

Lamar County Commissioners Special Called Meeting
Large Conference Room Administration Building
July 22, 2010
10:00 A.M.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Lamar, State of Georgia, held a Special Called Meeting in the Large Conference Room at the Administration Building on Thursday, July 22, 2010 at 10:00 A.M. Present for the meeting were Chairman Jay Matthews, Vice-Chairman Bennie Horton, Commissioner George R. Brown, Commissioner Jimmy Hearn, and Commissioner Nancy M. Thrash.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jay Matthews.

The pledge of allegiance was said by everyone. The invocation was said by Vice-Chairman Bennie Horton.

The meeting began with discussions on cuts to the 2010 Budget. Vice-Chairman Bennie Horton said that he has gone over the overall structure of the budget and concluded that we do not need to have furlough days nor any layoffs. We do need to raise the millage to be operational to pay for the services in the county. He noted that Lamar County has the lowest millage rate in the surrounding counties.

Commissioner George R. Brown stated that Lamar County's millage is lower than Monroe County's. Their millage rate is 9.50 and they have a good revenue base which is plant Scherer. Commissioner Brown suggested not paying employees for the holidays which would approximately save \$130,000 for the year but only \$13,500.00 a day on the holidays.

Commissioner Jimmy Hearn commented that we have kept the millage rate low and he has studied the budget for three or four hours and the easy way would be to raise the millage rate. Commissioner Brown suggested that we can start with a low millage rate increase and then ease into a higher millage rate, by doing this the county won't have to go into \$1.5 million dollar hole using the line of credit. The inmate cost went up and the case load went up but the revenue went down.

Commissioner Nancy M. Thrash stated that she is not going to vote on raising the millage rate. She suggested combining some departments, unfunded mandates by the state need to be sent back to the state to let them know that the county cannot afford them. DFACS and the Health Departments are state programs. She suggested cutting the spending at the Old Jail Museum and look harder as to where cuts can be made. It was suggested to move the Old Jail Museum to the Service Center, have the EMA report to the Fire Department. The Chairman suggested that cutting out the Old Jail Museum and the Health Department will save the county approximately \$200,000. They suggested that they would like to sit down with the Board of Education to see if they would agree to give back a mill and the county will increase one mill. There needs to be money to operate the county at least six months down the road.

It was suggested by Tax Assessors Board Chairman John Hamrick that the new laws that are in effect when a home sells, the fair market value will be the price of the sale and not the actual value of the home that is on the books.

Public Comments

The Public comments sign up sheet names were read for the citizens to speak. Mr. Clay Lovejoy stated that he was upset when he came in but now feels differently because he sees how hard the Commissioners are working and how much they care for the people in this county.

Mr. Hal Williams appreciates the job that the Commissioners are doing. He stated that they should have raised the millage rate over the years and he thinks that there are not enough cuts to make ends meet.

Mr. Terry Turner stated that new regulations will be imposed and things will be changed in the year 2011. He stated that there will be less houses to build than what we have.

Newly elected Commissioner Charles Glass stated that the cuts are going to be unpopular and the people are struggling now. He said that he received some suggestions to add a new SPLOST tax on the people.

Former Commissioner Gene Hardwick stated that he is not critical and understands where the commissioners are. He suggested a Saturday workshop. He wants to revisit the fire station because he thinks that it is overrun by 100%. He suggested looking at furloughs and increasing the millage rate by one mill and look at all of the options to include reducing expenses.

Tax Assessor Board Chairman John Hamrick stated that he can't see laying off county employees before getting with the school board. He asked are you all aware of what one or two days furlough a month is going to do to a family?

It was suggested by Chairman Matthews that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 27, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. and these new cuts need to be in the paper and emailed to all department heads and constitutional officers. County Administrator Wayne Patterson will call Dr. Truby to see if he can attend Tuesday's meeting at 6:30 p.m. Commissioner George R. Brown made a motion for the Board to recess at 12:00 noon and return to the meeting at 2:00 p.m. Commissioner Nancy M. Thrash seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous decision.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairman Jay Matthews. The discussion was in reference to Budget Amendments. It was suggested that the Recreation Department can be operated by an association and the county would provide the building and facilities. The parents association can possibly start during the football season. The county will pick up the tabs for the balls and referees and the association can have cake and donut sales.

The 2011 cuts suggested are DFACS, Health Department, Old Jail Museum to move to the Service Center. The Service Center needs a new roof. Uniforms will not be in the budget on next year and have the employees pay for a portion of their insurance. The Senior Center needs to generate more revenue, Public Transportation escape clause will need to be checked into; a suggested cut to the Public Transportation is \$1835.00. The Service Center Building has two groups moving out. It was suggested that the Hope Tree and the Summer Food pay rent. DFACS cut will be 25,000.00, the Public Health Administration and mental Health and Retardation cut \$23,000.00; the county pays \$135,000.00 will leave a balance of \$121,500.00. The Public Works Director is essential and the slot for the Public Works Director position will not be filled but will modify their budget. It was suggested that the commissioners put in a real paving plan with the New SPLOST monies.

It was suggested that the EMA budget be reduced by \$4000.00. Commissioner George R. Brown stated that the EMA Director is protected under State Law 327, and the county needs an EMA Director for records and training. It was stated that when EMA Director Billy Campbell retires Ms. Becky Martin will become the new EMA Director. Ms. Martin needs a few more months of training before she takes on this position. The PPA monies received can go toward salaries for the employees in the EMA Department.

The County Coroner/Medical Examiner, Probate Court and Magistrate have looked at their budgets and presented their cuts. Ben Henson with the EMS has looked at saving the county some money with a long term contract. It was suggested that the Traverse/Grand Jury cut the number of citizens that have to serve. It was suggested to talk to Superior Court Clerk Frank to suggest that the jurors get paid fifteen dollars for a half day and thirty dollars for a full day.

The Conservation Administration has cut \$3000.00 from its budget. The UGA needs to be cut, the Recreation Department needs to be funded by the Parents Association by October, Building and Zoning and Code Enforcement has cut budget. It was suggested to cut the Industrial Development Authority's \$65,000.00. The power plant that will sit on fifty acres will help generate revenue in the year 2012. The Chamber of Commerce is different from the IDA. Former Commissioner Gene Hardwick named some of the businesses that have been brought into the county and created jobs. Some of those businesses named is the Aviation Auto Salvage, Greenco, Aircraft on Chappell Mill Road, Standard Door and Jordan Lumber Company. A lot of people do not know what goes on with the Industrial Development Authority. Chairman Matthews stated that these cuts will approximately be an additional \$357,345 plus the \$523,416 giving a total amount of cuts \$880,761 for 2011. After much discussion about the IDA it was agreed upon that the IDA goes back in at \$65,000. There being no further business to discuss at 4:05 p.m. Commissioner Jimmy Hearn made a motion for the meeting to adjourn. Commissioner Nancy M. Thrash seconded the motion. The decision was unanimous.

LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

JAY MATTHEWS, CHAIRMAN

BENNIE HORTON, VICE-CHAIRMAN

GEORGE R. BROWN, MEMBER

JIMMY HEARN, MEMBER

ATTEST:

WAYNE PATTERSON
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

NANCY M. THRASH, MEMBER