shawn stated it would not be a conflict with the Engineering laws and that other Engineers in other counties manage Sanitation or other departments. That's no reflection on Mr. Friend; he just wants to focus on his revenue and backing out of all the interim positions that we have placed him over, He has done a great job.

This would give the County Commission a 90 day window to have some time to monitor Parks and Recreation; observe it and then meet. Not a rush have to make a rush decision on the direction that you want to go with that position in the future. We can review this again in January. That is the proposal; shared duties between Maintenance and Engineering.

Mr. Friend: I have also made a packet up for Ms. Horne of projects that I was working on anything that needs to go further in all these separate areas, where they need to go. Anything that is actually needed and it has a price tag on it.

I also have requested it in the budget prior to the budget meeting. I have ordered some tarps to cover the fields which will save the infields a considerable amount of work and money, because that red dirt that is put on those fields for a pallet cost \$2,400 for 40 bags. There was a lot of rain and was all washed away. We tried to rake it back in and put other stuff back in, but it was my understanding this is a special compound that the kids can crawl and fall in and not get hurt. It will save money down the line. Everything is running good right now.

Commissioner Epps: I read something in the budget book that you were asking for a total of \$90,000.

Commissioner Corbett: That is if he took on all three departments.

Mr. Friend: Presently, my salary is right at \$41,000 and then I get a \$20,000 for additional duties that I do for the collections for the Sanitation Department (total \$61,000), which I believe is put back into the General Fund. Don't they pay that?

Commissioner Corbett: So, your department head salary is \$41,000?

Mr. Friend: For Enforcement Officer it is, because I get \$20,000 for Sanitation.

Administrator Horne: No, as I stated to you over a year ago, General Fund completely pays your salary of \$61,602.

Commissioner Epps: I think that when we hired Bill and I was here. This is my 17th year in November. I haven't been around as long as Gentry, but I have been around a long time. When I say I have been around a long time. A lot of time I don't say anything and I know it is going to play out eventually and in the later months it has been playing out eventually things are same. Now, when we hired Bill we hired him to do a job. This job, the position that we have hired him to do, which was to go out and collect taxes and do things like the trailer parks and make sure they have the right numbers and all on them.

Mr. Friend: I was eventually hired for licensing.

Commissioner Epps: I can go back and pull the record on it, because I do keep stuff. Now, there were no benefits, because he was retired and did not need benefits. At each time, we come to a new budget year, we keep adding this and this and this. Now, if we are going to merge or combine departments together, then we need to do it under one person. Every budget year, we come back with a different thing that we keep adding here and giving here and then we keep adding to the salary. Poor employees that are out doing the work and making the County look good. A man came in yesterday complaining that their grass is not being cut and all of this stuff is not being done. Those

employees are the ones that make the county look good or bad. We can't even give them a 3% increase, because it seems to me that the ones that are getting it are the folks up here and not the ones down here doing the work. I'm not referring to all Department Heads; I'm just referring to the Commissioner side of this. I think it is unfair.

We are sitting here talking about and just listening to the Coroner a department head and an increase. Now, we come back and I'm reading \$90,000, we got to do something and be better stewards over county money. The Commissioners are stewards over the county money and we need to put it where it can be used and people can appreciate coming to work for the County. I have talked to a lot of county employees and I listen.

Commissioner Corbett: County employees call you?

Commissioner Epps: Of course. I talk to them at Church, the park, I go down town and they call me at home. They have my card. I give them out. That was what I was elected to do was to represent this county. So, county employees talk to me. I'm not fussing. I'm just saying, the Commissioners have to look at a better way in doing business with this county. I feel that very strongly and we should do it.

Mr. Friend: I agree, but when I was asked to take this interim, my request was if I'm going to keep it permanently, I asked for \$30,000 additional to run Parks and Recreation complete. That was what that request was. I don't know what they pay the parks and recreation person, but that is what I requested was \$30,000.

Commissioner Reed: I can do that easy. Your number one job is to get revenue for Russell County and you can do that easy. Don't worry about these other things. That is your number one job. If you don't bring revenue; no one gets paid.

Commissioner Epps: I need to know in the Parks and Rec. budget you have training. Do they go to training? I was asked that way back from a department head that they wanted to go to school to get some training. I see that there is a 265 line item it was increased for a proposed \$750 for training. Do they go to training?

Mr. Friend: Yes.

Administrator Horne: They go to HASMAT training, learning how to handle chemicals and get certifications. They have to apply a lot of chemicals at the sports complexes.

Commissioner Epps: This has been done before, for approval for Parks and Recs?

Administrator Horne: Yes, I believe it has.

Mr. Friend: Previously, when I was in Parks and Recs. I sent all three employees to class on how to properly put out grass seed, chemical mixing and sprays. They went to three different classes. This time two of the employees went to the Extension Office about chemicals. Yes, they go to training and receive certificates.

Administrator Horne: They also went to Montgomery for training.

Mr. Friend: One thing in Parks and Recs, that I did request is, because those guys are out in the sun, heat and rain constantly is a \$.75 an hour raise for the three guys. They are out there in bad weather, but just the three employees.

Commissioner Corbett: Is that on top of the proposed 2%?

Mr. Friend: I rather have the \$.75 than the 2%. They deserve something; they are really good people and work hard. I know everybody else does too. I would like to see them get something.

Commissioner Corbett: My thought to that would be; are we paying them what they should be paid and if we are then, the cost of living or the raises that we do will take care of it. If we are not paying them what we need to be paying them, then we need to reevaluate the positions, job descriptions and rate of pay. So, just going in and giving them \$.75 per, there are other folks that want that too.

Commissioner Epps: That is what I mean when I say it's not fair. It needs to be brought before this Commission. Not because I like you and you really do a good job, but because you do a good job I'm going to give you \$.80. The other folks out there also do a good job but they get 3%. Is that fair? That is what I'm talking about being fair.

Mr. Friend: I thought I could come up here and ask. It doesn't mean that you are going to get anything, but you can still ask.

Commissioner Corbett: I applaud you for asking for your folks. I really do applaud that, because that is what you are supposed to do. I agree with that. I like him asking, but just say I'm not sure we can do that for individuals without having a reason behind it. It's like asking the Coroner 1,000 questions. It's not our job to give the County's money away. It's to give the county's money in the right direction for what we should be spending it on.

Commissioner Reed: You can ask, but that doesn't mean he is going to get it.

Mr. Friend: That is true.

Administrator Horne: Madam Chair, before we move off Parks and Recreation I did want to outline what is in line item 530, Improvements Other Than Building, which is \$10,000 for the Commissioners that you get as discretion money. Commissioner Reed had asked for a Commission project, Commissioner Epps, Commissioner Currington had asked for some projects this money use to be in appropriations, now all Commissioners are allotted \$10,000 for recreational projects because through the year if you need something for your district that is what your money is used for recreation. Items like the picnic tables that was mention earlier, the tarps that Mr. Friend wants, basketball court

materials, swings, etc. I just want to let you know what was included in that line item. When you start to go forward with that project, let Shawn know where that money is located so you can go forward. I will give Shawn a detailed list, as well as you.

Commissioner Screws, I did not forget you. Your walking trail is budgeted in a different fund but the money you have requested is there, as well.

Mr. Friend: Commissioner Epps, I have budgeted under Parks and Recs your picnic tables for your playground.

Administrator Horne: I placed a book on your desk so you can get an idea of the zip-line that Ladonia has just as an example.

Commissioner Corbett: So that I am clear on this, you mention that Mrs. Epps, you have basically budgeted 30,400 dollars for that project? That is what I'm showing on the request.

Administrator Horne: Yes, that is for all the materials and plus the \$10,000 in case there is something that she may need done at the Fort Mitchell Senior Center. Commissioner Reed under the Commissioner projects had requested money as well for a recreation project. That is where I placed money instead of under appropriations.

Chief Mapper Heath Crowe stated his budget decreased 12% from last year, because it was budgeted for aerial photography last year and was paid for by last year's budget. The finishing touches are being done on that project. Rod Powell at E911 contributed \$50,000 to the project and was able to get a superior project for the difference. The budget was approved by the Department of Revenue in August of 2017 and working with the County Administrator, Mr. Crowe was satisfied with the budget.

Sanitation Director Wanda Hardie stated that she was okay with the budget and a lot of the line items that were increased were mentioned at the Administrator's overview.

Mrs. Hardie discussed issues she has had with trucks breaking down due to the miles they traveled each day and that replacing one of the trucks was included in the 2017-2018 budget.

Commissioner Epps discussed fees that are charged when you pay your bill on line. Mrs. Hardie stated the fee charged does not go to the County, but is charged by the company that processes the online payment.

Chair Martin asked about money placed in advertising. Mrs. Hardie plans not only to let people know of holiday schedules for garbage pickup, but to advertise new rollaway dumpsters customers can rent for renovations and extensive cleanups. This should bring in additional revenue and is less expensive than renting the same type dumpsters from other companies.

Administrator Horne discussed the Commissioner's special projects:

- District 1 is a carry over and has been budgeted in fund 116 for repairs to the Old Seale Courthouse building.
- District 2 projects for Ladonia Fire Department are on hold. Commissioner Currington has discussed chip sealing roads instead of asphalt in his district allowing there to be more miles of road to be maintained. There will also be picnic tables and benches placed at the Ladonia Sports Complex.
- District 3 this area is mostly in the City Limits/ Police Jurisdiction, Chair Martin would like to build a fire station on Cutrate Road, but the Russell County Volunteer Fire Association will not support the project at this time. Chair Martin feels there is a need in this area since the City refuses to service this area with emergencies and police protection. She will keep continue to work on this issue for the citizens in that area.
- District 4 Commissioner Reed would like to create a recreation area for the kids in his area who have no place close to play. He is trying to work with the City on this project and requested to keep money available in the budget for this project.
- District 5 has begun work on a playground at the Seale Fire Station and she is requesting support from the Commission. The amount of this project will be \$30,400. There is an extra \$10,000 for the Fort Mitchell Senior Center for recreation or upgrades. Commissioner Epps stated there should be some money left over from Parks and Recs from the 2016-2017 budget for projects that were not done at the Senior Center. Administrator Horne reported there are no left over funds.
- District 6 Commissioner Corbett would like to have fencing installed at Crawford Park. There has been an estimate of \$19,000 for fencing the area so he has requested \$20,000, because the project will have to be bid out.
- District 7 requested \$10,000 last year for a walking trail in Hurtsboro. Commissioner Screws is requesting the same and if it is approved he will go to the Board of Education and to the Hurtsboro Alumni Association for right to do that. Commissioner Screws stated that he has consulted the Engineer Department and it will cost approximately \$14,000 to construct the walking trail. With the \$10,000 from last year and this year's \$10,000 there will be enough for the project.

Administrator Horne stated that she did not understand that he wanted to carry over the \$10,000 from last year. The request was only placed for a \$10,000 for the project. Other Commissioners discussed how money is lost if it was not used in the year that it was requested in. The request should have been \$20,000 for his project this year.

Commissioner Screws changed his request to \$20,000 with the understanding that if the three parties do not agree to allow the walking trail to be built that the money will come back to the Commission. He also requested \$20,000 for restroom repair at the School, which is used by Senior Citizens.

Administrator Horne mentioned Board of Education would need to appropriate, too.

Commissioner Corbett asked if Commissioner Screws wanted to do the \$20,000 for the school as an appropriation?

Commissioner Screws agreed. He also wanted to change the first item to \$25,000.

Commissioner Reed stated that he would like to change something as well. There is an appropriation he would like to change.

Commissioner Corbett stated that he received a call Tuesday from the Russell County High School Softball Team are not able to get funding for covers over the batting cage and pitching area and have asked if he would bring this before the Commission. The pole barn project will cost \$7,200.00. He would like to fund the project and he would like to help them.

Commissioner Corbett also requested for Administrator Horne to identify some funds to help complete the restrooms at the Crawford Park. The park currently is renting porta-potties each month at \$110. The project has begun but needs \$15,000 or less to complete.

County Engineer Shawn Blakeney stated that this year's budget was difficult because it is approximately 7% less than last year's budget. We are at the average of what Engineering had back in 2002-2003 money-wise. He was able to get a little more out of their fund balance account to support the 2% increase for his employees' salaries. He budgeted a little more into the 117 RRR Gasoline account to transfer over the 111 Gas Tax. He has a \$4.4 million budget this year where a last year's budget was \$4.75 million.

Projects for this year,
Carry over even for ATRIP \$200,000 has been carried over to pay the County's portion of Cutrate Road/ Opelika Bridge. It's moving forward and hopefully it will be completed next year. The City is handling all of that.

Annual resurfacing, \$391,000 has been budgeted; \$910,000 is needed to keep the resurfacing program going county-wide. His department is meeting approximately 35-40% of that. This is not a good thing to do, but that is what he has to work with. Gammage Road ER project has \$70,000 for the Federal aid match. \$40,000 was budgeted for the dirt road paving to pave Gammage Road, because once it is completed they will surface treat the road.

Dirt Road paving is the biggest issue that he has at this time. He provided a list of proposed roads that were requested to him. As he discussed, last year it would take 29 months to do all roads that were submitted and he would need \$100,000 more than he has budgeted to do them.

Lynn Road paving began last year and will have to be finished. This will take about 3 more months to do. Pitts Road, Carden Road, Gammage Road remains on the list because Engineering had to budget the money this year for the rock and tar.

Mr. Blakeney requested direction on dirt road paving priority. He sat down with each of the Commissioners to discuss what roads they would like to see paved.

Commissioner Reed: Mrs. Lawrence comes to the Commission Meetings all the time worried about her road. I want you to put some gravel or something on her road.

Mr. Blakeney: We put gravel on her road about three months ago.

Commissioner Reed: She says, there is someone on her road that is sick and it is hard to get out when it rains. She says she is going to keep coming until you do something.

Mr. Blakeney: We blade it and keep it maintained. I rode it Monday and counted the houses on the road. The road rides good. The only problem that we have with that road is there is a driveway slanted towards the road and every time it rains the water washes down the drive way and puts a rut in the road. We have to fix it after every rain event. There is something that the property owner can do on their side that would eliminate that issue, but we cannot get them to do that.

When this list is approved, I have said it for two years now and Larry Kite said for eight. I don't agree with paving dirt roads because of the money that we have. You see there is only \$391,000 and I need \$900,000 to keep the paving program up for existing roads. This is something that the Commission has been doing and whatever you approve, if it is on the list, we will pave it.

Commissioner Reed: I'm not in favor of approving this list unless you place Mrs. Lawrence on the list. She will keep coming up here.

Mr. Blakeney: This is not a list. This is a list requested by Commissioners.

Commissioner Epps: This is Screws' district.

Commissioner Reed: It still takes 4 votes to do something. I support Commissioner Screws on this.

Commissioner Screws: I met with Mrs. Lawrence Monday night, and told her we will not pave her road.

Commissioner Reed: We need to do something on that road. She says she has a sick person on that road.

Commissioner Screws: I have a question about road number 3. Who recommended that?

Mr. Blakeney: Commissioner Corbett.

Commissioner Screws: I understand, it is in my district.

Mr. Blakeney: It is 6 /7. It is in both of your districts.

Commissioner Corbett: In fact, that is the only road that I asked for.

Commissioner Corbett: The problem is that Lynn Road is going to take three or four months. We will not be able to do Pitts until we get Lynn finished.

Commissioner Screws: I agree because it is 2.5 miles.

Commissioner Corbett: The reasoning behind Carden Road not only does it have houses on it, but it is a major cut through for people who live on County Road 22. That road has high traffic all the time.

Mr. Blakeney: I do have video of all the roads that were proposed and about the issues and struggles that we would have with them and the reason for the estimated times. The traffic count on Carden Road on the Sandfort Road end, there are 83 cars a day on this road. At the Hwy 169 passed the Dollar General end there are 123 cars per day and the paved section at the Dollar General there are 900 cars daily.

Commissioner Corbett: Then, it is safe to say, we have citizens driving all around the world to not drive on that dirt road.

Mr. Blakeney: I have told each of you, if you ask me for my recommendation of what road I would pave, if I had to pave one, it would be Carden Road and Ridge Road. Those are probably two roads in this county that numerous people use that road access to and from places. There are probably 100 plus cars a day on both of those roads.

Mr. Blakeney: You just can't get right-of-ways on that road. That is the problem that we are having on everything now; right-of-way issues.

Commissioner Corbett: There are a couple of other points too is Carden road has the width.

Mr. Blakeney: We have the right-of-ways and it already has the width, yes.

Commissioner Corbett: You don't have to get width, the road is based out pretty good and it is an easy one to pave. Let me be clear on Pitts Road, I' not backing off

of Pitts at all, but there is no way to put Pitts on and be able to get Lynn Road done and then get other Commissioner's roads done as well.

Commissioner Screws: Like Screws Road.

Commissioner Corbett: You can't blame me for that one.

Commissioner Screws: I will

Commissioner Corbett: Make sure you tell people that you live on it.

Mr. Blakeney: In the future, I will note the District that recommended it. The dirt road paving is the only issue everything else that you have seen the salaries are basically the other big increase this year, because we are giving 2%. From last year's budget that is about \$32,000 increase from last year.

Commissioner Corbett: How many months out of the year can you pave roads?

Mr. Blakeney: I would say maybe 9 months.

Commissioner Corbett: Mr. Screws, you have that is an 8 month project. That would be an entire year. That is Screws Road.

Commissioner Screws: That is my road. The reason why I got it on there is because I have waited 10 years since I have been on the County Commission. I've been working on everybody's road in the community. Now, it is time to get my road paved this year.

Commissioner Corbett: So we will go down the list. Lynn Road is a carry-over project, because most of the time last year work was done in District 7.

Mr. Blakeney: We spent probably as much time on Lynn Road as we did on Sandpit Road. It is because we had about 5 months of rain this year.

Commissioner Screws: How long did it take on Sandpit?

Mr. Blakeney: About 4 month's total, then we worked on McClure Road. We are still waiting for the rock and tar for McClure Road, but it was based out ready to pave the first part of next week. We have been on Lynn Road for 3 or 4 months now, but have been on and off because of the rain. The rain has hurt us this year.

Commissioner Corbett: For Pitts Road; I proposing that will probably get pushed to the first part of next year. Still do Carden Road because it is a major road because it goes through from County Road 22 to Hwy 169. Just like Mr. Screws said, since I have been on the Commission I have had people on Carden Road asking me about paving. Gammage Road is that State?

Mr. Blakeney: That is an ER project for the flood money that we have. It is a Federal aid project that the County matches 20%. The 20% match will come from Engineering's annual resurfacing money, Line 530 and the rock and tar will have to come from the dirt road money.

Commissioner Corbett: Screws Road will take 8 months, Lakeview Drive, 4 months and Isbell Road. There is no way that you can get all of these done in the amount of time.

Mr. Blakeney: If we hire two or three contractors and we go to work.

Commissioner Epps: I think too as Commissioners and the roads that we are talking about I think we do have to consider the weather. If you say it is 5 months, it may not be that.

Mr. Blakeney: A lot of county roads are roads that Grandmas and Grandpas cut in years ago. That is the ones that we have left. Carden Road is a good road, but like Pitts Road and Screws Road are 12 or 13 foot wide roads, that the power companies have put light poles on both sides of the road, so then we are working around utilities. All of the water lines are buried in the middle of the road. There are a lot of utility conflicts. Next week, I will propose an updated dirt road policy, trying to get some type of standard for paving dirt roads. There are a lot of conflicts, a lot of work and Engineering does not have clearing equipment. We have a backhoe, excavator, dozier and a dump truck. We do not have pans, chippers, mulching heads to do what we need to do.

Commissioner Corbett: So to go with the ones that are obvious: Lynn Road because you are already trying to finish it up and Gammage Road because it is an easy one and there are matching funds for Gammage. That would be over three months. Now we are down to six months. Screws Road, eight months is unbelievable about for 1 mile.

Mr. Blakeney: We will start at Leroy and go 1 mile into Screws Road and pick up goes over to Bowden Road.

Commissioner Epps: I would like to thank Shawn and Larry for the meeting that we had between the City Engineer and the City Manager. We got a lot cleared up about Brickyard Road and Lonesome Pine Road. Five or six years ago a couple would come to the meetings talking about Lonesome Pine Road. The City and County Engineer have agreed to work together again and get some stobs put in letting people know where the city portion and what belongs to the county. Their complaint was who to call. The City Manager said a lot of the problem came from politics. When it comes to business of the County, I have always said we need to keep politics out of it and take care of business. That is what happened with Lonesome Pine and Brickyard Road. A lot of politics and promises that were not able to keep

and when they were made they could not be kept at that time. We are hoping that we have this all cleared up. The City and the County Engineers are working on the project and trying to resolve the problems that they are having.

Chair Martin: Out of the seven roads that you listed which are the worst?

Mr. Blakeney: It is much more cost effective to maintain a dirt road than a paved road. You can see that my budget is the same as it was back in 2003 and 2004. Salaries have gone up since 2002 about \$720,000 of the Engineering budget. Everything is going up except what I get money wise. If you talk to the Administrator and she says next year she needs to cut even more. We get \$2.1 million and the salaries are at \$2.7 million. If we had to operate off the gas tax, we could not operate. We either will have to start cutting salaries, projects, services or somehow we are going to have to get more money.

Commissioner Screws: The \$10 tag fee was important.

Mr. Blakeney: I got \$150,000 of that.

Commissioner Screws: According to that \$275,000 is projected.

Mr. Blakeney: My project this year is \$150,000,

Commissioner Screw: 2016-2017 we got \$324,000 for the \$10 fee. How much goes to Phenix City and to Hurtsboro. Where is the break down for that?

Administrator Horne: The projected this year is based on actual revenue. The first year of the tag fee is just an estimate; it did not run a full year after the legislation passed. This year currently, they have not posted September, revenue received is \$233,000. The Commission will have to approve allowing the engineer to have the transfer that we proposed for this budget. That is the Commission's discretion what the money is for. I know that during the discussions when passing the legislation you did want the funds to supplement the engineering budget. Your final vote will be to place the funds in the Engineer budget. 40% goes to the Phenix City, and with the county's is 60%.

Commissioner Screws: You say the bill has changed from the first appropriation? The Bill that I read said it was left up to Commission.

Administrator Horne: The legislation is in the back of your book for reference.

Commissioner Screws: When this bill was first passed we were told it was placed in Engineering. We already voted on it. When the bill first passed we voted as a Commission to put this money into Engineering for dirt road paving.

Commissioner Corbett: Sounds like what we have done. He has budgeted the whole \$125,000.

Administrator Horne: We did do that. If you approve this budget, that is what it is approving transferring that money as what he has budgeted.

Commissioner Screws: I heard that we will have to vote again.

Administrator Horne: When you vote on this budget. He has budgeted this money to be transferred. It is required to be placed in the General Fund and transferred into the Engineering's budget at your approval.

Commissioner Screws: I'm thinking, because we have already voted that as a Commission. When the bill was first approved to put it into the Engineer's budget; I didn't think that we would have to go back every year and do the same thing.

Administrator Horne: The legislation stipulates that as well, but what I'm saying it is in the budget as a transfer. The law changed from what it used to be. The old law put the Revenue directly into the Engineering Fund, but now it is being deposited into the General Fund and we have to transfer it to Engineering. That was the change in the legislation.

Commissioner Corbett: I don't think we are ready to make a decision on the roads. Obviously, you can't do the whole list that you gave us.

Commissioner Screws: My part of Carden Road, I'm not for that. If you want it, pave your half.

Commissioner Corbett: I'll pave one lane of it.

Commissioner Screws: That will take away about 12 months, no 4 months.

Commissioner Corbett: We could take away Screws Road and take away 8 months.

Commissioner Epps: We hire department heads to do jobs. I have always said that we should let the person that is doing the job, and who is there every day on the job, know more about what they can or cannot do better than we can, sitting up here making decisions for them. I don't know how long it takes to pave a road and I don't know what it entails to go into that road. I think we should just let the Engineer make the decision. He is out there and he knows what he can do best. If Isbell Road doesn't get paved this year, the Engineer couldn't get to it this year. Then I should tell the folks at church that we are doing our best. I have been saying it for 16 years now and I will continue to say it. Doing our best, we don't have the money, the weather has done this and that. I think we should not push the Engineer into doing something. I would rather he do a good job than try to do 2 roads and both of them be bad.

Mr. Blakeney: That is why I put this spread sheet together and talk to each of you and you give me your opinions and ideas of what you want on the list, because you have asked me in the past; which roads are the worst and basically what would you recommend. If it was my recommendation with our money situation, I would recommend use the \$125.00 - \$130,000 and pave 2 miles of road so after 5 or 10 years we have 20 or 30 miles of road paved that are falling apart. That is why we always come to this table and let you vote on what roads to pave and go pave it.

Commissioner Corbett: I think you have a list from the Commissioners, now. Since I've been elected in 2012, we picked a year that we didn't pave anything and we had two different years we only paved ½ mile to let the Engineer catch up. I'm ready to move on and get something done.

Mr. Blakeney: The year that we did the ½ mile of road, we had a mile that was carried over from the last year. So, that year we still averaged 2 miles. We have been paving dirt roads pretty much year round, every dry day for the last 8 or 9 years.

Commissioner Corbett: What I'm saying is we haven't been shoving it at you, you saw that we tried to work with that. I made the motion in 2013 to do the ½ mile and it wasn't popular, but we did it. We took 2015 and didn't do anything. Maybe, it was ¼ mile, but we have really dropped it down.

Mr. Blakeney: It's going to be dropped down. I could see on Screws Road, getting out there and with the amount of tree clearing, That eight months could go to nine or ten months. That one mile could take us 1 year.

Commissioner Screws: When you do a road paving project and when it goes through you are going to change that and you are going to pave it as is.

Mr. Blakeney: Again, that will be at the Commission's discretion. If I come back and say that we can't get the right-of-way and we have 12 foot out there and you tell me to pave it; then we will pave it.

Commissioner Screws: I'm for paving it as it is.

Mr. Blakeney: Then, y'all give me 4 votes and we will go out there tomorrow, throw base dirt down and pave away.

Commissioner Screws: What is the difference for driving on the dirt road now at the width that it is?

Mr. Blakeney: The liability. Once you change something to pavement.

Commissioner Screws: Change the speed limit then.

Mr. Blakeney: the liability and me having to go to court because we have killed 2 teenagers driving 70 miles an hour on a paved road that is basically one lane.

Commissioner Screws: If they do 70 on a county road which are 45 MPH, what is the difference?

Mr. Blakeney: That is up to FHWA standards. Again, that is up to y'all. You get 4 votes and I will pave anything you want me to because the liability shifts.

Commissioner Epps: This is the 21st Century. In the 18th Century, no one worried about paving roads, just live in the Country.

Commissioner Corbett: I don't think that is where we are at. I think we are going to keep paving. We have to give the Engineer a sensible direction.

Mr. Blakeney: If we are going to continue to pave roads, I would like for you to give me next year's list, so we will have a change to go out there and do the preliminary engineering, pull the deeds to try to get right-of ways, try to do it the right way and lets put a good road in.

Commissioner Currington: If you are paving dirt roads are we taking care of any of the paved roads now?

Mr. Blakeney: Yes

Commissioner Corbett: There are resurfacing projects in here, as well.

Mr. Blakeney: There are roads all over the county falling apart, because we don't have the money or time to resurface them.

Commissioner Currington: Outside of Hurtsboro there is a paved road that dips and all.

Commissioner Corbett: It is County Road 49, which is on next year's Federal Aid Program.

Mr. Blakeney: I can take you to some paved roads right now that if you drive 30MHP on you might get thrown into the woods. They are bad, we keep patching and they keep falling apart.

Commissioner Corbett: We have not talked about resurfacing. There is a list of resurfacing in the packets, as well. Most are in District 2.

Mr. Blakeney: Commissioner Currington did option to the existing surface treated roads for us to go in and surface treat them. We can do 2 miles for 1 mile of asphalt. There are a lot of roads, but a lot of them are short and in that area.

Commissioner Screws: Also when we started this, we agreed to finish out dirt roads so District 2 pretty much doesn't have any.

Mr. Blakeney: He has two: Little Loop and Rolling Hills. The guy maintains his own driveway.

Commissioner Screws: When Tillman Pugh agreed that he only had a couple more miles of road he agreed and that left the three of us with dirt roads. What is bad for the goose is good for the gander. All I'm saying is that I want some paving done in my district. You want to make the call. I know what road I want to pave and what I've got to give up. But, I want something done to this one.

Commissioner Corbett: That would be fine if he does Carden Road, which is in your district too.

Commissioner Screws: Not my District, that is yours.

Commissioner Reed: Shawn, what do you need from us because we are not getting anywhere?

Mr. Blakeney: I just need for you to pick from this list what you want me to do this year,

Commissioner Screws: Every year we have carry overs so I don't see any need if we just approve this list and what we pick through for this year and what we don't just carry over.

Mr. Blakeney: In the order that it is in?

Commissioner Corbett: Look at that; we started in District 7 last year.

Commissioner Screws: I suggest that he come up with some kind of plan to let us know what District he will start first each year. The only reason we started in District 7 last year is because the agreement was if I gave up my paving money the year before that he would start in District 7 last year and I did that.

Commissioner Corbett: We all gave it up.

Commissioner Screws: We all did. But, the agreement was if we did, because I didn't get anything the year before. We said we would start in District 7, plus I seven tenths of a mile.

Commissioner Corbett: That was because of carry over. You are right.

Commissioner Screws: Because when it rains 5 days I can't get out; the road floods.

Commissioner Corbett: If I'm hearing you right, from this you would do your carry over on Lynn and then you would start on Carden Road. Once Carden Road is done, Gammage Road would be done quickly. Then you would start on Screws Road after that.

Mr. Blakeney: If you did this list you would have about a year between. If you did all of Screws Road, it would take about 2 ½ years.

Commissioner Screws: Be fair. Because, I was first last year. Got to be fair about it and that is why I said we have to come up with a road paving system what District to start each year.

Commissioner Corbett: I make a motion that you finish your carry over on Lynn Road, move to Carden Road, pave the 2.5 of Carden and then move to Isabell and if time permits you move to Screws and Lakeview.

Mr. Blakeney: So you still want a mile of Screws Road, and then a mile of Lakeview. Looking at this list, the next time that anything is added to it is about 2 ½ years from now. That is 29 months' worth of work. There are 13 months before we get to Screws Road.

Commissioner Screws: I will have to wait on Carden; that is 2 1//2 miles.

Commissioner Corbett: But it is how many months? 4 months.

Commissioner Screws: If you look at everybody else you are looking at .7, .8 and I have one mile. If you pull Carden Road up you are looking at 6 miles .

Mr. Blakeney: Then again like the 2 ½ miles of Carden, I can do in 4 months. Where one mile of Screws Road takes 8 months.

Commissioner Screws: The thing that I'm hearing is you don't want to do Screws Road.

Mr. Blakeney: No, if you vote to do it, I will do whatever.

Commissioner Screws: That is what I am hearing, that is the recurring thing. As I have said before, I have waited 10 years to pave my road.

Commissioner Corbett: Have you ever brought it up before?

Commissioner Screws: No, because I have waited.

Commissioner Reed: Commissioner, are you are interested in doing something then go ahead and make a motion. We need to go ahead and move on.

Commissioner Corbett: I will take my motion off the table.

Commissioner Epps: I heard that they began in District 7 last year. It is fair to move on and do this on a rotating basis. Then you start in District 5 or District 6 this year. If you get to District 7; then, you can start on Screws Road.

Commissioner Screws: I'm alright with that.

Commissioner Epps: Ok. Then, the only thing that Shawn needs to know is what District to start in.

Mr. Blakeney: We would start in District 6, because we are still on Lynn Road now.

Commissioner Epps: If you are already out there now, then you continue.

Commissioner Screws: Then you can do Pitts Road after Lynn. I think that with Carden, since it covers both Commissioners, we both should agree. I don't agree. It splits the road, I have half on one side and he has the other and I don't agree then we need to move on.

Commissioner Epps: You are already in District 6 working.

Commissioner Screws: You get two roads at the beginning and he will get another road when you complete Lynn.

Commissioner Corbett: Ok. Then, you have deleted Pitts Road.

Commissioner Screws: Then you move to District 5 and do Isabell and then come back to me. This time, then you can roll over to the next year.

Mr. Blakeney: Then we can begin doing all the preliminary engineering on this. Those 3 roads will be 13 months, so we will be rolling into the next year with Screws Road.

Commissioner Screws: You will be rolling from now on, because you carry over every year.

Mr. Blakeney: This is the first year in 2 years that we have carried anything over. Last year we finished everything on time.

Commissioner Screws: What I am saying is I don't have a problem with my road being rolled over. In all fairness, if I was first last year, then we need some type of system. Whoever was first will drop to the bottom next year and then the next move up.

Mr. Blakeney: Besides the dirt road paving, I'm happy with my budget. I just needed some clarification on the dirt roads; everybody has an opinion on that.

Commissioner Corbett: I took my motion off the table. I'm prepared to wait until Monday to approve it.

Chair Martin requested for the Administrator to discuss the Appropriations.

Administrator Horne explained how a column was added, for a quick reference showing the actual requested appropriation amount versus the proposed amount. The proposed amounts are basically level funded; except for those the Commission has requested a one-time increase. Those are proposed to be reduced back to the original amount prior to the one-time increase.

Commissioner Reed requested to change a couple of the appropriations: United to Save Ourselves changed back to \$10,000 which is what the Commission has given him and Teen University back to \$12,000. There are others he would like to reduce such as the Sports League back to \$15,000 and the Russell County Historic Commission decreased to \$2,000. Commissioner Reed wants to do more for the kids than community and the proposed appropriation for the Historic Commission is too much.

Commissioner Corbett stated that he did not know a lot of the background on United to Save Ourselves. He did read some information for the organization and does not know much than in 2016-2017. The Commission did give them the amounts that Commissioner just stated, but saying the Russell County Historic Commission was not about kids is wrong. It is all about kids and citizens learning the area history. Commissioner Corbett announced that his proposal will be for the Historical Commission to increase their appropriation from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Commissioner Reed discussed what United to Save Ourselves does for the area kids

Commissioner Currington discussed decreasing the \$90,000 appropriation that the Russell County Volunteer Fire Association request to pay the insurance for the fire stations, since legislation has been passed to collect fire dues on property taxes and funding from beer tax.

Commissioner Corbett informed that the County Commission has been paying for their insurance and we want to insure that they maintain insurance on their vehicles, workers compensation for their firefighters. If they are injured the insurance helps them with their bills, takes care of the vehicles and the fire stations. He did call the President of the Fire Association and asked if they were still requesting this appropriation. Mr. Jenkins said they are requesting the appropriation and this amount does not even cover the insurance because it is more than this. If this is

taken away from them all the work that they did to get the funding with the property tax they will have to make his back up.

EMA Director Bob Franklin stated that more of the fire departments are operating with substandard equipment and the little bit of funding they have received isn't making a dent in their equipment. Departments need to build additional stations such as Fort Mitchell is doing now. Take that money away and all the progress is gone.

Commissioner Corbett informed the Commission that now they will be paying insurance premiums with the money they had for progress.

Commissioner Reed stated he did not mind giving them some money but not \$90,000. We need to start cutting.

Commissioner Corbett said they thought that is pretty cheap for all that they do and this is the only contribution the County gives to them at all. If you want to start cutting appropriation begin with some of the little ones that never give us a report, we never hear a word from them, and they just get our money and run.

Victor Cross stated that his contract with the Chamber of Commerce ends December 31, 2017. He informed the Commission that he was not interested in retiring and would like to keep working and wanted to make it known that if the Commission had a need for someone with his qualifications he would be more than happy to work with the Commission. He has been working for Russell County at the Chamber for 26 years. Mr. Cross also submitted a resume and discussed his qualifications.

Mik Cole is requesting to renew her contract with the County. She has been under contract with the County since 2005 as a web designer and media specialist as well as publicist, which has developed into many other things. The only difference in this contract and the 2005 contract is she is requesting \$15. Per hour instead of \$12.50 she is receiving now. She also request \$12.00 for the editorial, photography, media specialist, publications as opposed to \$10 an hour. She stated that others in this field with a comparable education and experience are making \$65.00 an hour. Everything else in the contract is the same.

Administrator Horne asked if Mrs. Cole had sent the contract to the County Attorney for review. She did but has not heard back from him.

Commissioner Corbett motioned to recess the meeting until 3:00p.m. on September 25th. Seconded by Commissioner Currington. The vote was unanimous.