

**LUMPKIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL CALLED WORK SESSION NOTES**

July 1, 2015

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Dockery called the Special Called Work Session to order at 8:42 a.m. in the Executive Conference Room of the Lumpkin County Administration Building. Present were Chris Dockery, Doug Sherrill, Steve Shaw, Rhett Stringer, and Bob Pullen.

**2016 Budget**

The purpose of this work session is to discuss the proposed 2016 Budget.

**TAX COMMISSIONER**

Rachel Pruitt asked if there would be a salary study done for the employees and said, if so, she expects them to act on the study results. Chairman Dockery explained that one has been included in the proposed budget. Ms. Pruitt then requested another full-time employee dedicated to the new boat registrations portion that will be submitted to her office. Chairman Dockery asked if it was premature to ask for another employee without knowing the impact it will have on her office. Ms. Pruitt stated that a portion of the position could be funded by her employee's Social Security withholding, that is reimbursed by the state. She asked that all of the revenue from her office be spent within her office. Chairman Dockery gave an example of how her revenue and additional funding was used to support her office. Ms. Pruitt said she believes that there is a need for another employee now, so she feels that there will be more of a need next year. Commissioner Sherrill stated that he doesn't question her need for another employee, but said he feels that the salaries and other issues are more of a priority. Ms. Pruitt requested a raise for an employee to bring her up to the current pay scale.

**COUNTY CLERK**

Kathleen Walker reviewed the information regarding her request for a part-time employee, from the currently frozen full-time position. Commissioner Sherrill asked if an intern could be a possibility. Ms. Walker explained that the employee was needed for day-to-day operations, and projects were usually the required focus for interns. She then discussed how the Clerk and Deputy Clerk jobs have changed since the 2012 Open Meetings/Open Records law was passed and listed the responsibilities of the office. Deputy Clerk Melissa Rich described areas where state-mandated changes have increased the needs of the office staff.

**CORONER**

Ronald Fortner began by asking to be paid a yearly salary instead of being compensated per call. He said this is a choice he is given by law but Deputy Coroners are not given the salary option. Commissioner Stringer questioned what the difference in savings would be if the coroner was paid a salary. Mr. Fortner stated that the cost should be less. There was discussion of where the change would be listed in his budget.

*Chairman Dockery called for a break from 10:15 – 10:30 a.m.*

**LIBRARY**

Chairman Dockery began by explaining the budget process and the Commissioners expectations.

Bill O'Leksy made a PowerPoint presentation listing the main reasons that so many people visit the library. He discussed the long-term and short-term problems of the library. He said the short-term issues are the loss of hours open to the public due to a reduction in staff. The presentation compared their 2008 budget to the 2015 proposed budget. Mr. O'Leksy stated that 2008 was the last time the library met the state minimum standard requirements.

The library was removed from the 2008 SPLOST due to the Justice Center going over budget. General O'Leksy proposed adding one full-time employee, restoring the current full-time employees to full-time hours and making a new library plan to take to the state representatives for their assistance.

Commissioner Sherrill stated that the \$410 million loss in the tax digest since 2008, makes it very difficult to meet every department's requests. The library is requesting a \$162,000 increase to their 2016 budget in which a little over 55% of the increase is requested for salaries. He said he is more interested in the amount for the requested new and improved materials, instead of the requested salaries increase. Commissioner Sherrill stated he would like to look at using the inmate housing revenue to help fund some of the material costs at the library. He said he feels the request for an additional employee and increase in salaries should be considered the same as the other departments in the county.

Chairman Dockery explained that there were other departments in the county that still have frozen positions. The library's staff furloughs were taken off a couple of years ago, but the frozen positions have still remained in place. The Chairman reviewed areas that were also not funded with the 2008 SPLOST, like the Development Authority and Water & Sewer Department. He would like for the community to get together, make a long term plan and see how much money they could raise to put with the funding from SPLOST. He said they could then add all funds together to ask the state for support. The Chairman explained that it's the Commissioners' responsibility to try and work the best way possible, without a greater burden to the taxpayers.

Library Director Claudia Gibson discussed the 2008 state grant funding and a waiver she submitted regarding reductions in county departments. However, she fears that since they are not keeping up with the other departments' funding, then they are in risk of losing those grants.

Commissioner Stringer and Commissioner Shaw expressed their support of the library as a board, however, they said they have to look at all needs of the county and address them accordingly. Commissioner Sherrill stated that it is important for the citizens to know how, even with a decreasing digest, the Board of Commissioners is maintaining without the funds. He explained by increasing fees and by using funds from fund balance that the board has been able to maintain, but that only goes so far. Commissioner Sherrill asked how and what was the Library doing or changing, to assist in their funding needs. He said he recognizes the need but also recognizes the need of other departments in the county as well.

Carol Martina, a part-time employee at the library, stated she was surprised to see how small of a size the library is, compared to the size of the community. She stated that there are so many that cannot afford a computer or the internet and come to the library to gain access.

Carol Ann Johnson asked questions about economic development and where the funding came from to pave the roads in the county. Commissioner Sherrill replied that the roads are funded by the county. He said they are set up on a maintenance system, scored and reviewed by the state and then approved by the state. Chairman Dockery then answered her questions regarding economic development.

Jonathan Carlisle stated that it has become almost impossible to do anything without the internet. He said there are many people that use the library internet for jobs and education which is pushing more and more on the younger kids so that they need the internet.

Lamar Bates questioned why the library was not in the Capital Improvements Plan. Commissioner Sherrill explained that it was a plan for things like new computers and equipment, but not for new buildings.

Debbie Hamm, a retired school teacher, said she wants to make sure the library does not slip down from importance compared to other departments.

Laura LaTourette, a financial advisor in the county, has gone to the library many times and is surprised that they have to fight for this fundamental part of the community. She stated that fundamental things should be in the top part of the budget items. She told the board that if they want to grow the poverty level then take away the library, because that is what it will do. Commissioner Sherrill asked how are they to increase taxes on property that continues to decrease in value, according to the digest.

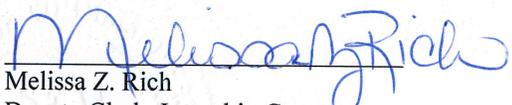
Nan Peters stated that she knows that there are kids whose families don't have the means for the internet. She said they, therefore, cannot do their school projects due to the library being cut back and not open, on those occasions when they are able to get to the library.

**PARK & RECREATION**

Park & Rec Director Greg Walker requested one full-time position to be added to the maintenance staff. He said this need is due to the increased responsibilities of all of the additional property and services they have acquired over the past few years. There was discussion on what changes have occurred due to those increases.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further comments the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Dockery at 12:57p.m.

  
Melissa Z. Rich  
Deputy Clerk, Lumpkin County

