

HARTSVILLE/TROUSDALE COUNTY METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MARCH 17, 2022 | 6:00PM | TC COURTHOUSE

MINUTES

Members Present:

Dwight Jewell
Beverly Atwood
Ken Buckmaster
Shane Burton
Gary Claridy

Bill Fergusson
Jerry Ford
T. Bubba Gregory
Landon Gulley
Richard Harsh

Rachel Jones
Gary Walsh
Mayor Stephen Chambers
Amy Thomas, Budget Director

Others in attendance: Sheriff Ray Russell, County Attorney Branden Bellar, Commissioner Lesley Overman

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairman Dwight Jewell. Quorum was determined with all members present.

Chairman Jewell requested for the order of the agenda be changed to put the compensation study as the primary discussion.

1. Discussions

A. Compensation Study

Jewell opened the discussion by stating two questions that need to be addressed: Does the Committee recommend the step-based compensation schedule to the full Commission and if so, when would this begin?

Mayor Chambers concurred with the direction of the meeting.

Buckmaster would like a simple approach. The study is outdated but believes we can go by the study and allow the department heads to decide where the employees land on the scale. Jewell answered that the job classifications have been discussed and agreed upon by the department heads. They were included throughout the process.

Fergusson stated the Personnel Committee came from the perspective of what could this provide for the employees. It was agreed that the step plan allows for structure and more understandable growth for the employees. He believes that the County has lacked a compensation structure for some time and this brings a plan into place.

Gulley doesn't feel that the County can absorb a percentage increase each year. Jewell offered that the percentage adjustment would be decided annually by the Commission. There may be years that an annual adjustment is not feasible. Ford agreed that financing the plan is a concern; we will never be in line with the bigger counties and the compounding from year to year may be greater than we can carry. Concerning the classifications of employees, it was noted that not all employees had to be adjusted to "catch up" to the market rate. Some positions were correctly classified and in a comparable compensation level where there were several that fell below average market rate. This study and pay schedule help to correct these concerns.

Bill Fergusson made the motion to recommend the step-based compensation without a dollar amount tied to the full Commission; second by Ken Buckmaster.

MOTION CARRIED

Hand Raise Vote: 12 yes | 0 no

Jewell moved on to the next topic of discussion being the dollar amount for budget purposes.

Thomas asked the Committee what figures she needed to use as she prepared the budget. Did the Committee want to keep the figures as presented or does the Committee want to adjust the figures due to the data being outdated?

Buckmaster requested for every employee below the market average to be brought up to that average and all others be adjusted by the percentage. Ford recommended a 2.5% adjustment. Jones stated that the study's numbers are outdated and already beneath where they should be today. Jewell said a 2.5% is almost an insult to the employees.

Rachel Jones made the motion to adjust the study data by 7.5% to retain and recruit employees; second by Gary Walsh. Before the vote it was decided to present 3 options during the budget hearing process to decide which percentage to move forward with for FY23 budget.

MOTION CARRIED

Hand Raise Vote: 12 yes | 0 no

B. Sheriff Immediate Increase

Sheriff Russell is asking for an immediate \$2/hr increase for each employee. When incorporating the study into his budget, he will adjust the new value with consideration of the immediate increase. *If with the study findings an employee was to be raised \$2.50/hr the employee would receive \$0.50 at the new budget.*

Thomas stated that any compensation increases would go against the current salary agreement the Sheriff has with the County, but a new one could be worked up should this request be approved by the Commission.

Buckmaster said that a good 80% of the Sheriff's employees are unhappy with the pay and benefits. Several are hanging on by a thread and waiting to see what the Commission will do.

Ken Buckmaster made a motion to recommend an immediate \$2/hr increase for the Sheriff department employees effective April 7, 2022 (*this being the start of the next available pay period*). This motion includes an amended salary agreement to be signed by the Sheriff and for the increased amounts to be reflected in the FY23 budget figures with consideration of the step-based compensation figures; second by Landon Gulley.

MOTION CARRIED

Hand Raise Vote: 10 yes | 0 no | 2 Abstain

Shane Burton and Ken Buckmaster abstained due to personal ties to the employees affected by an increase.

2. Public Comment

No Comments

3. Adjourn

Gary Walsh motioned to adjourn. Committee adjourned at 7:12pm