

**EDDY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING
August 21, 2018**

BE IT REMEMBERED that the Eddy County Board of Commissioners held a special meeting at the Fire Safety Complex on August 21, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. Crockett called the meeting to order.

PRESENT:

SUSAN CROCKETT	CHAIR, DISTRICT 5
JAMES WALTERSCHEID	VICE-CHAIR, DISTRICT 1
STELLA DAVIS	COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 4
JON HENRY	COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 2
LARRY WOOD	COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 3
RICK RUDOMETKIN	COUNTY MANAGER
KENNEY RAYROUX	ASSISTANT COUNTY MANAGER
GEMMA FERGUSON	ASSESSOR
MELISSA WASHBURN	CHIEF DEPUTY ASSESSOR
LAURIE PRUITT	TREASURER
MARK CAGE	SHERIFF
ROBIN VAN NATTA	COUNTY CLERK
DARLENE ROSPRIM	CHIEF DEPUTY CLERK
GAY WEST	ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
ROBERTA SMITH	FINANCE DIRECTOR
JESSICA STYGAR	ASSISTANT FINANCE DIRECTOR
BILLY MASSINGILL	WARDEN
MARIA MALDONADO-MERJIL	DETENTION ADMIN ASSISTANT
ROXANN BRANNON	HR DIRECTOR
ANNA VASQUEZ	ASSISTANT HR DIRECTOR
CHARLIE POWELL	SAFETY OFFICER
CAROL HENNINGTON	IT DIRECTOR
SHARON DODSON	ASSISTANT IT DIRECTOR
STEVE MCCROSKEY	COUNTY PLANNER
BRIAN STEPHENS	FACILITIES DIRECTOR
WESLEY HOOPER	COMMUNITY SERVICES
RAY ROMERO	PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
CHRISTINE MCCROSKEY	PUBLIC WORKS FINANCIAL OFFICER
JOSHUA MACK	FIRE MARSHAL/FIRE SERVICE DIRECTOR
TRAVIS OLBERT	TRAINING OFFICER
JESSICA ONSUREZ	CARLSBAD CURRENT ARGUS

TIMED AGENDA

9:00 A.M.:

- 1. PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:** *(THREE MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER PERSON) (WE REQUEST ALL COMMENTS BE RESPECTFUL AND COURTEOUS IN NATURE)* None.

TRAILING AGENDA:

1. SPECIAL WORKSHOP:

a. DISCUSSION, DIRECTION AND DECISIONS ON COUNTY PRIORITIES, ELECTED OFFICIALS & DEPARTMENT HEADS' NEEDS, & FINANCIAL OPTIONS – RICK J RUDOMETKIN:

Rudometkin stated this was not a budget meeting. He stated there was approximately \$5.9M surplus from last years' budget which could be made available if the commission approved. This meeting was for all of the departments to present the needs not addressed in the current budget. Rudometkin suggested partnering with the cities in the county on special projects. It was suggested that the monies given be specific to Fire and EMS services in Artesia and Carlsbad. The meeting was also to consider funding and revenue options to fund the needs in the county.

Rayroux reported the mil rate for property tax in Eddy County was 5.545 for residential and 7.5 for commercial properties set in 1988. Lea, Chaves and other surrounding counties had a much higher commercial tax rate.

Henry reported last month the oil and gas companies had sent \$112M to the state with \$1.8M being Eddy County's portion.

Smith stated her understanding of this meeting was what to do with the surplus. She didn't think we should be having this meeting since the budget had already been passed. She suggested saving the surplus; but if going to spend the money it be spent on one-time purchases. The personnel needs should be addressed in the next budget.

Crockett sent an e-mail to the BOCC asking them to come with an idea of what they wanted to do with the surplus funds and a plan on moving forward.

Henry stated he agreed with Smith regarding not spending the surplus on re-occurring expenses. He stated the salaries of the elected officials needed to be addressed and questioned if the commissioner's salaries could be addressed separately from the others, since the commissioners usually have other jobs. He stated he wanted to work on getting a better return on our investment from the State regarding oil and gas revenues. Henry's priorities were roads and safety. He was interested in bonding for funding of those priorities.

Walterscheid stated he was interested in learning more about impact fees. He felt the frac sand companies had a huge impact on our roads and didn't feel they were helping monetarily to fix them. Walterscheid asked staff to request for money from the companies. He felt roads were a priority.

Davis agreed with Henry and didn't want to spend the surplus on re-occurring expenses. Her number one priority was roads and safety. She also would like to see the county hire an oil and gas liaison. She had considered toll roads or a

GRT to generate some revenue. She had concerns about the debt service that would come with bonding. She did not want to raise property tax. Davis stated Representative Harper would be introducing new legislation that would address the GRT in the state. She stated she was in favor of increasing the cities allotment of monies to be directed to Fire and EMS Services.

Wood stated he felt the voters would have to see the need before approving a bond. He agreed with Smith.

Crockett stated her priorities were roads, safety and employees. She stated the employees were the backbone of the County and felt they deserved a COLA. Crockett stated they could not do their job without them.

Mack asked for an increase in wages, and suggested bonds some long term and some with sunset clauses. He stated he saw priorities as roads, detention, and the administration building. Mack stated partnering with industry could certainly benefit both entities. He stated that there were less volunteers to respond to fires as they all had full-time jobs.

Cage stated he felt his request was futile because only two commissioners had mentioned his office as a priority. He was losing employees to the Carlsbad and Hobbs Police Departments because of the discrepancy in pay. He was bringing in revenue to the area by having a guest speaker for a special presentation. He was going to carry the Drug Task Force for the whole county. He was asking for a 30% raise over a three-year period which would amount to \$1.2M. He also stated the parking lot at his office needed paving, along with security fencing at the courthouse for the judges could be addressed as one-time expenses. Cage was willing to do whatever he could to get raises for his employees. He stated the City of Carlsbad was fixing to lower the PERA contribution which would also be an increase in the pay to their officers. Crockett asked how effective the bonus incentive was as there had been 4 recipients who had received the money and had since left employment. Should the incentive pay be done away with? Walterscheid asked about the difference in the county and city PERA contributions. Davis asked if the employees receiving the sign on bonus had to stay with the county for a certain length of time. Cage said they did not and contracts regarding the length of employment were un-enforceable to his knowledge.

Ferguson stated her needs included air conditioning, and two additional appraisers recommended by the State Property Tax Department. She also needed to move the two employees who were currently being paid out of her 1% fund to be paid out of the general fund. She would like to hire one appraiser in 2018-19 and the other in 2019-20 fiscal years. Ferguson asked them to consider a COLA and raises for the elected officials. She stated raising only the commercial property taxes would be helpful and make Eddy County comparable to Lea and Chaves Counties. Washburn stated they had five appraisers assessing 53K parcels and challenged the 5 commissioners to imagine that work load. They had two appraisers currently in training.

Romero presented a list of bare minimum one-time expenses. He stated he currently had four frozen positions. His list of expenses was attached to these minutes.

Pruitt stated she was in favor of a COLA and felt her employees deserved it. She observed people having difficulty paying their taxes and felt that increasing the mil rate would only increase their burden. She was not in favor of that solution. She supported a GRT and felt a bond should be taken out to construct a new administration building.

Stephens informed the commissioner that \$700K of his budget was for utilities. He went from three groundskeepers down to one and was using a maintenance employee to help with that. He asked the commission to consider adding a custodian supervisor position along with another custodian. He felt this could help him better run his department. He also stated if the state would do away with the prevailing wage on projects that could save the county large sums of money. Davis thanked Stephens and Massingill for the excellent job they did on getting the Roger Sawyers Park ready for the dedication. She stated there would be a job fair on September 20, and thought some retirees might be interested in working for facilities. Stephens stated an option to consider on new buildings might be to have an outside entity who was not subject to the prevailing wage build for the county to lease.

Hooper stated a liaison would be a huge addition to the county. They could lobby for grants and facilitate problems and help with communication between the county, public and the companies. He stated getting a grant for the overpass would cost approximately \$3M to \$4M with a 10% match from the county. He was working the NMDOT, the BNSF railroad, and the cities for planning of construction phase as a partnership match of \$350K for professional services. Code Enforcement had moved out to fire services and could use 2-3 employees in that position. Walterscheid asked if people were keeping up with the rural addressing signs. Hooper stated charging for the signs helped with the budgeting. Davis asked how they could help with railroad involvement.

Smith stated as far as funding she supported a GRT and possibly rotating bonding.

Hennington stated her department supported the entire county and as other departments grew so should IT. She was in favor of a COLA.

Brannon stated the county employed great people who were asked to do a lot on a shoestring budget. She was in favor of a GRT. Wood agreed a GRT was the best way to increase funding.

Van Natta asked for internal equity in her departments. Employees were indeed the backbone of the county. She stated roads were a re-occurring expense.

Davis agreed Eddy County had the best employees and was in favor of a COLA. She suggested re-visiting the pay schedule. She had supported the GRT two

years ago and would support it again. Davis stated it needed to be explained in depth. There was a lot of work to be done and didn't know how it was going to get paid for.

Massingill stated the detention was designed in a way that required quite a few employees. He needed his positions unfrozen.

Rayroux stated the commissioners had heard a lot.

Crockett stated she had heard from several employees that this commission had difficulty making decisions which bothered her.

Davis stated she would support a COLA, elected officials' salaries, the request from public works for equipment, unfreezing positions, the oil and gas liaison, and detention needs.

Walterscheid was in favor of unfreezing the four public works positions and giving the three or four custodian positions to facilities. He wasn't sure about raises just for the Sheriff's Department but felt raises revolved around the whole county and needed to be reviewed.

Henry was frustrated about the statement of not making decisions. He felt they had made decisions, sometimes when they shouldn't have. He was not happy about the departments coming little by little to request their needs. He would like to see a plan and how to execute such plan. Henry wanted to address the issues. His desire was to obtain more money from the State. He felt oil and gas was paying their fair share. He felt maybe partnering with the cities to help pay for the liaison position would be an option.

Crockett stated she would support elected officials increases, COLA, roads, unfreezing all positions and the Sheriff's requests.

Davis agreed with Crockett. She would vote for a bond and GRT and agreed it was not the oil and gas companies' responsibility to pay for the roads.

Rudometkin stated sometime having "skin in the game" helped.

Crockett suggested the finance committee address the pay system to include input from the HR department.

2. **ADJOURN:** At 1:29 p.m. Walterscheid moved, seconded by Davis to adjourn the meeting. Voting yes: Crockett, Walterscheid, Henry, Wood and Davis. Passed 5-0.

EDDY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

CHAIR: _____

ATTEST: _____

DATE: _____