

The Russell County Commission
Proposed Budget
Continuation September 22, 2017
September 25th, 2017
3:00 P.M. EST

The September 22nd Proposed 2017-2018 Budget Meeting was called to order; members present were: Chair Peggy Martin, Vice Chair Larry Screws, Gentry Lee, Carl Currington, Ronnie Reed, Cattie Epps and Chance Corbett. Also present was County Administrator LeAnn Horne and Assistant Administrator Vickie Perry.

A quorum was established.

Administrator Horne reviewed project and appropriation changes made to the budget she presented at the previous meeting:

- Commissioner Screws requested an additional \$10,000 for a walking trail and requested that it be rolled over from this budget year, which would increase his appropriation request from \$10,000 to \$20,000.
- Commissioner Corbett requested \$7,200 for a pole barn for Russell County High School; and \$15,000 for bathroom construction at the Masonic lodge.
- Commissioner Reed asked an appropriation request for Teen University in Phenix City to \$15,000 and United to Save Ourselves to \$10,000.
- Commissioner Currington requested to consider reducing the Volunteer Fire Departments allocations since their revenue is close to \$1 million now.
- Increase Fort Mitchell Historic Commission appropriation to \$15,000.

Commissioner Lee apologized for not being at the last budget meeting. He asked Administrator Horne if any of the changes presented had been voted on at the last meeting.

Administrator Horne stated: No, sir0.

Commissioner Lee made a motion to add changes to the budget. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Lee understood that at the last meeting there had been discussions about the Coroner and Coroner's Deputies salaries. He motioned, at this time, to roll back the Coroner's salary and his Deputies salaries be rolled back to the 2016–2017 salary schedule, plus the regular COLA increase that all other employees received. Seconded by Commissioner Currington. The floor was opened for discussion.

Commissioner Reed asked the Coroner if he had any extra money in his budget for a pay raise.

Coroner Sumbry: The question he had asked of the Commissioners was based on the Department Head Salary scales; or, whatever the Commission says we had in the General Fund where I could get some because I want to know, if not the \$38,000 in

salary I think was proposed, I asked what did the department heads make? Did they make \$47,000. I never felt that I really got an answer for that. I just wanted to be able to talk and find out if it was still \$38,000 like it sounds like it is going to be; or, if so where could we have any wiggle room to work with. I wanted to ask the question but didn't get answered. Am I considered a Department Head; or, also an Elected Official? Why am I not being brought up to \$47,000, Certainly, there could be some negotiations.

Chair Martin: As I understand the legislation action for Russell County, the Coroner is part-time and the salary is set at \$15,000 minimum.

Commissioner Lee: We have raised it over the years. Legislation did give us that authority. We should be asking the Legislature since the Coroner has gotten up to a salary comparable, actually more than 90% of the others in the State. That throws the average off because you have six large cities that require you to be a Medical Doctor to be the Coroner and they make a lot more in salary. That throws the average up, because the Russell County Coroner is above the pay. What I suggest, is that the current Coroner's Legislation be repealed and treated like all other Elected Officials. Legislature would have to approve it each time they wanted the Coroner to have an increase.

Commissioner Lee: My motion is to take the Coroner's salary as it is currently. That is; leave it like it is and give him the raise that everybody else will get.

Chair Martin: Are there any other questions?

Coroner Sumbry: You said the Coroner is part-time; it is not part-time; it is full-time.

Commissioner Lee: It is part-time. Legally, it is part-time. Legally the position is an Elected Official. I'm sure you know why it was set like it is. It was so the Coroner could get insurance and benefits through the County. That is the reason legislation was passed the way it was.

Coroner Sumbry: I don't have a copy with me, but I have it. I will have to address the Administrator is this considered part-time or full-time?

Administrator Horne: The current law does not specify.

Commissioner Reed: I think it was changed from a part-time to full-time position, but he can work at his on pay.

Commissioner Lee: It is just a classification; it doesn't really mean anything. Commissioners are part-time and some Commissioners work 50-60 hours a week and some work 10-12 hours a week.

Commissioner Lee: I have the Senate Bill in front of me and I don't see anywhere that it says it is full-time. I 'don't see where it addresses part-time or full-time.

Commissioner Epps: The Commissioners voted at the Budget Meeting and I may be totally wrong. If I'm wrong, I'm sure Coroner Sumbry can correct me. Didn't the Commission vote that this would be a full-time position, after you came before the Commission with some information that you had gathered?

Coroner Sumbry: As soon as I find the Bill. I don't know verbatim if it says full or part-time. I do have a copy and I will provide it to the Commission.

Commissioner Lee: It's not going to make a difference if it is full-time or part-time. I don't know what you are leading to. It doesn't matter.

Commissioner Epps: It's leading to the discussion that we had on Friday, when you wasn't here.

Coroner Sumbry: It's a big difference being classified as full-time or part-time.

Commissioner Lee: What is the difference though?

Commissioner Reed: Back to the situation, do you have enough money in your budget, extra money to give yourself a pay raise? Can you adjust anything? I just want to know. You can go ahead and just leave this open.

Commissioner Lee: We need to vote. We have to have a budget sometime or another. It doesn't matter, vote it up or down. We haven't given anyone else a big raise like this that I know of.

Administrator Horne: For clarification, on the proposed Coroner's Deputy salary are you saying to roll it back to how it is currently in this year's budget 2016-2017?

Commissioner Lee: Whatever is current right now, plus the COLA raise.

Commissioner Reed: Can the Coroner pay the deputy?

Commissioner Lee: I guess, the Coroner can decide what to pay them. I don't know that the Commission has to do...I don't know how that works as long as it is not exceeding the budgeted amount.

Administrator Horne stated: the Commission approves the salary amount which is included in the salary schedule.

Commissioner Reed: Let the Coroner give himself a pay raise as long as he has it in his budget.

Commissioner Lee: Call for the question.

Administrator Horne polled the Commissioners. The vote was unanimous

Commissioner Currington: I make a motion to approve the appropriations with changes.

Commissioner Epps: I have a question about the appropriations. I'm not ready.

Commissioner Lee: I second.

Commissioner Screws: For clarification, you are saying the changes that were made to the appropriations as of last week; you are going to leave them the way they are?

Commissioner Currington: The way we discussed them last week?

Commissioner Screws: Yes.

Commissioner Currington: Take them the way that we set them up last week.

Commissioner Lee: How was that? I did not know that anything was done last week with appropriations.

Commissioner Corbett: Can you run down that list?

Commissioner Lee: What changes were made that I don't have?

Administrator Horne:

- Commissioner Corbett requested for the Fort Mitchell Historic Park to be increased back from \$10,000 to \$15,000.
- Commissioner Reed requested Teen University to be placed at \$15,000 and United to Save Ourselves at \$10,000

Commissioner Lee: Were those voted on?

Chair Martin: No.

Commissioner Lee: Then, the motion stands just as is.

Commissioner Epps: On appropriations, I see that you all did not add in the Macon-Russell Community Action. They did get the letter in late, I understand. It was sent and the person did send it to every Commissioner. On the budget from last year, Macon-Russell did not get the money that they were allocated. So, I believe she asked in her letter for \$10,000. I will not say to give them the appropriation of \$10,000, but I think we should give them something. They do serve the citizens of Russell County as well. They are trying to keep the agency open. I think that since they did not get anything from last year's appropriation, I would like to add \$5,000 for Macon-Russell Community Action.

Commissioner Lee: Are you making an amendment to my motion?

Commissioner Epps: We are in discussion.

Commissioner Lee; Then my motion has to be voted on.

Commissioner Screw: Currington made the motion.

Commissioner Lee: Well, I seconded it.

Commissioner Corbett: I would like to ask Commissioner Epps. Is this still operated out of Tuskegee? Who has the funds and who is coordinating the funds? You stated; Friday that it was disorganized and I want to make sure if we are going to put our money into something.

Commissioner Epps: They have an Interim Director now, since the Director has left. When you come in behind someone, you have to pick up and learn what has been left off. That is why the letter is late.

Commissioner Corbett: It is housed in Tuskegee and the money is managed out of Tuskegee/ Macon County as well. Do we know who the people are that are managing the organization?

Commissioner Epps: I'm on the Board. It has always been housed in Tuskegee and the only thing that Russell is part of is LIHEAP program for low income.

Commissioner Corbett: Will that \$10,000 come back to Russell County?

Commissioner Epps: Russell County receives 60% of Federal funds that goes into the Light/Heat program.

Commissioner Corbett: I'm talking about the \$10,000 that you are asking us to put in. Will it come back to Russell County; or, will the \$10,000 be split between us and Macon County?

Commissioner Epps: If we proposed the \$10,000 we can, I'm assuming, we can designate that it be spent here with the LIHEAP program.

Commissioner Corbett: Would it be out of line for you to bring that back to the Commission and let us vote on it at the next meeting; when, you know that for sure. I'm not comfortable asking that we approve money going to Tuskegee not knowing if it is coming back to this County.

Commissioner Epps: The service is done out of here for the LIHEAP Program.

Commissioner Reed: I'm familiar with what is going on with Macon/Russell because I have been to their meetings a number of times. They spent a lot of money. A ballpark figure, they probably give away about \$40,000 or more back to this County paying their bills.

Commissioner Epps: Russell County gets \$60,000 from ADECA which is given to Russell County for the LIHEAP Program. Russell County gets the majority of the federal funds given to Macon/ Russell.

Commissioner Lee: This can be changed later. There seems to be a lot of questions.

Commissioner Epps: The first year that they asked for funding they sent an audit report to us.

Administrator Horne: We have the agencies audits or financial reports in our office that each entity sent in with their funding request. Father Tom recommended not funding Macon Russell at the meeting earlier. I will check and see if they turned in an audit.

Commissioner Epps: I would like to know, last year TEARS asked for \$945 and this year they are asking for \$19,000. Personally, I think that is a big jump.

Commissioner Lee: Commissioner Epps, the motion on the floor is to pay TEARS \$945, like they received last year. The proposed is the motion that Commissioner Currington made. The proposed amounts are in the center column.

Chair Martin: They are level funded?

Commissioner Lee: Most of the appropriations are level funded.

Commissioner Screws: If I understand this correctly, New Life Teen Center and United to Save Ourselves are level.

Commissioner Reed: No; we have already done that Commissioner Screws. Call for the question.

Chair Martin: Asked if the American Legion is level funded?

Commissioner Lee: It is level funded all the way down the list. If there are any changes, we can come back after the budget and change it after it is approved.

Chair Martin asked Administrator to poll the Commission. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Lee discussed a letter he had received and there has not been action taken yet for a \$600 one time pay increase for Retirees; that is in the form of a motion. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. After reading the letter Commissioner Lee amended his motion to say "According to the law that was passed by the Legislature it would vary between \$300 and \$600. He moved for that to be approved. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Lee: I do not think that the Commission really needs to get into it at this time; we can do this after the budget is approved. The only thing left is the dirt roads that will be paved which can be done at a later date. I motion the budget be approved as it was presented to the Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Lee: I move to approve the salary schedule as presented and according to the budget that was just approved. Seconded by Commissioner Corbett.

Commissioner Reed: Are all the salaries a 2% increase pay raise.

Administrator Horne: That is correct for majority salaries except those adjusted as presented to you during the budget meeting by department heads or myself.

Commissioner Lee: I understood there were some salaries that needed to be corrected too and that has been done.

Administrator Horne: Yes, County Revenue is down as I reported in the Ad Valorem. The average increase is a 2% COLA for regular county employees.

Administrator Horne polled the Commission. Motion approved.

The budget meeting was adjourned.