

September 7, 2017
Budget Workshop

September 8, 2017

Court Reconvened at 9:10 a.m. at the County Judge's Office, 576 West Main, in the City of Raymondville, Texas.

THE COURT MET:

PRESENT:

Aurelio Guerra, Jr.,	County Judge,	
Eliberto Guerra,	Commissioner, Precinct 1,	
Oscar De Luna,	Commissioner, Precinct 2,	
Henry De La Paz,	Commissioner, Precinct 3,	ABSENT
Eduardo Gonzales,	Commissioner, Precinct 4,	
Annette Hinojosa,	County Attorney,	
Ida Martinez,	County Auditor,	
Elizabeth Rios,	County Clerk Deputy,	

WHEREUPON, the Court was opened to the following proceedings were had to wit:

PERSONS VISITING THE COURT:

No one signed the sign in sheet.

Chairman Guerra, continues with discussion on reference to the 2017-2018 Budget Workshop.

Discussion continues with Commissioner Gonzales reducing the Budget on Sanitation Department about permitting Contractors for dumping in the County Dumpsters. Commissioner Gonzales, states that he has an issue with a Contractor doing illegal dumping. Annette Hinojosa, County Attorney advises Commissioner Gonzales to charge this individual with a fine and for the Constable to issue a citation. Commissioner Guerra, states the County would like to consider to set up a Demolishing Permit.

Chairman Guerra, asks Lee Gonzalez, Internet Technician and Amos Prado, Building Inspector if they can check on-line to see what Hidalgo and Cameron Counties what are their permit fees and fines.

Commissioner Gonzales, states for the record he is not interested on the money that he will be receiving from the Longevity Program.

Ida Martinez, County Auditor asks the Commissioners if they had decided on reference to their County Vehicles? Commissioners Guerra, De Luna and Gonzales agree that they will park the County Vehicles at their Precincts and will not be taking them home.

September 7, 2017
Budget Workshop

Mrs. Martinez, states that for Budget purposes it will be under Commute Tax, IRS calls it "Control Vehicles". As of now, there are two (2) Foremen and three (3) District Attorney's Office taking the County Vehicles home. Mrs. Martinez would like to know by Monday who will be taking them home and who will not.

Discussion continues on reference to the Budget for the following departments:

County/District Attorney:

Discussion starts with Annette Hinojosa, County Attorney on the County Vehicles driven by Teresa Coronado, Maria Morales and Chuck Mattingly by adding \$720.00 for the vehicles, which will be \$125.32 taxable for each vehicle.

Fund 15 District Attorney's Forfeiture Article 18 this one will be affected by the HIDTA Grant. Mrs. Hinojosa, states that there is a contract pending and has asked for an award amount. There is an amount of \$34,000.00 still pending. Mrs. Martinez puts \$27,000.00 on the Department's request, contingent upon receiving that money. So, on Account Number- 3999 Unencumbered Fund Balance will be \$58,300.00. Account Number- 200 Repairs and Maintenance zero out. Account Number- 115 Gas reduced it from \$8,000.00 to \$4,000.00. Account Number- 110 Office Supplies zero out. Account Number- 165 Bonds zero out and remaining on Gas. Account Number- 115 Gas \$4,116.00. As per Mrs. Martinez contingency of \$74,000.00 coming from HIDTA. The beginning Fund Balance was \$134,970.85 and more less about \$101,000.00 of expenses.

Mrs. Hinojosa, states that Ben Vera will be working twenty (20) hours, so his hours will be lowered.

Mrs. Hinojosa mentions to Chairman Guerra about the use of the Library Account, states if necessary needs to be use by Commissioner Court like for the Contracts for the Restoration of the Courthouse.

Fund 22 Law Library, as per Mrs. Hinojosa no changes.

Fund 59 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) State Grant this one will be reimbursed. Mrs. Hinojosa is waiting on a grant letter, which is funded from Fund 15 was put on the salary.

Fund 50 District Attorney's Drug Seizure (Chapter 59) was moved to Fund 60. Fund 50 the beginning balance was \$150,188.25 and expenses up to August is \$140,251.00, which will be left with \$48,000.00 (still needs September). There was no Fund Balance, need to review the Unencumbered Fund Balance. The shortfall on this fund will be funded out from Fund 60.

Fund 60 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Federal Seizure had \$101,000.00.

Mrs. Hinojosa, states it will be a matter of moving Employees around from different source of funds to pay for their salary. She was worried that maybe had to request money from General Fund. Fund 50 and Fund 60 are related funds.

September 7, 2017
Budget Workshop

Motion was made by Commissioner Guerra, seconded by Commissioner Gonzales for approval to finalize contingent upon making the adjustments on the Fund Balance on Fund 50 and Fund 60. Motion was put before the Court by the Chairman. Commissioners Guerra, De Luna and Gonzales voting AYE. NAYS NONE. Motion was declared carried.

Chairman Guerra, states about the Reber Library that Rose Sanchez, Librarian knew that the Commissioners weren't going to give her another Employee. Although, for the Commissioners to consider a salary increase for her assistant Mary. However, Chairman Guerra concern was that the plus fifty (50) program was going to go away. According to a person Cassie, County Judge's Administrator talked to told her that the program will not end until two (2) more years. So, as for now keep it the way it is, by keeping the person with the plus fifty (50) program.

Chairman Guerra, states need to discuss about the Auditor's Office. Chairman Guerra asks how would it work if District Judge approves it by an Order. Mrs. Hinojosa, states they would have it by a hearing for comments from the Public and then adopts it. Chairman Guerra, wants it to go through in a form of an oath because Mrs. Martinez had mentioned that the District Judge can order it by an Order. Mrs. Hinojosa, states that what is recorded is in order, order by the Court. Chairman Guerra, states if District Judge signs something that she is agreeing to it, then Chairman Guerra wants for her to order it by Commissioners Court to apply like what the code says sufficient monies, but go through it by the full extent. If it was by within budget then Chairman Guerra didn't had a problem with that, but this is too far out. Also, having the District Judge leaving, the Chairman wants to be sure about an order that can be recorded as record.

Discussion continues about County Judge's salary more less how much he earns.

The Commissioners ask how much is the District Judge is approving by the Order? Chairman Guerra, states that he does not agree because of the financial situation, but once the District Judge orders this to do it. He will apparently support the effort of the audits on each Departments. Also, mentioned to Judge Lopez that if Chairman Guerra sees that those things are not happening, he will let her know and address to her how this is turning out. Although, at this point and time he can't be for it because of budget purposes.

Commissioner Guerra, states it is not only that. Now, the County Auditor will be needing more office space, a computer and another desk. That will not be the only expense that the Commissioners will inquire with that Order; which it will be a big expense.

Chairman Guerra, states the new position salary is \$65,000.00 with benefits \$81,329.00. Commissioner Guerra asks Mrs. Martinez how Judge Lopez comes up to pay the First Assistant a salary of \$81,329.00. Mrs. Martinez, states because they are qualified person. Chairman Guerra, states maybe he had only found one from the other County Auditors that earns like Mrs. Martinez. Chairman Guerra, states he had given Judge Lopez the documents on the research he had done from the other counties. Also, states on Mrs. Martinez defense the other counties have the Statue that the County Auditor may not make more than the highest pay Elected Official. They don't have to worry that the District Judge going above that, but with exception of Willacy County. Chairman Guerra mentions Subchapter B.

September 7, 2017
Budget Workshop

Commissioner Guerra, states when they were going to give raises. They had talked about a percent to individuals. The low income Employees the percent was going to be nothing, compared to Mrs. Martinez' salary it was going to be more.

Chairman Guerra, states he had asked about the Commissioners approving salary increases, obviously been the odds throughout the years. If it would be a line item that the Commissioners would approve and what he was told is when the Commissioners approve the Budget. Then that is when the Commissioners are approving to the increases. So, when the District Judge has a Public Hearing and is making the Public aware of the increases and set forth. The Commissioners don't get involved, when it will be able to stopped, is when the Commissioners approve the Budget.

Commissioner Gonzales, states what if the Commissioners say if they don't want to pay \$65,000.00 and only pay \$48,000.00 for the First Assistant. Can Commissioners Court do that? Chairman Guerra, states they can challenge it. Commissioner Gonzales, states they are not denying the position, but only saying that not approving the salary at this time. Can the Commissioners say why pay \$65,000.00 and not \$48,000.00 or \$57,000.00? Chairman Guerra asks Mrs. Hinojosa to assist them on explaining Subchapter B. Chairman Guerra reads out loud Subchapter B, under Section 84.021 Assistants. See attach attachment.

Discussion continues with Chairman Guerra and Commissioner Gonzales stating they're questioning because financially does not make sense. Chairman Guerra, states that this is a decision made by the District Judge and further that the Commissioners were not in agreement to that expense based on the financially expenses the County is in right now, maybe like in other times it would of been different. Commissioner Gonzales, mentions well if it is an Order by the District Judge, so it will go through Commissioners Court, or will the Commissioners approve the actual Budget and once approve that; that is it? Chairman Guerra, states that is what he doesn't know. Commissioner Gonzales, states well you can say District Judge ordered it, but Commissioners Court is not approving it and then what? Mrs. Hinojosa, states maybe at that point it should be put on Regular Meeting and maybe go into Executive Session in Commissioners Court. Commissioner Gonzales, as of Commissioners they will respect it because of the Order. Commissioner Guerra, states that he understands what Chairman Guerra is saying, that Chairman Guerra wants it on record. For example, the Commissioners support the idea because it is a good thing for the audit. Although, they don't agree to it because on the financial situation the County is in. So, in that case the District Judge would need to be on record with the Order she approves. Chairman Guerra, states what it adds to is that the District Judge won't be here to see it through depending if that individual gets hired. The Commissioners agree to be put on record, which they don't agree to this. Chairman Guerra, states on the other side once this happens he will support this program and make sure it is done as per the District Judge's wishes because it is a lot of money. Mrs. Martinez, states the reason is because what the market place due to the qualifications. For example, like Mrs. Hinojosa is on the top because she is an attorney and that is the way it is dictated on the market. It is what the market dictates for the recipient. Chairman Guerra, states he has the market in front of him, is it different from East Texas and all the way in Texas? The Attorneys from other Counties make almost the same as Mrs. Hinojosa. The only other place that is not level plate field is any other Employee in the County including the County Judge because when you are competing you are on the top of the Employees. Although, Chairman Guerra states that Mrs. Martinez already went from being below, to mid and then to high and then you lead the path not unless his

September 7, 2017
Budget Workshop

findings are off. So, this is where the County is at this point. Also, states he knows there is a lot of corruption, if somebody does something wrong everybody gets affected not only that person nor Department.

Chairman Guerra, states his standings is that just wants to be sure because does not want this to come back in the future. Either, they get a Professional Accountant that will look into what responsibilities, like who has what has been talking about forever including salaries. How this wind up here with hiring an Assistant to the County Auditor's Office? Although, this position is a First Assistant; which will be earning more based on salary than the other Employees at the Auditor's Office.

Chairman Guerra, reads out loud salaries for the County Auditors from other Counties their salary ranges are from \$46,000.00 to \$70,000.00 compared to the person Mrs. Martinez will be hiring as for First Assistant. Mrs. Hinojosa, states maybe on reference to the County Auditors from other Counties depends on the qualifications if they are very qualified or not. Chairman Guerra, states he wishes he could do it in every Department. Mrs. Hinojosa, states she agrees. Also, Mrs. Hinojosa states she had mentioned it to the Commissioners that she would like to equalize Ms. Coronado's salary like the other Employees she has, but as of now she can't do it due to lack of funds. Chairman Guerra, states that the First Assistant will be making as much like the other County Auditors for the other Counties. Also, those other Counties are like 1-2 percentage to budget; which Willacy County will be maybe around seven (7) percentage to Budget. Chairman Guerra, states the reason he bringing up this is not for getting back on the District Judge, nor on Mrs. Martinez. The reason is to put on record that Commissioners Court knows they are way off and don't agree with it. Hopefully, this program will flourish and be recognize as the leaders of putting programs in place through-out the State of Texas in smaller Counties. That they will be proud of the District Judge's decision had made during this times. Commissioner Gonzales, states he agrees with Chairman Guerra coming from a State Environment and that this is why it is called ethics, how they run your Department knowing that you are accountable to the Taxpayers and understands that. Although, Commissioner Gonzales, states he would of prefer this to be delayed maybe another year. Commissioner Gonzales, states that Commissioner De La Paz and himself had also asked several options to delay this to the District Judge, but they were turned down. So, the impact will be on the County to pay for this, due to the County wanted a \$7.1 million budget now might be \$7.2 or \$7.3 million budget.

Commissioner Gonzales, states the only fair thing to do in the County should at least give the other Employees the Longevity Program.

Chairman Guerra, mentions keeping the Budget like this is not what they wanted; which Commissioners Court had agreed to their two (2) years plan. The other thing Chairman Guerra, says that aside the District Judge coming in with this, the County Auditor came with the 5% increase for all Employees. Although, nothing has been granted. Commissioners Court had done a great job negotiating the LGC, about to generate the \$1.5 or \$1.8, but that is not a revenue that will be continuous. The Chairman, states that the little he knows about finances he was hoping the County Auditor would of acknowledge that part of it as like all of them would of like to give increases.

September 7, 2017
Budget Workshop

Commissioner Gonzales, states well the \$65,000.00 is not negotiable? Chairman Guerra says no, it is not. Commissioner Gonzales says well then the County Auditor was going to add five (5) hours to the part-time. Mrs. Martinez, states the 5% is for the rest of her staff; which is a total of \$9,641.00 for the raises plus fringes. Commissioner Guerra, states that he just feels bad for other Employees because they won't be getting a raise; which won't look good on their behalf.

Commissioner Gonzales, states it should of not reflect on their decision because their decision would of not reflect this year. Commissioner Guerra says he agrees, but states that when Commissioners Court approved that Resolution for that Statue on the very beginning about ten (10) years ago. The Law changed that Willacy County was going to be an exception of from the other Counties in the State this is why Willacy County is in the situation the County is in. Chairman Guerra, mentions that he is trying to find a way to satisfy the District Judge what she wants and be able to do what the County has; which he is thinking about it in his mind. Although, still haven't come up with something strong enough so the District Judge would of consider, but will continue to talk to the District Judge. Commissioner Gonzales, states for Chairman Guerra to talk to the District Judge just to give this particular Department a raise, but for the Auditor's Office to accept more responsibilities.

Chairman Guerra says that Commissioner De La Paz comes up in his mind is that Chairman Guerra is anticipating because of the size of this County that those audits can be done maybe in the beginning the year; which they would not take too long to be able to testify an individual to be paid \$65,000.00 plus benefits just doing that. Mrs. Martinez had mentioned that individual would also be doing other duties. Commissioner Gonzales tells the Chairman he has a point. For Example, how long would it take for that person to audit the Commissioners it might only take a week or no more than two (2) weeks with findings and corrections. Once the internal audits are done, then what? Mrs. Martinez, states they should be done quarterly by every Department.

Commissioner Guerra mentions that he does not have a problem with that. The only thing is that the Auditor's Office will be giving them spreadsheets to the Precincts; which the Commissioners would have to be in their barn every day or every week. So, this will be hard for the Commissioners to do since they are part-timers and not full-timers. So, then they would need to change the Statue on the County Commissioners that they will not be part-timers. The Commissioners say it will be time consuming for them to get everything done.

Chairman Guerra says that he proceeds that the Auditor will go to the Department Head for something general, where they are at this procedure. If the County wants to use Technology, well then maybe have Lee Gonzalez, Internet Technician accompany the Auditor to see how Mr. Gonzalez can help the Department Head pull out information through Technology. So, it may not be so difficult utilizing it and direct the Department Head where to go to. Although, it might be difficult in the beginning. Mrs. Hinojosa says she is up to if there is an easier way to do it, she would like for that person to let her know.

County Attorney, Annette Hinojosa leaves the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

September 7, 2017
Budget Workshop

Mrs. Martinez mentions that as of now she is in a very comfortable level with all her Staff, also every year she has been in a low budget.

Discussion continues with Chairman Guerra on reference to Sally Velasquez' Contract asks the Commissioners what they think? Commissioner De Luna, states to put \$18,000.00 and only on needed bases because she was asking \$35,000.00. Chairman Guerra, states Ms. Velasquez gets paid on monthly bases. Commissioner Gonzales, states remember that this year won't be a Legislative year. Commissioners agree to only on in a needed bases. Commissioner Gonzales states that the County has another resource with the UTRGV. Commissioner Guerra, states to put the money for Ms. Velasquez on the County Judge's Budget. So, they can only pay her when they need her on a needed bases, and not paying her upfront/pay her by the project.

Account Number- 180 Contracts and Legal added \$18,000.00 in Administration for Marketer if the County need Ms. Velasquez on a needed bases.

Account Number- 401 for the UTRGV Engineering Program. Administration under Contract and Legal added \$25,000.00 and Account Number- 155 Association Dues and Subscriptions added \$8,000.00.

Chairman Guerra, states would like to come back after lunch, to see where the Budget stands, revisit the future the plans; to see how the County will stand next August, 2018. If the Budget would be in a better situation or on a worse situation. So, it will be better check on the overall and see about the future monies coming in. Commissioner Gonzales, states for sure they are running low in the LGC, the same from Duke Energy.

General Fund used for this year is \$400,000.00 from LGC. (\$695,000.00)

TENTATIVE

PFC BAL	2,700,000.00
GF	(695,000.00)
CH RESTORAT	(400,000.00) replace multi-purpose funds
CAP FD	(615,000.00)
SELF-FUNDED	<u>(200,000.00)</u> in lieu of \$550 premium
FY 18	790,000.00
GF FY 19	(400,000.00)
FY 19	<u>390,000.00</u>

Revenue: \$7,267,370.00

Discussion continues that for the Budget for 2017-2018 they have added about \$162,000.00 to the Budget.

Discussion continues with Chairman Guerra and the Commissioners on looking for the next coming year of a 3% salary increase is due able for the Employees. So, the proposed budget for next year will be \$7.4 million budget. Although, they would need to find \$200,000.00 so this might be due able.

September 7, 2017
Budget Workshop

Chairman Guerra, states with the County staying within the Budget, the Longevity Program was due able for this year. Although, so maybe for next year maybe a 3% salary increase might be due able next year for the Employees, if they stay within Budget.

Discussion continues with Constable Precinct 3 Ben Vera's wish list request was for Vests, Body Cameras and Radars.

Health and Welfare for Account Number 380- Machinery and Equipment < \$500.00 added \$4,220.00 for the Vests. Account Number 380- Machinery and Equipment > \$500.00 added \$5,780.00 for Body Cameras. Commissioners agree for Vests and Body Cameras only, not for the Radars.

Administration for Account Number 430- Contingency went down to \$96,361.00.

Commissioner Gonzales, states for the record he is not interested on the money that he will receive from the Longevity Program. Chairman Guerra, also agrees maybe donate his to Charity.

Mrs. Martinez, states they will need to have a Public Hearing for the Budget and Advertise for the Elected Officials.

Motion was made by Commissioner Gonzales, seconded by Commissioner Guerra for approval to accept the Longevity Program for all eligible Employees and Elected Officials, and to advertise on the newspaper. Motion was put before the Court by the Chairman. Commissioner Guerra, De Luna and Gonzales voting AYE. NAYS NONE. Motion was declared carried.

Discussion continues to balance out the Budget. Administration Account Number 430- Contingency deducted \$3,415.00 for the shortages and left it at \$92,946.00 amount.

Balance out the accounts for Road and Bridge Precincts 1, 2 and 4.

Commissioner Gonzales, added \$9,174.00 on Machinery and Equipment > \$500.00. Account Number 3999- Unencumbered Fund Balance will be using the \$40,000.00 in his Budget.

Mrs. Martinez reminds Commissioner De Luna for him to get back with her on Monday on reference to the take home County Vehicles.

Chairman Guerra, states to the Commissioners that Joe Jimenez with the Sheriff's Department had remind him about his wish list on reference of requesting one (1) Deputy and the Vehicles.

Commissioners approve for one (1) Vehicle and the twelve (12) Dash Cameras for a total amount of \$39,000.00 for the Sheriff's Department.

Commissioner De Luna asks Mrs. Martinez about the County Vehicles taken by the Deputies to their houses. Mrs. Martinez, states they won't be charge because they are in the Law Enforcement.

September 7, 2017
Budget Workshop

Discussion continues about the Reber Library the Chairman states the plus fifty (50) program won't expire until two (2) more years.

Last Year's Budget: \$7,126,264.00

2017-2018 Estimated Budget: \$7,267,370.00

The Budget from Last Year's to 2017-2018 Budget was increased by \$141,106.00.

Mrs. Martinez, states if there in any changes she has to make for rounding off numbers. She will get with Chairman Guerra if any changes will be made.

Motion was made by Commissioner Gonzales, seconded by Commissioner De Luna that Court Adjourn. Motion was put before the Court by the Chairman. Commissioners Guerra, De Luna and Gonzales voting AYE. NAYS NONE. Motion was declared carried.

There being no further action.

Court Adjourned.