

DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

EUGENE C. THACH, PRESIDENT, PRESIDING

August 17, 2000

A. CALL TO ORDER

The August 17, 2000, meeting of the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Supervisor Eugene C. Thach of DeSoto County.

Chief Deputy Charles Brown of the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office was present and did open the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors meeting in a regular session to hear any and all business to come before the Board. The following were present:

Supervisor Jessie Medlin-----District 1
Supervisor Eugene C. Thach----- District 2
Supervisor Gerald Clifton-----District 3
Supervisor John Caldwell-----District 4
Supervisor Tommy Lewis-----District 5
W. E. "Sluggo" Davis-----Chancery Clerk
David Armstrong-----County Administrator
William Austin-----Board Attorney

B. INVOCATION

The invocation was presented by County Administrator David Armstrong.

C. OLD BUSINESS

The Board of Supervisors determined that there was no old business to be addressed.

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution of Appreciation for C. G. Richardson

Supervisor John Caldwell made a motion and Supervisor Gerald Clifton seconded the motion to send a resolution of appreciation to the family of C. G. Richardson recognizing Mr. Richardson for his dedication and service on the Planning Commission. The **motion passed** by a vote as follows:

Supervisor Jessie Medlin-----ABSENT
Supervisor Eugene Thach-----YES
Supervisor Gerald Clifton-----YES
Supervisor John Caldwell-----YES
Supervisor Tommy Lewis-----ABSENT

****See Exhibit D.1****

ITEM E, CONTINUED,

A. BUDGET 2001

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County/Youth Court Judge Mills Barbee addressed the Board of Supervisors to regarding raises for the County Court Administrator, Court Reporter, Youth Court Prosecutor, and Public Defenders. Judge Barbee reported that the caseload has significantly increased for both Youth Court and County Court. Based on the increased caseload and extended work hours, Judge Barbee requested the salary of the Court Administrator be raised from \$25,159.00 to \$30,620 and his Court Reporter's salary be raised from \$33,600.00 to \$36,000.00.

Judge Barbee advised the Board that DeSoto County ranks fourth in the State in the number of Youth Court referrals. Judge Barbee added that Hinds County, which ranks first in the number of Youth Court referrals pays a full-time Youth Court Prosecutor \$43,000.00 and Lauderdale County, which is ranked third in Youth Court referrals has a part-time Youth Court Prosecutor which receives a salary package over \$23,000.00, including benefits. Judge Barbee requested that the salary of the Youth Court Prosecutor be increased to \$28,000.00. County Administrator David Armstrong said he proposed a salary of \$19,600.00 for this position.

Judge Barbee said that he and Circuit Judge Andrew Baker are requesting that the salaries of the four Circuit Court Public Defenders be increased from \$21,525.00 to \$30,000.00 and the salaries of the two Public Defenders assigned to Youth Court and Justice Court be increased from \$11,605.00 to \$20,000.00. Judge Barbee said that these positions are not at the salaries they should be according to the size of the County and the caseloads.

Supervisor John Caldwell said his main concern about the requested increases is that the Public Defenders and Youth Court Prosecutor are part-time positions. Supervisor Caldwell said that the Board might want to consider hiring a full-time Youth Court Prosecutor and a full-time Public Defender instead of increasing the salaries of these part-time positions. Supervisor Caldwell said that the average salary of the full-time County employees is \$23,000.00. Judge Barbee said he understands Supervisor Caldwell's concerns but compared to other counties, these salaries are too low. Supervisor Eugene Thach instructed County Administrator David Armstrong to compare the benefits of having a full-time Youth Court Prosecutor and a full-time Public Defender with that of the part-time positions. ****See Exhibit E.1****

Board of Supervisors continued the discussion of the FY01 Budget as follows:

Volunteer Fire Departments

County Administrator David Armstrong advised the Board that there is an increase in Volunteer Fire from \$439,298.00 to \$540,000.00 in FY01. Mr. Armstrong said the Fire Departments receive two mills at \$170,000 a mill. Supervisor Eugene Thach said that if two mills is not enough to fund the fire departments then the County should increase the mills and not budget for the fire departments out of the general fund. Supervisor John Caldwell said that the millage should have increased to \$190,000.00 due to building and equipment costs, despite annexation by the Cities. Supervisor Thach said he does not support paying for County Fire Departments from the general fund. Supervisor Caldwell said he agrees that the fire departments in unincorporated areas should not always be funded by the general fund but that it is appropriate to fund the fire departments from the general fund now because they are in a transition phase with the possibility of the County having paid fire departments. Supervisor Jessie Medlin said that there are areas in the County not receiving adequate fire protection and if the County is not at a point to pay County Fire Departments, then the County should provide buildings and equipment for the Volunteer Fire Departments.

Supervisor John Caldwell discussed a non-binding referendum for paid Fire Departments. Supervisor Caldwell said that a non-binding referendum will give the Board an idea of the support level for paid fire departments and will let the County phase in paid departments over

ITEM E, CONTINUED,

time if the support level is low at first. Supervisor Caldwell said that the funds in the budget will cover the next fiscal year and they will have until next October to know what the need is. Supervisor Eugene Thach said he recommends more millage if necessary. Supervisor Caldwell

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said the County should oppose more annexations if that is the consensus of the Board. Supervisor Thach said he is not opposed to the volunteer fire departments, just the means of funding them.

Central Maintenance

County Administrator David Armstrong said that he proposed a beginning cash balance in Fund 156 to be \$1,842,000.00 and proposed revenue of \$5,061,680.00. Supervisor Tommy Lewis asked if \$8 million was budgeted in this fund for the Church Road project. Mr. Armstrong said that Church road is under the \$18 million bonds. Supervisor Lewis also asked about the commitment to Airways Road. Mr. Armstrong said Airways Road is not in the Road Budget. Mr. Armstrong said that in Fund 156, 3 mills are levied for roads and in Fund 160, 5.39 mills are levied on bridges and culverts. Mr. Armstrong said another mill will be for overlay in Fund 160. Mr. Armstrong said that the County's proposed projects were put under the \$18 million bonds and the State Development Bank so that there will be 2 million for new overlay in the budget. Mr. Armstrong said the only project not included in the FY01 Budget is the Highway 304 and Tulane connection.

Mr. Armstrong said to date, \$7,275,843.00 have been spent in Funds 156 and 160 and that he is proposing an increase of \$1,289,337.00, for a total combined budget of \$8,565,180.00 for Funds 156 and 160. Mr. Armstrong said this figure includes a carry over of \$1.8 million.

Supervisor Jessie Medlin asked why \$11 million was requested in these funds. Road Manager Kenny Gunn said he had included the road projects that Mr. Armstrong included in the \$18 million bonds and the State Development Bank. Mr. Gunn said \$750,000.00 was included for Hacks Cross Road, \$50,000.00 for box culverts on Pleasant Hill Road, and \$250,000.00 for the bridge on Baldwyn Road. Mr. Gunn said that the Sandidge Road Bridge has the bridge funds tied up now but there is a possibility that the bridge funds can be used for the bridge on Baldwyn Road. Supervisor John Caldwell said that the traffic count on Sandidge Road will not justify using bridge funds on the Sandidge Road Bridge. Supervisor Jessie Medlin said the County Engineer Daniel Murphy is working out that issue so that the bridge funds can be used for other bridges.

Supervisor John Caldwell said his main concern is how the Audit Department will address the split in the road and bridge funds. Mr. Armstrong said that he and Kenny Gunn disagree on that issue. Mr. Armstrong said that the funds were not being spent out of Fund 160 so he split the budget between Fund 156 and 160. In addition, Mr. Armstrong said that millage is higher in Fund 160. Mr. Gunn said that Fund 160 was new last October so there was no revenue in it as of October 1, 1999. Mr. Gunn said that as the year progressed, funds started to be used.

Mr. Gunn said he does not have a problem with the bottom line figure of the budget but said there are certain line items that will have to be increased in both Fund 156 and Fund 160. The Board of Supervisors instructed Road Manager Kenny Gunn and County Administrator David Armstrong to work together to address Mr. Gunn's concerns and bring a recommendation back to the Board.

Circuit Court Administrator

Mr. Armstrong said the Circuit Court Administrator's budget was increased from \$96,880.00 to \$120,000.00 with the County's share of the budget being 30%.

ITEM E, CONTINUED,

Law Library

Mr. Armstrong said the Law Library budget was increased from \$35,891.00 to \$38,933.00. Vanessa Lynchard requested that the salary of the law librarian be raised to \$6,400.00 because at the present she is making minimum wage. Vanessa also requested an additional \$3,800.00 be added for computer equipment. Supervisor John Caldwell said that no County employee

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should be making less than \$7.00 an hour regardless if they are part-time or full-time employees. Vanessa Lynchard said the Law Library could not afford the \$7.00 salary.

Supervisor John Caldwell made the motion and Supervisor Gerald Clifton seconded the motion to raise the minimum salary of all County employees to \$7.00 an hour for part-time and full-time employees unless otherwise requested by an employee working under special circumstances to be effective October 1, 2000. The **motion passed** by a unanimous vote.

The salary of the law librarian was increased to \$7,280.00 based on a twenty hour work week.

Courts

Supervisor John Caldwell recommended that the Board meet half-way between what was offered and what was requested by Judge Mills Barbee for salaries for the Circuit Court, Youth Court, and Justice Court Public Defenders, and the Youth Court Prosecutor. The Board agreed to a salary of \$27,000.00 for the four Circuit Court Public Defenders, a salary of \$17,000.00 for the two Justice Court and Youth Court Public Defenders, and a salary of \$23,825.00 for the Youth Court Prosecutor. The Board advised that the salaries of Court Reporter Jimmie Kate Edwards and Court Administrator Marilyn Culver will be discussed in Executive Session.

Solid Waste

Mr. Armstrong said that Solid Waste Account decreased because the Grand Gulf Funds were added back to the General Fund and also because the tipping fee decreased. Supervisor asked what has been spent to date on solid waste. Comptroller Joyce Riales said that \$1,053,349.00 has been spent.

Wastewater Grant

Mr. Armstrong advised that the grant match of \$1.2 million for the 1999 EPA Grant is included under the State Development Bank.

Genealogy Department

Supervisor Tommy Lewis advised the Board of Supervisors that the Genealogy Department requested funds for a computer and a copier. Supervisor Lewis said the individuals in the Genealogy Department are volunteers and would like to add \$5,000.00 to the Genealogy Department's budget for a computer and copier.

Sheriff's Department

Supervisor Tommy Lewis said he has received numerous calls regarding the additional \$1,000.00 raise for Sheriff's Deputies and was unaware of the proposal since he had to leave the last Board meeting early. Supervisor John Caldwell requested that the salaries of the 58 deputies assigned to the Patrol Division be raised \$1,000.00 more than the proposed 5% raise. Supervisor Lewis said that he has received complaints from investigators and jailers about the additional raise. Supervisor Caldwell said that the officers have already been compensated and the jailers are not even certified.

Supervisor Eugene Thach said he is concerned that once the money is placed in the budget, the Sheriff will spend the money where he wants to and not allot it to the patrolmen. Supervisor Jessie Medlin suggested talking to the Sheriff about putting the money in a separate fund as an incentive for deputies to go to the academy.

ITEM E, CONTINUED,

The Board of Supervisors agreed to wait and discuss the proposed raises with Sheriff James A. Riley before making any decisions.

Mr. Armstrong gave an overview of the projected millage and said that he and Bill Bryant will meet again to discuss the millage rates and he will bring the figures back to the Board.

F. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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The Board of Supervisors determined that there was no Executive Session items to be addressed.

Supervisor Gerald Clifton made the motion and Supervisor John Caldwell seconded the motion to recess until August 23, 2000 at 9:00 a.m. The **motion passed** by a unanimous vote.

THIS the 17th day of August, 2000, these minutes have been read and approved by the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors.

EUGENE C. THACH, President
DeSoto County Board of Supervisors

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