

HARTSVILLE/TROUSDALE COUNTY METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE

BUDGET HEARINGS FY2026

JUNE 10, 2025 | 6:00 PM | TC COURTHOUSE

MINUTES

Members Present: 6/7

Landon Gulley, Chair

T Bubba Gregory, Vice Chair

Beverly Atwood

Chris Gregory

Jerry Ford

Lesley Overman

Amy Thomas (*nvm*)

Members Absent: Will Dennis

Others in attendance: Mayor McCall, Sheriff Ray Russell, Clerk Rita Crowder, Chief Wayland Cothron, Commissioner Mark Presley, Commissioner Linda Bruce, Commissioner David Nollner, Chief Matt Batey, Ken Buckmaster, County Employees, Sheriff Employees, EMS employees, Rescue members, and members of the public.

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

The budget has been reviewed and reviewed minus employee salaries. Tonight's discussions will focus on wages. The penny value has been certified at \$36,529 for General and \$8,594 for Urban Services.

A report was compiled of the projected gross salaries of EMS medical staff for this fiscal year and included a comparison of salaries with Sumner and Smith counties.

The Committee was provided options to consider. Some departments may get different amounts. Gulley supported "Option 3" which listed \$1/hr for EMS, \$2/hr for Sheriff, and \$1.50/hr for all others. This would roughly be a 8.78¢ increase on the tax rate. Another option would be \$4,000 for Sheriff employees and \$3,000 for all others.

Russell stated that employees should be raised the same as their elected official. Whatever the state increases the elected officials, the employees should be increased at the same rate. Most officials received a 3.4% increase this year. Gulley asked if that is what the Sheriff is proposing for this year. Russell said he wanted the 10% this year to adjust his employees, but to implement the other the following years. Gulley reiterated that Option 3 would be the most "fair".

B Gregory used his job as an example where each position had a range. He knew what he would make when he accepted the position and he knows what the position will top out at. Anything beyond that would be considered as bonuses or adjustments.

As it stands, the pay scale needs to be readdressed. Will need a property tax increase to support any wage increase. Russell added that the wage study was done and implemented three years ago. Went by it the first year, but haven't fully abided by it since. The cost of living adjustments and longevity was built into the schedule.

Overman asked Sheriff Russell if a 10% was granted this year will he be happy next year? Sheriff answered, "no". Overman was inclined to give EMS 50¢/hr, Sheriff 10%, and all others \$1.50/hr. Gulley said the 10% would be less than the \$2/hr option.

Gulley stepped down from the Chair; B Gregory assumed the Chair.

Gulley made the motion to give the following increase to employee salary; second by B Gregory:

- \$1/hr to EMS
- \$2/hr to Sheriff
- \$1.50/hr to all other employees

MOTION FAILED

2 YES, 4 NO

C Gregory stated that EMS asked for 10% as well. Agrees that the two departments are important and need to keep it equitable. Gulley offered that Chief Batey felt that the \$1/hr is fair to his department. Batey approached the committee and said it was not discussed and asked for his department to be treated the same as the Sheriff’s. Gulley referred to emails between the two; Batey did not recall the correspondence.

Ford stated that for four years in a row that we’ve given raises. Now the burden is falling on the tax payers. It’s a bad situation. Sales and Property Taxes are all we have; highly suggests implementing the Wheel Tax back into the revenue streams. Gulley reminded the committee that this option was not available for consideration at this time.

Motion by Ford to give \$3,000 flat increase to all employees; seconded by Gulley

MOTION APPROVED

5 YES, 1 NO, 1 ABSENT

Roll Call Vote:

**Atwood – Yes
C Gregory – Yes**

**B Gregory – Yes
Gulley – Yes**

**Ford – Yes
Overman - No**

Chief Cothron approached committee for clarification of the passed action. Gulley stated that the approved action was a flat number of \$3,000 for each employee and not a rate increase. Payroll staff would need to calculate the hour rate equivalent for each employee.

Gulley recommended a tax increase of about 8¢, raising the 1.9877 rate to \$2.06 to cover this funding.

Motion by Ford to set the General Tax Rate at 2.07; seconded by Gulley

MOTION APPROVED

5 YES, 1 NO, 1 ABSENT

Chief Batey stated that EMS overtime is scheduled at 824 hours per year.

Gulley stated his appreciation for al county employees.

Atwood charged the Mayor to consider pay ranges for all positions with starting rates and top out rates. Overman as Chair of the Personnel Committee will consider this proposal.

Motion by B Gregory to adjourn; seconded by C Gregory.

Meeting adjourned at 6:48pm