

HARTSVILLE/TROUSDALE COUNTY METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE

BUDGET HEARINGS FY2026

MAY 21, 2025 | 6:00 PM | TC COURTHOUSE

MINUTES

Members Present: 6/7

Landon Gulley, Chair

Bubba Gregory, Vice Chair

Beverly Atwood

Chris Gregory

Jerry Ford

Lesley Overman

Amy Thomas (*nvm*)

Members Absent: Will Dennis

Others in attendance: Mayor Jack McCall, Sheriff Ray Russell, Comm. Jeff Gregory, Comm. Brian Crook, several sheriff employees.

Meeting was called to order at 6pm by Commissioner Gulley.

Tonight's focus is the Sheriff Department

Fund 101 General Services

53920 Courtroom Security – Gulley reiterated that there is no salary increase presented in the current budget. Russell confirmed all positions in this function are filled. Staff includes 1 Fulltime and 3 Part-time positions. Part-time positions may only work a certain number of hours. Hours depend on caseload; this can be affected by events at TTCC. Change 187 Overtime to \$3,000.

Motion by B Gregory to approve 53920 with change; seconded by Ford

53920 Courtroom Security Recommended

54110 Sheriff Department (Patrol/Dispatch) – Russell stated that he is removing a position to make the total amount of deputy positions 16. This decreases the 106 line item to \$880,256. Line 187 Overtime is moved to \$80,000. Overtime is used to cover vacant positions; currently at 3 vacancies. C Gregory asked about line item 431 Law Enforcement supplies; move to \$20,000. In line item 471, the License Plate Reader (LPR) system is budgeted for Flock Services. It has an upfront cost of \$37,500 with a \$30,000 annual cost. Roughly \$5,000 per camera to run each year. Line item 524 Staff Development contains funding for academy and other required training. The state has paid for the academy for 2 years; Sheriff is unsure if that program will continue. Change line item 524 to \$7,500. Line item 716 hold Law Enforcement Equipment including the Taser Program for deputies, Body Cameras, equipment for patrol vehicles; move line item to \$30,000. Line item 718 Motor Vehicles, Sheriff originally requested 2 patrol vehicles but withdrew this request.

C Gregory requested to open discussion on salaries. Gulley stated he wishes to go through budget before discussing salaries. It is acknowledged that the Sheriff has asked for a 10% increase for all of his positions; this roughly equals 8.2¢ on the tax rate. A significant portion has been cut from the Sheriff's function to offset that amount but want to see the whole picture before moving forward with the salary discussion.

Motion by Ford to approve 54110 with change; seconded by B Gregory

54110 Sheriff (Patrol/Dispatch) Recommended

54210 Jail – Per Sheriff, there is one vacancy in the jail staffing. Guards begin at 16.69/hour; Smith County pays \$2 more an hour. Food Costs are always increasing.

Motion by Atwood to approve 54210 as presented; seconded by Overman

54210 Jail Recommended

54220 Workhouse – New truck is requested at \$60,000. Amount could be partially covered by an upcoming grant through TDOT to pick up state roads in the county. When grant is in place with executed contract, a budget amendment will be presented.

Motion by Ford to approve 54220 as presented; seconded by Gulley

54220 Workhouse Recommended

55170 Alcohol and Drug Programs – Status Quo budget; same annually.

Motion by C Gregory to approve 55170 as presented; seconded by Ford

55170 Alcohol & Drug Programs Recommended

Fund 111 Urban Services

54110 Sheriff (Patrol/Dispatch) – Line item 106 holds 5 positions; 1 Chief, 4 deputies. Russell would like to remove 1 deputy position for a total of 4 positions in this line item. Line item 187 moves to \$50,000. All positions are filled in 148 Dispatchers. Line item 716 Law Enforcement Equipment contains body cameras at \$18,000, replacement for other equipment as needed. Move Line item 716 to \$30,000.

Motion by Ford to approve 54110 with changes; seconded by Gulley

54110 Sheriff (Patrol/Dispatch) Recommended

Fund 122 County Drug Control

54150 Drug Control – Status quo budget overseen by Sheriff Russell. This contains funds from seizures and confiscations. Currently have over 50 cars to sell/auction.

Motion by C Gregory to approve Fund 122 as presented; seconded by Atwood

Fund 122 County Drug Control Recommended

Miscellaneous Discussion

C Gregory reopened the discussion on salary considerations. He stated that the Sheriff has reduced his overall budgets by \$202,000 in 101 and may be able to offer a 7.5% increase without “hurt” to the County. Gulley would like to consider a flat rate instead of a percentage.

Commissioner Brian Crook requested to speak; Comm. Crook is also a Sheriff Deputy for the County. Crook has been with the department for almost 5 years and states his rate is “not much to live on”. Hosing has increased; Cost of living has also increased. Committee should not compare jobs with other positions. Other departments should come forward to fight for their employees just as the Sheriff is doing for his staff. Certified officers are putting their lives on the line every day. Crook continued that the 10% increase is the bare minimum. B Gregory asked if Crook was for raising taxes. Crook answered that he is against taxation without cause; this is raising taxes to cover services needed in the County. If the County doesn’t believe in funding the services, then they don’t need the service.

Deputy Travis Blair also spoke to the Committee. He stated that he has been with the department for over 7.5 years and has seen little increase in compensation. Trousdale starts deputies around \$21/hour while Sumner starts at \$33/hr – why wouldn’t others go somewhere else? Gulley suggested that Trousdale’s workload was a lighter load compared to other counties or municipalities. Blair answered that the same issues and per capita still exist.

Russell stated he is having a hard time getting anyone to come work for him due to the low pay. Also stated that no one wants to be an officer anymore. Gulley agreed and reiterated that surrounding counties do pay more than what Trousdale is about to offer. Russell also opined that insurance needs to be reviewed, and the County should contribute more to the employee premiums. Gulley agreed that insurance should be reassessed.

C Gregory offered that he is comfortable adjusting one department over others. Russell added that a tax increase going towards law enforcement would be more favorable.

Crook asked the Committee on fund balances and why the County isn't using the full amount. It was explained that the fund balances allow the County to provide a balanced budget. Several items make up the fund balances including reserved items that can only be spent on specific items. It was not a savings account to be spent at will. Fund balances are also kept for contingencies. It is a "rule of thumb" to keep 3 months of expenses in a fund.

Russell added to help more on securing the 10% salary increase, he will remove another deputy position from 101 if the 10% was approved.

Ford voiced that reinstating the wheel tax could help. Gulley replied that a wheel tax should not be set up to provide for perpetual recurring expenses. We are currently looking at a 9¢ increase to spread amongst the funds. The Board of Education moved to have every teacher at a minimum \$50K/yr and the minimum salary for non-certifieds at \$16/hr. Russell interjected that the requested 10% for law enforcement would still be under other counties but would make the positions more palatable.

Hearings concluded at 7:54PM Ford, Overman

ADJOURNED