

HARTSVILLE/TROUSDALE COUNTY METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MAY 16, 2022 | 6:00PM | TC COURTHOUSE

MINUTES

Members Present: 12/12

Beverly Atwood
Ken Buckmaster
Shane Burton
Gary Claridy
Bill Fergusson

Jerry Ford
T. Bubba Gregory
Landon Gulley
Richard Harsh
Rachel Jones

Gary Walsh
Dwight Jewell, *Comm Chair*
Mayor Stephen Chambers
Amy Thomas, CCFO

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairman Dwight Jewell. Quorum was determined with all members present.
2. Chairman Jewell added items of to the agenda from the Parks & Recreation Committee.
 - A. Parks & Rec has recommended to use funds from the ARPA to put towards a total grant match of \$600,000 to the TDEC Parks & Recreation Funding. This would make the total amount of the project \$1,200,000
 - B. ARPA Approval – When the quote was made for the Little League Lights & Poles, the T-ball field was left off. Parks & Rec request making that project a total of \$350,000 and therefore requests \$17,355 from the ARPA funding to cover this oversight.

Motion by Beverly Atwood to amend the agenda; second by Landon Gulley.

MOTION CARRIED

3. Minutes from the April 18, 2022 regular meeting and Budget Hearings 1-3 were reviewed. Mayor Chambers noted on the May 5 Budget Hearing that the County Attorney rate should be \$205/hr. Minutes were approved with the noted correction.
4. County Trustee Report / Financial Summary – April 2022
The Committee reviewed the April 2022 Trustee Trial Balance and Fund Financial Summaries.
No concerns were noted.

Motion by Jerry Ford to accept the April 2022 financial report; second by T. Bubba Gregory.

MOTION CARRIED

5. Budget Amendments
The Committee reviewed all the proposed budget amendments.

101 – COUNTY GENERAL

2022-101-40R	Courthouse: HvAC	\$	803,957
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Mayor has received an official quote for the project. The use of ARPA funding was previously approved at the January 24, 2022 Commission meeting. Asking to use the remaining Local Government Support Funding of \$300,416 which has a deadline of use as June 30, 2022. ARPA funds would be \$503,541.

Gulley asked which departments were moving into the Courthouse. Mayor answered that the Boards, Commissions, and Committees continue to meet in the Courthouse. The Election office will be moving in after the November Election. The Chamber of Commerce will be moving in to Room 2 (County Clerk’s old office). The downstairs courtroom will be a multipurpose room and possible space during elections.

Motion made by Richard Harsh to recommend BA 2022-101-40R to the full Commission; second by Gary Walsh

MOTION CARRIED
Voice Vote | no opposition

2022-101-41FB	Clean Up Entry	\$	9,198
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Year-end clean up entries for the General Fund 101. Entries are due to overtime use in a few departments due to staffing shortages. This would be a fund balance draw.

111 – URBAN SERVICES

2022-111-05	Clean Up Entry	\$	360
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Clean up entry for the prepayment fee when paying off the loan for the Urban Services trash truck. Moving unused interest funding to other services to cover the fee.

Motion made by Beverly Atwood to recommend BA 2022-101-41FB and BA 2022-111-05 to the full Commission; second by Jerry Ford

MOTION CARRIED
Voice Vote | no opposition

6. American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Spending

A. Parks & Recreation \$ TBD

- i. Landon Gulley was able to state the amount for each project they need from the ARPA spending. The Parks & Recreation Committee would like to see the total amount of the Little League Lights & Poles to be funded at \$350,000. *(The amount previously approved using the Local Government Support Funding was \$232,645)* In the process of quoting the project the smaller T-ball field was overlooked and not included in the original quote. An exact figure for the project is not known at this time. If more funding is needed, a request will be made at a later date.

Motion made by Landon Gulley to recommend to the full Commission funding the Lights and Poles Project up to \$350,000 using the ARPA funding; second by T Bubba Gregory. **MOTION CARRIED**

Voice Vote | no opposition

- ii. The second issue from Parks and Recreation was increasing the match amount for the Local Parks and Recreation Funding grant program through TDEC. It is recommended to increase that amount to a total of \$600,000 for the match which would make the project total \$1,200,000. The funding would be pulled from the ARPA funds. Previously had approved \$296,000 from various sources. Estimated amount from ARPA would be \$304,000.

Buckmaster spoke on the funding as he has been against it in the past, however due to the extended scope of this grant, he would like to approve this action.

Jerry Ford asked about the drainage issues and asked if the location could be moved to a more level area where the drainage would not be an issue. Jewell answered that site preparation is involved in the scope of the grant as well as removing equipment and will address the drainage issues. Mayor Chambers also offered that TDEC highly advised that we use an engineer firm that specifically worked with this sort of construction so that we would address the drainage problems.

Motion made by Ken Buckmaster to recommend to the full Commission funding the LPRF grant match up to \$600,000 using the ARPA funding; second by Landon Gulley. **MOTION CARRIED**

Voice Vote | no opposition

7. FY2023 Budget Discussions

A. **FUND 131 Highway Department**

Road Superintendent Bill Scruggs reviewed the proposed budget for the Highway fund. No major concerns with the proposed revenues. Expenditures were conservative in nature. Landon Gulley inquired on the \$6,500 increase on the Assistants position listed under 61000-103. Scruggs answered that is for 1 employee. He gave his employees a \$2/hr increase. Needed to increase wages to retain employees.

No tax dollar increase is being requested from the County.

Proposed Revenues are \$1,852,880. Expenditures at \$2,461,662. Negative net change of \$608,782.

Motion made by Richard Harsh to recommend the Highway Fund 131 budget; second by Jerry Ford.

MOTION CARRIED

Voice Vote w/opposition

B. **WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT**

Committee reviewed the proposed budget from the Water & Sewer Department. Proposed Revenues are \$3,786,664. Expenditures at \$3,848,112. Negative net change of \$61,448.

Jerry Ford asked about the Fund Balance of \$19,767,641. This amount includes all capital assets and cash. The 2021 Audit shows assets at \$18,069,408. The department reports differently than other funds due to being an enterprise fund and shows their Net Position rather than a fund balance.

Chairman Jewell stated that there has not been a water rate increase in several years and that the department does not receive any tax dollars to operate. The Water Board will be meeting on May 18 to hold a workshop to discuss a growth plan for the County that concerns the water needs. A water plant will need to be built in the coming years. The estimate on that project is \$18 million. Sewer lines will need to be repaired sooner than later.

Jerry Ford asked about the pay for employees, focusing on bonus amounts. Wages are based on the compensation study assignments, raising employees a step, plus a 5% cost of living/labor adjustment. Bonuses are on top of the proposed wage amounts. Bonuses are traditionally awarded around Christmas. Fergusson asked what the overall increase is with the proposed wages. McFarland broke down the amounts where \$39,761 is the initial bump to put the employees at their assigned grade levels; then another \$45,741 that is the step increase and 5% CoL adjustment.

The Commission did issue a degree of authority to the Water & Sewer Board and they are able to spend as they see fit. If an issue of fairness needs to be discussed, then that needs to be done at another time.

Gulley asked if the budget would require a rate increase. Tommy McFarland said the May 18 workshop will help address that question.

Motion made by Rachel Jones to recommend the Water & Sewer Department budget; second by Shane Burton.

MOTION FAILED

Hand Raise Yes-4 | No-8

Water & Sewer Department proposed budget is sent back to the Water & Sewer Board for revisions.

Landon Gulley reminded the Committee that the current position is to keep with the original assignments from the compensation study. Mayor pointed out the Water Board approved this budget at their April meeting which was before the first budget hearing. Gulley also reminded the Committee that it was requested for annual bonuses to stop as well as Christmas parties. He wants to be sure the fairness is addressed.

Tommy McFarland addressed the Committee and asked if the Committee is dealing with the School system in the same fashion or the Sheriff's department. The original numbers in the County budget did not require an increase to the tax rate, but it was still taken out. Mayor said the original

numbers represented the compensation study assignments, a step up, plus a 2.5% CoLA. The Budget Committee did elect to cut out the step increase and the 2.5% CoLA at the first night of budget hearings. McFarland said in fairness to all County employees a good compromise to the bonus discussion would be a longevity plan. Jewell answered that the compensation study does address the longevity of employees.

C. Other Departments

The Election Commission will present their numbers at the May 23rd meeting. There had been some revisions since the original proposal.

D. **Employee Compensation**

EMS/EMA Director Matt Batey addressed the Committee saying that the current proposed compensation is not enough and needs to be reviewed. He believes the original numbers proposed by the Mayor's office would be sufficient.

Buckmaster asked to review the Ambulance Fund 118 numbers.

55130-147 Drivers. Requests for this line to be removed and the drivers paid out of the 131 Medical Personnel. His reasoning is because the 131 line item is budgeted at a full staff and the 147 line item would give 2 more employees to the department. It was explained that it is an accounting matter, but any portion not used of the 147 line item would be moved back into the fund balance. Drivers are not considered medical personnel.

Fergusson asked Director Batey if the 1.04/hr increase helped or had he lost any employees. Batey said he has lost one employee to Wilson County.

Ken Buckmaster made the motion to reinstate the original compensation for County employees that consists of the study assignments, a step increase, plus 2.5% CoLA; second by Bill Fergusson.

Fergusson added that he agrees with Buckmaster's opinion. As we look forward putting the pay scale in place would give the employees a fundamental structure with the capability to adjust as needed. Instating the pay scale does not incur a tax increase and we need to do this for the employees.

Mayor Chamber added that the recruitment and retention issue is not central to one or two departments but in all departments. We have had 49 staff changes throughout the year.

Gulley stated he was not against the employees but wants to be sure the Committee understands what the tax payers are also going through with the economic rising prices. He also asks when the pay scale was put in place. Mayor answered that it was requested by the Committee to instate the process, but no dollar figure was attached to it. [\[Reference Budget Minutes March 17, 2022\]](#)

POINT OF ORDER – Gary Walsh stated that before we continue further, a motion is needed to add the discussion to the agenda as this topic was not specified when the agenda was set at the beginning of the meeting. Chairman Jewell agreed that the agenda would need to be amended in order to take this up properly. County Attorney Branden Bellar was asked for his opinion on the matter. Bellar stated that he didn't believe that you could amend the agenda in the middle of a meeting and didn't feel it would be appropriate.

Bellar further stated that if sufficient notice was given to the public, then you are set to discuss. However, since there were specific items bulleted on the agenda, he didn't believe that the discussion should move forward since the payroll was not a specifically listed item. In light of Mr. Bellar's opinion, Chairman Jewell ruled that the discussion and motion was out of order.

Chairman Jewell set a meeting of the Budget Committee for Monday, May 23, 2022 at 5:30pm to discuss the 2023 Budget appropriations.

Commissioner Mary Ann Baker addressed the Committee and said the purpose of this Committee is to recommend or not recommend to the full body. She asked if the process on the Water & Sewer proposal would be to send it to the full body without a recommendation. Jewell stated that the recommendation was to not approve the Water & Sewer budget and send it back to the Board.

Budget hearings are part of the budget process to help weed out some issues that would come before the Commission.

Commissioner Beverly Atwood asked about the pay scale implementation as she could not find any mention in her notes or previous minutes. [\[Reference Budget Minutes March 17, 2022\]](#) Mayor stated that it never went to full Commission and is still in this Committee. The Committee did vote to accept the pay scale but did not have a dollar figure attached to it. Jewell added that the intention was to use it as the basis of the budget figures to present with different options (2.5%, 5%, 7%). Gulley asked for clarification that when we vote in the budget, we will also be voting in the pay scale. Jewell confirmed that was his remembrance as recommended by the Committee and that any increase would be voted on from year to year, but the format or matrix of the scale would be used as the guideline.

Fergusson stated that the budget was built upon the concept of the scale. As the item moved forward there was no dollar amount attached to it. Commission will always have the ability to adjust the scale.

8. Adjourn: In light of the time running over to the next meeting, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Gary Walsh.

Adjourn at 7:41pm

*Minutes submitted by
Amy Thomas*