



LUMPKIN COUNTY
Board of Commissioners
Special Called Work Session Agenda
Executive Conference Room

June 28, 2022
2:30 P.M.

- **CALL TO ORDER**
- **DISCUSS 2023 BUDGET**
- **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Dockery

LUMPKIN COUNTY
Board of Commissioners
Special Called Work Session Minutes
Executive Conference Room



June 28, 2022
2:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by Chairman Chris Dockery

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Chris Dockery	Chairman	Present	
Tucker Greene	District 1 Commissioner	Present	
Bobby Mayfield	District 2 Commissioner	Present	
Rhett Stringer	District 3 Commissioner	Excused	
Jeffrey Moran	District 4 Commissioner	Present	

DISCUSS 2023 BUDGET

Coroner Mark Cox disseminated a paper copy of a PowerPoint that listed the surrounding counties' coroner data. The Coroner said his request is just for a realistic pay amount for next year. They are being hit hard with overdoses and transports to the crime lab. He is just trying to get competitive pay for himself and the deputy coroners. The handout shows the pay and call volume of the surrounding counties and Coroner Cox explained how each county was different. He said he hasn't had any complaints about how the coroner's office has been run. If they have heard any issues, please let him know so he can address them. He just wants realistic pay for the job compared to the work load. Coroner Cox said they attempted to pass a bill in congress that addresses the pay but that got tabled until next time. He said Lumpkin County was mentioned multiple times during the creation of the bill because of the issues here in the county and how it has been a concern for many years. There are only two coroners out of the six surrounding counties that are not affiliated with a funeral home, here and Fannin County. He said they had a record number of cases last year and he does not see himself running at the next election if the pay is not addressed.

Chairman Dockery asked for comments and Commissioner Mayfield asked what number he would consider appropriate. Coroner Cox responded after he looked at two different ways of figuring it, he does not recommend looking at it by calls. A set amount per call is difficult because the time that is spent on a case varies from case to case. He thinks a set salaried amount for the coroner of \$30,000 - \$35,000 is a good ballpark figure and half of that for the deputy coroners. Coroner Cox said the two ways they look at figuring the salaries in surrounding counties is either by calls or by population. Currently they are already 11 deaths ahead this year, from this time last year. Chairman Dockery ran some numbers of the surrounding areas and he said the average he is coming up with is \$23,518.00. He did not figure in Hall County, because he does not think they are on the same level as us. Chairman Dockery asked is it either paid by salary, paid by call, or could it be both? He said we would need to check on this to make sure it could only be paid one way. He knows he can trust the current coroner not to try and double dip, but he will not be the coroner forever. They need to make sure that whoever took the position in the future couldn't change it and get paid twice. Chairman Dockery agrees there needs to be some parity in this. He asked the coroner to let the BOC look at the budget as a whole, which is what they are going to do as soon as he leaves. Let them see where they are at in the big scheme of things, but he thinks it is a need and they need to take a step in the that direction to meet that need.

Chairman Dockery stated the guidance the BOC gave the County Manager was to prepare a budget providing the same services there are now. He has prepared a budget that reflects that. The BOC met with some of the

elected officials to see what their requests are, and that brings us to where we are now. The Chairman asked what guidance the County Manager needed tonight and what the next step will be. Mr. Ours said we prepared a budget including everything the Board wanted and continuing the same service we have now. He reviewed the additional amount included for fuel, the inmate medical increase that was just approved, the COLA in July of 3%, and the merit of 4% in January. There are \$10.2 million in property taxes currently being anticipated. That would leave \$1.9 million needed to balance the budget. If they chose to take the \$1.9 million from fund balance that is needed to balance the budget it would dwindle it to \$6.5 million. There are three main areas in the budget being personnel, operating, and capital. Personnel is the largest expense, then operating, and then capital. There has been very little capital included in the budget. Mr. Ours said there are buildings that need some improvements, and he wished we had more capital because there is no money to fix those issues. He said they need to decide if they are going to increase taxes to cover the \$1.9 million needed or start reducing the level of services or remove the COLA or merits.

Chairman Dockery deferred to the Board if there was anything that was not included in the budget that needs to be from the budget meetings with the elected officials. They said there was not. Chairman Dockery said if you take Hall County out of the equation the coroner has a legitimate request for additional salary. He really thinks we have a good coroner, he provides a good service, and he thinks there needs to be some adjustment to the coroner salary. Chairman Dockery believes to keep pace, it averages out to \$23,518. He is not in support of a millage increase. They need to take a hard look at services and see if there are areas, they need to cut. He feels they are right on the verge of real growth and they will be able to grow into it. The next step they need to do is take it by department and tweak it. The Chairman thinks they have to take the roll up and take the inflationary growth.

Commissioner Mayfield suggested going through the budget line by line and see where they can deduct to reduce the \$1.9 million. Chairman Dockery asked if we have County vehicles being excessively driven around? He was adamant the COLA and Merit has to stay. Commissioner Mayfield said he agrees with the Chairman, that is a must have. Commissioner Moran was in agreement with the Chairman and said there are some creative ways to reduce the budget. They will not be able to find all of the \$1.9 million, but the Chairman said they will find some. They need to use as little as possible of fund balance to balance the budget at the end of the year. Through attritions and limited movement of vehicles and savings in departments they can find some savings. Mr. Ours agreed there may be some things they can start doing now that may help decrease the budget for next year. The commissioners all agreed they have to take the rollup and include the COLA and merit. They think that the growth is coming and that is going to help, we just have to get by a little bit longer. There was discussion of what date to hold the special called meeting to review the budget line by line. Staff will prepare some ideas and information to present to them at a Special Called Work Session on July 16 at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

July 20, 2022

Date



Melissa Witcher
County Clerk, Lumpkin County



Chris Dockery, Chairman
Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners