

Continued
2012-2013 Proposed Budget Meeting
September 24, 2012
5:00 P.M. EDT.

The recessed proposed budget meeting was called to order. Members present were Chair Martin, Vice Chair Epps, Gentry Lee, Tillman Pugh, Ronnie Reed, Cattie Epps, Mervin Dudley and Larry Screws. Also present was County Attorney Kenneth Funderburk and County Administrator LeAnn Horne, who kept the minutes.

A quorum was established.

The salary schedule discussion was continued from the previous meeting. Commissioner Screws made a proposal for the salary schedule since there was a conflict in the Engineering Department and also the Coroner's salary request. He proposed to increase the assistant engineer (Shawn Blakeney) salary \$5,786, which will bring that salary total to \$67,089. The second engineering assistant (Brandon Bundy) will be increased \$3,377 bringing his total salary to \$58,327. The Coroner's salary should be increased \$9,543 which was included in his budget and all other salaries will remain as in the proposed salary schedule adjustment for 2012 - 2013.

Commissioner Lee stated since he heard a proposal and not a motion; he will make a motion to replace the 3% salary increase with a \$1,200 across the board salary increase, per year, per employee. Seconded by Commissioner Pugh. District 1 (Lee) voted, yes; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, no; District 4 (Reed) voted, no; District 5 (Epps) voted, no; District 6 (Dudley) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) voted, no. Four (4) no votes and three (3) yes votes the motioned died.

Commissioner Screws motioned to increase one of the assistant engineers to \$5,786 which will bring his salary to \$67,089 and \$3,377 to the other assistant engineer which will raise his salary to \$58,327. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. District 1 (Lee) voted, no; District 2 (Pugh) voted, yes; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6 (Dudley) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. Six (6) yes votes and one (1) no vote; the motioned failed.

Commissioner Screws motioned to leave the Coroner's salary as it was proposed in the 2012-2013 budget which is an increase of \$9,543. Seconded by Commissioner Epps.

Commissioner Lee stated he could not vote for one elected official receiving an increase that much more than other elected officials. That will also make the Russell County Coroner making \$10,000 more than the Lee County Coroner, who has twice as many calls. Commissioner Lee was in favor of the Coroner getting the 3% like the other elected official and employees.

Commissioner Screws acknowledged that the Lee County Coroner is part-time and our Coroner is full time.

Commissioner Lee specified our Coroner is part-time with full-time benefits. The only difference is what you call his position. He only has half of the calls that Lee County has.

Commissioner Pugh informed the Commission that when the Coroner's bill went from a part-time, technically, to full-time so he could receive full-time benefits. He is still considered part-time.

The Commission was polled: District 1 (Lee) voted, no; District 2 (Pugh) voted, no; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6 (Dudley) voted, no; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. Four (4) yes votes and three (3) no votes; the motioned passed.

Commissioner Screws motioned all other salary increases will remain the same as indicated in the proposed salary schedule adjustment for the 2012-2013, excluding the Coroner and the Assistant Engineers. Seconded by Commissioner Reed.

After discussion of the salaries, Commissioner Screws amended his motion all salary increases remain the same as indicated on the proposed salary schedule adjustment for 2013 to include the 3% for those who did not receive one-time adjustments or vacant. Seconded by Commissioner Reed.

Administrator Horne clarified the 3% raised will not be given to those that have one-time salary adjustments, vacant positions or employees that are not permanent.

The Commission was polled. District 1 (Lee) voted, no; District 2 (Pugh) voted, no; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6 (Dudley) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. Five (5) yes votes and two (2) no votes; the motion passed.

Administrator Horne reminded the Commission that salary adjustments were not arbitrarily placed in the budget. They were requested by department heads and were funded from the savings of county budgets that the departments. It was my responsibility to present those requests to the Commission.

Commissioner Pugh stated that as an Administrator those are requests. They are not mandates on this Commission. Once you place them in the budget, they almost become a mandate in the budget. In my personal opinion, they should not have been put in there, they should have let the Commissioners that wanted those raises bring it out and they could see how they are picking and choosing people for raises, which is unfair to other who are only getting 3%.

Administrator Horne replied that she understood, but she wanted to let you know since it was referencing her and those were requests from each department head which has come before the Commission.

Commissioner Pugh replied just because they give you a request, you don't have to place it the budget. If you have to put it in there, you need to put it in and let the department heads bring it to the Commission.

Administrator Horne said she would be glad to do that, but again these were funded from the saving from the county budgets, which all of the department heads worked hard to save money to return to the reserve fund. I want to thank the department heads for doing that throughout this year and those are the benefits the employees have received for saving the money.

Commissioner Pugh stated my comments on that are straight forward, and I think that some department heads seek ways of around fairness to other employees. Once they get it put in the budget, we have to pull it out. These should be things that should be put in and reasons given for each one.

Commissioner Epps discussed the proposed salary schedule and asked about Commissioner Pugh's statement that the Administrator should not place the salary request in the budget.

Commissioner Pugh clarified that if the increases go above the 3% for the rest of them it should not be allowed to be included in the budget. Those salaries should be brought up on an individual basis and why they should receive the increase. That would be more openness and fairness to the process.

Commissioner Epps replied that maybe she is misunderstanding the word proposed. That does not mean those individuals would receive the increase, this means they were proposed. That meant items given to the Administrator from the department heads are up for discussion. Also it was stated individuals up for one-time increases were due to completion of education and certifications. It was then left up to the entire Commission whether or not we would accept the proposed increases or not. The Commission has accepted the proposals from the department heads and administration.

Commissioner Pugh stated he understands the process. Engineering increases were discussed as other special increases should have been instead of grouping those together. Increases are something that should be put in not something that is a proposal. They should be requests.

Commissioner Epps reminded that when the Administrator presented the salary schedule she did explain that the increases were due to completion of studies or promotions.

Commissioner Pugh stated he understood that, but there needs to be an explanation of whether the increases are due to a higher degree or certification in their job skills that warrant a raise.

Commissioner Lee clarified if a department head wanted an increase for an employee then they should stand up and explain why they should have the increase. It could be done without calling names; it can be by naming the position.

Commissioner Dudley explained this issue is the reason for a true Personnel Department with a director that would work with the department heads for evaluation of increases to employees.

Commissioner Epps agreed with Commissioner Dudley's statement, but since there is not one, the department heads knows who does the work and who they can depend on.

Commissioner Dudley recognized Extension Office Director Ted Gilbert who requested additional funding up to the level of \$47,000 to enable the Extension Office to add a position of 4H Agents Assistant. This is a part-time position without benefits. This will help this region expand the limited 4H program now in existence. The agent will be able to go to all local schools whose youth will reap benefits from this program. The additional amount Mr. Gilbert requests is \$3,500. Commissioner Dudley motioned to approve the additional \$3,500 if there is money in the budget to comply with Mr. Gilbert's request. Commissioner Reed seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Dudley motioned to approve the 2012-2013 budget. Seconded by Commissioner Reed. District 1 (Lee) voted, no; District 2 (Pugh) abstained; District 3 (Martin) voted, yes; District 4 (Reed) voted, yes; District 5 (Epps) voted, yes; District 6 (Dudley) voted, yes; District 7 (Screws) voted, yes. 5 yes votes, 1 no vote and 1 abstention; the budget passed. Commissioner Lee stated for the record that he counted by taking the 3% instead of the \$1,200 per employee, 188 employees will take home less money.

Commissioner Lee motioned to adjourn the budget meeting

The meeting was adjourned.