LUMPKIN COUNTY
Board of Commissioners
Special Called Work Session Agenda
Executive Conference Room
99 Courthouse Hill
Dahlonega, GA 30533

June 19, 2023
8:00 AM

- **Call to Order**
- **2024 Budget Discussion**
- **8:00 AM to 9:00 AM - Sheriff**
- **9:00 AM - Staff**
- **Adjournment**

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Special Called Work Session Minutes
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99 Courthouse Hill
Dahlonega, GA 30533

June 19, 2023
8:00 AM

- **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 am. Present were Chairman Chris Dockery and District Commissioners Tucker Greene, Bobby Mayfield, Rhett Stringer, and Jeff Moran.

- **2024 Budget Discussion**

- **8:00 AM to 9:00 AM – Sheriff**

Chairman Dockery began listing the requests from the Sheriff's administration portion. DeAnna Williams said the taser and body cameras are set to expire and they want to make sure that is in the budget. Chairman Dockery confirmed it is included and it is very important. Sheriff Jarrard said they have hashed out everything except the extra positions in the patrol division. He is trying to stay above the curve and with the new hospital coming, he is predicting an increased amount in the call volume. Chairman Dockery asked about the City's police department and if that has decreased the calls in the city. The Sheriff responded that the City is a part-time agency and they must assist them with domestic calls and theft reports. The LCSO also has to do all of the city investigations. Chairman Dockery said the city is going to be a 24/7 department and the Sheriff agreed, but said they are 2 years out on that. Chairman Dockery said he is concerned about E911 because that is where the great increase is. He asked if the City has resulted in an increase in the call volume, and staff confirmed the City Police Department is causing more radio traffic than the County does on most days because of their frequent traffic stops. Chairman Dockery told the Sheriff the BOC would be willing to address the increase in the call volume with the Sheriff's support. Sheriff Jarrard said he would like to look more into what the other surrounding areas do with their cities.

Chairman Dockery is concerned with E911 the most. He thinks they need to look at the City paying their part or having their own E911 because the service they are providing is not paying for itself. Sheriff Jarrard said the City is working to become a full-time department, but up until that time, the City needs to cover their cost. They need 3 positions in the E911 department to cover the increase in call volume from the city. E911 Director Carlton Chester said the City could not just hire someone to answer only city calls because they are not set up like that. The Sheriff just reiterated that he knows what's coming and he is asking for additional positions to stay ahead of the curve.

Chairman Dockery ran some quick numbers and based on population we are at about the same ratio for deputies as Forsyth County. Commissioner Mayfield asked if we are currently fully staffed. Major Cochran responded no; there are currently 9 openings. Commissioner Stringer has an issue with taking from another department that is in need when they can't fill the openings they currently have. The Sheriff commended the BOC on the increasing the pay and said they have been great about giving raises. Commissioner Mayfield informed the Sheriff of a post he saw on Facebook where a deputy said they can't feed their families because the county is building a recreation center. The Sheriff said he tries to explain that funding for projects is paid from SPLOST, grants, or something like that and could only be used for building and not salaries. There are younger employees that don't understand how everything works that often make the posts like that. He said he does try to stop that from happening.

Commissioner Mayfield asked if the LCSO finance employee should be moved to the County's Finance Department. Ms. Williams responded no, because she does a lot more than just the finance portion. She is also over the uniforms and has other duties. Sheriff Jarrard thanked the Commissioners for moving CID to the old Planning building because that has given them so much more room to get more organized.

- **9:00 AM – Staff**

Chairman Dockery said they have met with the officials and now they will go through and tell them what they have proposed. The coroner came last year and wanted salaried positions, but he after he did the math and saw how it worked, he saw it was not the best way. They want to move the $15,000 to the salary and wages, so he will make that as coroner and then move the $30,000 to coroner services. That will pay for the $225 per call and he would get that as a per call fee or whoever answers the call. The coroner would like to do a $50 ride-a-long pay for training. He can move $500 to cover the ride-a-long pay in his training. Chairman Dockery asked about the coroners being paid as a 1099 and Ms. Branan confirmed that is correct. That has always been the guidance from ACCG. She said they are making a per case fee, so that is why they are issued a 1099. Chairman Dockery doesn't think that is right because they are using county supplies and equipment, so he doesn't think they can do that at a federal level. Ms. Branan is going to double check to make sure that we are doing it correctly.

The library asked for more funding to cover their health insurance increase. We have increased their budget $15,000 to cover the increase. Chairman Dockery asked staff if that is for just Lumpkin County's portion or if that is for ours and Dawson County? Ms. Branan responded it should be for our staff and for our portion of the main office, but she will double check that amount.

Judge Maxwell reduced his budget and he will be working as a part time juvenile judge.

The Clerk of Court asked for two fulltime positions, $1,000 for travel, and uniforms for her staff. They agreed $750 was more than enough to cover the cost for t-shirts and could be added. He asked about the current milage rate and said it needs to be increased to the federal rate. He said it needs to be made clear to the elected officials that if a county car is available, they are to use it and not be paid milage. Ms. Branan said the Clerk is aware of the policy, but staff cannot stop an elected official from getting paid for milage as long as she does not go over her travel budget. Ms. Branan will get with County Attorney to change the travel policy to make the mileage change.

Commissioner Stringer said the title for the Sheriff's finance person needs to be changed to reflect what she is doing and her pay. Her position is currently classified as a deputy position. The Sheriff is wanting to add an additional position, being the finance position, and freeze the deputy position. Ms. Branan said her understanding is that he is wanting to make her position what her position is and not increase her pay. She is listed as an administrative assistant in the finance system. Chairman Dockery agreed we need to get it cleaned up and list it as it is. Ms. Branan confirmed the staff did include the body cameras and tasers in the proposed budget. Chairman Dockery is really concerned with the call volume at E911 because of the city police department. Commissioner Stringer spoke to the Mayor and Councilman Gaddis, but they are not willing to look at and acknowledge the call volume. County Manager Ours asked the Sheriff to talk to the mayor and try to get her to support additional positions to assist with the call volume.

Ms. Branan disseminated additional talking points since the budget report. She explained the new FY22 audit shows the unassigned fund balance is $8,777,230. The LOST and TAVT revenue came in over the budgeted amount, however, she does not think that trend will continue. As for TSPLOST, we do not have the public works director position anymore, but we will have to pay for engineers. The project managers positions can be paid for out of the TSPLOST funds. Reservoir maintenance expenses have been moved to come from the special tax district. She continued, currently the reservoir bridge is budgeted out of the general fund, but she is suggesting it come from the special tax district. We do not know when that project will be complete or when we will be asked to pay for it. Commissioner Moran asked if we could take it from the fund balance. Chairman Dockery asked how much interest was being made off the ARPA funds. She is not sure; she will have to look and see and check to make sure there are no limitations on the funds. The consensus was for staff to come to the BOC with the options when the time comes for that bill to be paid.

Ms. Branan discussed the positions that were updated since the budget presentation. There is a proposal to add a full-time maintenance worker that will be hired for the aquatic center and to assist with the janitor workload. They will work on the pump and building maintenance for the aquatic center and there will not be enough to do with a new building, so they will be used to offset the need for an additional janitor position, said Mr. Ours. They will be placed under public buildings and will be able to be moved to assist where needed.

Additionally, since the budget presentation Randy Allison said they are no longer able to keep up with the people using transit. He is asking for an additional part time transit driver because the number of trips have gone up to pre-covid numbers.

Ms. Branan said K-9 started out with one dog but since, they have had dogs donated to them. The concern is the vet bills, food, and housing bills that come with them. She asked if they can put a limit on how many dogs they are allowed to have. They will check with the County Attorney to see if that is possible. Chairman Dockery wonders what their value is to the citizens if they were retired from somewhere else and then given to us. He thinks they should be counted as either a position or equipment. The current budget is $5,000 for the dogs and $8,000 is what is budgeted for FY24. The Sheriff is asking for $12,000. Chairman Dockery agreed with the $8,000 for next year and there has to be some accountability. They do have a K-9 account but there is only $641 in it. There is currently nothing stopping them from getting more dogs.

Next is the recreation center budget. They anticipate there will be about a $300,000 shortfall in the budget. The annual family pass will be $250.00 and there will be a 10% military discount that is not included in that amount. Chairman Dockery asked if there is a local resident discount and if so, how do they prove it? The staff responded by the address on their license. He asked who would rent the entire gym? Mr. Ours responded for a pickleball event, or a basketball tournament, and because it has a kitchen, a lot of catered events that require more room. He said the BOC just raised the hotel motel tax to 8% and currently we have 80,000 budgeted. You could say that a majority of the difference is coming from the hotel motel tax. Chairman Dockery said the swimming pool was the only thing that brought in revenue before it was taken out. He is hopeful they will make a revenue with the new one. If you break even, then you are doing good with the building. The contingency amount is built in because they do not know the cost of the natural gas, water and sewer, and what the water treatment contract will be.

The increase in the property and liability insurance is due to us not receiving the dividend.

Ms. Branan said the assessed numbers have increased 17% to the budgeted property tax. That does not include the exemptions and that would yield $13.7 million, essentially fully funding the 2024 budget as presented. That would be if you take the rollup. The budget increased 9% from last year due to the 4% merit, the increase to FICA, Medicare, and retirement, the COLA for half the year next year, and the increase in the self-insurance. Commissioner Stringer asked how many of the assessments would get appealed. The Chief Appraiser thinks there will be less than last year, but Mr. Ours will get a new number from him. Commissioner Stringer asked where the fund balance percentage would be based on what they were able to save from FY22 and it would set at 29%. Chairman Dockery asked about the possibility of shifting anything from the planning district to assist in not increasing the special tax district. Is there something that we could pay from our fund balance to help reduce the milage rate? His recommendation is to look at some things that are capital one-time expenses that could come from fund balance.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:31 am.

July 18, 2023
Date

Chris Dockery, Chairman
Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Melissa Witcher
Clerk, Lumpkin County