

THE JANUARY TERM HELD ON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JANUARY 2014

The County Commission convened at 9:05 a.m., pursuant to adjournment on January 7, 2014. Present: Dan Colbert-Presiding Commissioner, Eugene Galloway- Associate Commissioner District 1, Matt Bass-Associate Commissioner District 2, Crystal Hall, County Clerk, the following proceedings were held:

Invocation given by Commissioner Bass.

**2014 Budget Hearing**

The following were in attendance at the 2014 budget hearing: Larry Tucker, Julie Rodgers, Dottie Crenshaw, Lisa Sitler, Bob Padella, Rodney Huckelberry, Deanna Dickmeyer, Gary Grunick, Libby Grunick, Chris Ebert, Sue Lister, Jerry Fox, Clayton Duff, Bob Simmons, Kevin Bishop, and John Cottle.

Crystal Hall, County Budget Officer presented the Commissioners and Deanna Dickmeyer, Auditor budget binders with the complete printout of the proposed 2014 budget for the County. Packets containing the 2014 budget message, budgets requested summary for all funds, 2013 activity of unbudgeted accounts, revenues held in treasury report, funds held in treasury report, and 2013 Recap reports were given to all in attendance. Hall offered to email the entire document to anyone who desired an electronic copy.

Commissioner Colbert reviewed the information contained in the budget packets which were handed out, reviewing budget requests and general revenue fund balances. Commissioner Colbert offered that the fund balances for general revenue and Road and Bridge finished 2013 with a greater balance at the end of the year than at the beginning and have steadily increased in the past four years and complimented the Assessor, Kevin Bishop for the healthy fund balance that is now in the assessment fund. Commissioner Colbert reviewed the special funds and balances and gave the attendees a brief explanation of what each special fund is for. Commissioner Colbert explained the BRO program which is used to replace bridges in the County with Federal dollars. The County intends to complete 4 bridge replacements projects in 2014 utilizing the BRO program, two of which will be paid for with County funds using the soft match credit. Commissioner Colbert reviewed the Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) funds and balances. Commissioner Colbert reviewed the 2013 recap report, and expanded on some of the highlights of 2013. The Commission took a proactive approach to Economic Development in 2013 by hiring the first full time Economic Development Director for the County. The Industrial Development Authority (IDA) has committed to a 20% investment towards the 2014 budget of the Economic Development Department. The Commission and the IDA believe in expanding the tax base instead of raising taxes. This commitment by the IDA and the Commission is a collaborative effort to bring economic growth to the County and its residents. The 911 center has been combined with Emergency Management Services and anticipates bringing in much needed EMPG grant revenue. It is possible that the grant will reimburse up to 50% for Emergency services. The need for legislation to be passed to charge cell phone subscribers a fee for 911 services continues to be a concern for the 911 Center as land lines continue to decline. The 911 Center handled approximately 80,000 calls in 2013, 70-80% of the call volume were made from cell phones, which the center receives no user fees from cell phone users. The County Road and Bridge fund will pay to replace bridges on Sand Run and Quarry Roads at an estimated cost of \$650,000.00. In reviewing the Law Enforcement Trust Fund, Commissioner Colbert recognized Sheriff John Cottle for his efforts in finding additional avenues of revenue and managing expenses for the Sheriff's Office. Cottle has cut meal costs from \$1.50 per meal to \$0.90 per meal. Commissioner Colbert commented on the employees at the Sheriff's office who made a commitment to this County and took a 5% pay cut 5 years ago, those employees will be getting their 5% restored in 2014.

Commissioner Colbert then opened the floor for discussion. Sue Lister made a comment that she feels that there should be more publicity for budget hearings for the 2015 budget. Rodney Huckelberry stated he was present for the 2014 budget hearing and felt it wasn't much of a hearing, due to the lack of attendance. Mr. Huckelberry added he was curious as to the goals of the Economic Development department and how the Commission arrived with the \$150,000.00 budget for that department. Larry Tucker, Economic Development Director is a professional economic development director and feels this is the amount needed to run this department in the initial stages. Bob Padella asked how the newly formed positions have

impacted the salaries of other existing departments. Commissioner Colbert responded that this has no impact on other departments, and could be construed as an investment in the County. Rodney Huckelberry asked why the amount of utilities and staff requested for Emergency Services had changed from the original budget hearing. Commissioner Colbert explained that this is because of the EMPG grant. The utilities had originally fallen under the building and grounds budget and were moved to Emergency Management for reimbursement reasons for the grant. The additional staff is being added to Emergency Management due to the need for staff in that department, and half of the salary is reimbursed through the grant. Deanna Dickmeyer added that getting half back from the grant is not a guarantee. Sue Lister inquired about new hires for 2014 and how new hires affect the health insurance. Lister also asked how is it decided who gets new hires and who does not. Commissioner Colbert offered that hiring is based upon the expectation of a return on investment. For example, the Sheriff is adding a new transport driver, which is justified based upon the expected transport income. The Commission is adding the staff for Emergency Management Services because Julie Rodgers is overloaded as an administrative assistant for both Economic Development and Emergency Management. Road and bridge is adding two new employees for a total of 23 employees total to cover 480 miles of road. Commissioner Colbert added, the Commission is putting the dollars where it does the most good for the County. Gary Grunick questioned why there are so many attorneys in the Prosecutor's Office, and it was explained that this is due to population growth. It was also pointed out that staffing levels within the Prosecutor's office are at or below those in similar counties. Rodney Huckelberry raised the issue of staff for the Auditor. Chris Ebert asked if the Auditor was the only Elected Official who doesn't have an assistant. Commissioner Colbert offered that the Commission does not have an assistant and that they have allocated \$20,000.00 in this budget for the Auditor to have temporary staffing to help the Auditor complete the County inventory, which is covered in the first paragraph of duties in the state statutes for the County Auditor. The Commission has repeatedly asked the Auditor for a complete list of inventory, three years into her term as Auditor, this is still not completed. Deanna Dickmeyer stated that she had extra money in her 2013 budget which she did not use, which allowed her to hire a part time employee to help her to begin the inventory process. Dickmeyer states that her part time employee has been working three days a week, but might be leaving soon as she is looking for full time employment. Dickmeyer has currently completed inventory of all departments except the Collector, Road and Bridge and the Sheriff. Clayton Duff stated that all elected officials need to work together for the County to grow and stated that the people voted for Deanna to do her job. Commissioner Galloway reinforced what Commissioner Colbert explained earlier, that the Commission is giving the Auditor \$20,000.00 for temporary staffing.

Commissioner Colbert thanked all of the elected officials for their diligence in keeping departments under budget and being good stewards of the taxpayer's money. Dottie Crenshaw thanked the Commissioners for their cooperative efforts with her office.

Commissioner Galloway made a motion to approve the 2014 budget as presented by Crystal Hall, Budget Officer. Commissioner Bass second. The ayes carried the motion.

There being no other business before the County Commission at this time, the meeting thereupon was adjourned until Monday, January 13, 2014 at 9:00 a.m.

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Crystal M. Hall  
County Clerk

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Daniel H. Colbert  
Presiding Commissioner

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EuGene Galloway  
Associate Commissioner District I

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Matt Bass  
Associate Commissioner District II