

BUDGET HEARING MINUTES FOR MAY, 22, 2025

Meeting Date: May 22, 2025, 6 p.m., Trousdale County Courthouse

Present: Landon Gulley, Jerry Ford, Bubba Gregory, Chris Gregory, Lesley Overman

Absent: Beverly Atwood, Will Dennis, Amy Thomas

Others Present: Road Superintendent Bill Scruggs, Heather Bay, EMS Director Matt Batey, County Mayor Jack McCall

Chairman Landon Gulley called the meeting to order.

Water Board - budget presented by Heather Bay, chairman of Water Board. Revenues of \$4,846,272, expenses of \$4,774,573, surplus of \$71,698, fund balance of \$6,316,572. New statement provided to committee had estimates for 2024-25. No rate hikes planned, Water Board will match whatever raises county provides for its staff. If county does varying levels of raises, WB will reassess. Bay noted WB budgets at 100% of revenue rather than 92% required of county. Water Dept. has 15 full-time employees, plus 4 clerical full-time, 1 part-time, is fully staffed except for general manager (interim in place currently). Questions noted about increases in testing, depreciation; Bay noted more testing required and number of new vehicles purchased in recent years. Dept. has 53 pieces of equipment in all, including 17 vehicles. Question asked about water sales; department sells at wholesale rate.

Motion to approve by C.Gregory, second by B.Gregory. Motion approved.

Highway - Superintendent Bill Scruggs presented budget. Revenues of \$2,829,680, expenses of \$3,490,354, ending fund balance of \$747,563. Questions noted on truck driver positions, increase of \$100K over two years but most positions currently unfilled. Similar issue with laborers, only one on staff at present. Summer hiring of local youths has ended because of costs in physicals/drug testing and limited work availability make it not worth doing.

Motion to approve by B.Gregory, second by C.Gregory. Motion approved.

Rescue Squad - EMS Director Matt Batey presented budget of \$57,626. Gulley recommended increase of per diem line item to accommodate resolution supporting \$50 per call, changing line item from \$20K to \$33,400, total change to \$71,026.

Motion to approve with recommended change by C.Gregory, second by Overman. Motion approved.

Other Emergency Management - Batey presented budget of \$94,448. No questions from committee.

Motion to approve by Overman, second by Ford. Motion approved.

118 - Ambulance Service - Batey presented budget of revenues, \$1,393,161, expenses of \$1,629,294, ending fund balance of \$551,217. Gulley noted 118 costs 0.2468 cents or 12.42% of county budget. Pay scale email noted by committee, with three battalion chiefs over \$80K. Batey said should not be so high in future because of less need for those to work overtime. Committee asked if any local agencies are salary based rather than hourly, Batey stated he was unaware of any and such a model would likely deter potential employees from coming to TC. Revenue question raised on patient charges; Batey noted Medicare/Medicaid cannot be balance billed per law, that TC does negotiate with private insurance. TC rates are comparable to nearby, per Batey, and raising rates would likely increase writeoffs.

Questions raised on line item 399 - contracted services. Stericycle required every two years so increase required; 413 - drugs & medical supplies, committee recommended cutting from \$75K to \$65K; 131 - medical personnel, committee recommended cut to \$40K; 718 - vehicles, committee asked about removing \$190K for remounted ambulance. Gulley suggested next negotiation with CoreCivic, asking them to purchase and staff ambulance because of number of prison calls. Ford asked about ARPA for ambulance, Gulley stated only \$500K roughly of ARPA left so not good idea. Batey said of three ambulances, one is new, other two have over 200,000 miles and one of those recently had transmission replaced. If ambulance removed from budget, maintenance vehicle line item will likely increase during the budget year.

Motion to approve with changing 131 to \$410,000, 413 to \$65,000, 718 to \$0 by Ford, second by Gulley. Motion approved with C.Gregory voting no.

Public comment: Gulley asked how EMT wages compare locally. Batey said Macon starts paramedics at 89K to 99K, Sumner at 67K with increase planned, Wilson at \$77K, Smith unknown.

Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 28 at 6 p.m. canceled, next meeting likely first week of June but not scheduled yet.

Motion to adjourn by Overman, second by Ford. Motion approved.

Minutes presented by Chris Gregory.