

STATE OF TEXAS:

COUNTY OF MILAM:

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on Thursday, the 8th day of July A. D. 2021, the Commissioners' Court of Milam County, Texas, convened into a Workshop in the Commissioners' Courtroom, Milam County Courthouse, 102 S. Fannin, Cameron Texas, with the following members of the Court present, to-wit:

**STEVE YOUNG, COUNTY JUDGE
DONALD SHUFFIELD, COMMISSIONER PRECINCT NO. 2
ART NEAL, COMMISSIONER PRECINCT NO. 3
JEFF MUEGGE, COMMISSIONER PRECINCT NO. 4
JODI MORGAN, COUNTY CLERK**

**Absent to Wit
HENRY HUBNIK, COMMISSIONER PRECINCT NO.1**

And the proclamation having been made the Court was in session, the following business came on to be considered:

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET MEETINGS

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION RECORDED IN MINUTE BOOK

BUDGET WORKSHOP ASSISTANT – ACCOUNT LISTING

9:00 A.M. – Judge called the meeting to order and established a quorum.

In attendance: Judge Young, Commissioner Shuffield, Commissioner Neal, Commissioner Muegge, Danica Lara

Note: ARPA- American Rescue Plan Act Grant

9:00am-9:04am Greg Hoelscher- JP #1

Greg Hoelscher- We handle tickets, evictions, and inquest, we handle 90% of all warrants and everything else law enforcement doesn't handle. Our operating budget is fine, but it is time for a raise, 2% for all employees. The cost of inflation is going up and we are already behind.

Judge Young- We did 4% 2 years ago, we are thinking about using ARPA money as a bonus this year and hopefully again the first of the next year. We have around 179 employees and that includes part time.

Greg Hoelscher- We already missed last year, we have the 12th highest budget with counties our size. All our Elected Officials are the lowest paid, we need to be doing better for our employees.

Judge Young- I am hoping to buy some time with this ARPA money, then hoping with solar coming in, we will be getting some money from that.

Greg Hoelscher- My budget is fine like it is

9:05am-9:09am Gary Northcott- JP #4

Gary Northcott- I am asking for a raise, my clerk is what is considered a master clerk and she is the only one in the county. I would like to see the JP's bumped up to \$40,000. We are \$10,000 below average a year. Right now my Precinct has the smallest volume in the county.

Commissioner Muegge- They are projecting Thorndale will be the biggest in the county in a couple of years.

Judge Young- We know the situation we are in, its just the money, we don't have it. I want to get our reserves back to where they were

9:12am-9:13am - Danica Lara- Auditor

Danica- I am asking to increase my budget to \$25,000 for part time help, increase in salary for employees and our external audit fee is going up

9:13am-9:46am- Sherry Mueck- Tax Assessor/Collector

Sherry Mueck- I am closing the Rockdale Office, there are roaches, the building need maintenance, there is a leak in the slab underneath Janie's desk, Janie has been sick a lot, ceiling tiles are falling in. They sit right in the middle of that building and they have no emergency exit, there is a door that is locked and nobody knows who has a key to get out. The internet is a major problem, it is slow to print receipts. I had a lady file a complaint because she thought we refused to take her money because everytime she came down there the software was down due to internet problems. We are short staffed and when someone is sick we cannot take vacation. By law I only have to keep the county seat open.

Judge Young- How many people do you service there?

Sherry Mueck- I do not have those numbers in front of me. The car dealerships are the biggest customers. My employees are exhausted and tired. My first five years I worked 70 hours a week, my husband has been doing all the maintenance on both buildings because we do not have a maintenance man. One extra employee is just not going to fix this situation, it is the building.

Judge Young- The place is being exterminated, the emergency exit can be fixed

Sherry Mueck- An employee would be great, and I have spoken to you (Judge Young) about the problems at the building

Judge Young- I can fix a few things, but I am not sure you can close the substation on your own, I think that is a Commissioners Court decision

Sherry Mueck- It is my decision

Judge Young- No it is up to Commissioner Court, we don't want you to close, we will try and fix.

Sherry Mueck- So you will fix the building and give me another employee? I do not have enough staff to run my office. I have to wait the counter; we work through lunch and sometimes till 6pm

Commissioner Muegge- How many employees do you have?

Sherry Mueck- 2 in Rockdale and 4 here in Cameron

Commissioner Muegge- Didn't we give you a full-time employee last year?

Sherry Mueck- I got Part time money and we couldn't find anyone to work part time, so we took the money and split it up amongst my staff as raises. I just hired a lady,

and it will take 3 months to train her. When I took office, we were still down 2 employees from budget cuts

Commissioner Muegge- I talked to Lee County and they have 1 lady that handles it all in Lexington

Sherry Mueck- But she doesn't have the car dealerships. Hill County had the same problems and they closed down their substation.

Commissioner Shuffield- Can the car dealerships do their titles online?

Sherry Mueck- Only Caldwell Country does theirs, the other two do not. It still takes a person to process the online web viewer.

Judge Young- How much work does it take?

Sherry Mueck- It's still the same amount of work, they just don't have to stand in line and wait on it

Judge Young- Can you get mifi's to help with the internet? Let us think about this a little more

Sherry Mueck- Who is going to do the maintenance?

Judge Young- If something needs fixing call me and I will send someone to do it

Sherry Mueck- I feel like there are 4-5 people in this room all against me

Commissioner Shuffield- I resent that because I have helped you when you needed it

Sherry Mueck- In the beginning yes

Commissioner Muegge- Who else is in that building?

Sherry Mueck- WIC, JP #3, Health Department, Veterans, Workforce

Commissioner Muegge- Andy was here yesterday and only mentioned the roof

Sherry Mueck- We only have one phone that rings over there

Judge Young- Let us study on it

Sherry Mueck- Why do you want to keep it open?

Commissioner Shuffield- To service the people

Sherry Mueck-Brazos County is huge and they don't have a substation

Commissioner Shuffield- I don't know about other counties

Sherry Mueck – By law I only have to keep the mail office open

Judge Young- With the growth coming in

Sherry Mueck- With technology people have more than one option to coming in, they can pay online

Judge Young- People are accustomed to coming in there

Sherry Mueck- I can't fix this and its too stressful to watch my staff struggle

9:56am-10:07am – Karen Berry – District Clerk

Gave a handout.

Karen Berry- I am asking for a 3% raise for all my girls

Judge Young- We are thinking about giving them all a bonus with ARPA money

Karen Berry- I want to move Renee up to \$27,000

I also want to do something upstairs as soon as the new annex is finished. I want to move my girls around to where they are all facing the counter and no one has their back to the counter anymore and that may require new furniture

10:08am-10:16am- Ken Janicek- Veterans Officer

Ken Janicek- No changes, there are 1628 veterans, that is a 5% decrease in population. I am good with the same budget

10:17am-10:24am- Bill Torrey- County/District Attorney

Judge Young- Bill we are going to use ARPA money for the Admin Assistant and new Attorney you are needing

Bill Torrey- I would like to pay Charlotte more money, right now she only makes \$11.00 an hour which is only \$23,000 a year. I would like to bump her up to \$14.00 an hour if we can shift some money from ARPA. We have 700 pending felonies right now.

Judge Young- I will do my best to get money from ARPA to pay Charlotte \$14.00 an hour

Danica Lara- You allotted \$40,000; Judge and Bill wants to bring down to \$35,000

Judge Young- We will see about getting you fixed up

10:24am-10:32am- Jennifer Lopez-Juvenile Probation

Jennifer Lopez- In 2017 the cost for placement was \$110.00 a day for 6 months for 5 placements in 2020 the cost went up to \$197.00 a day for 6 months for 3 placements. We are asking for more money; we would like the cost for 1 more placement and that comes to \$35,584. All 3 surrounding counties contribute to our budget, I don't have exact figures just estimates; Fall County \$97,000 and Robertson County \$118,000 the rest of the money for our budget comes from the State. Our budget is distributed through placements, detention, and staff salaries.

10:33am-10:54am- Robert Kirkpatrick- Health Director

Robert provided a handout.

Robert Kirkpatrick- I am asking for an increase for Dr. House

Judge Young- \$5250 is already in the budget for Dr. House

Danica Lara- The increase of \$5,250 needs to be added to the budget

Robert Kirkpatrick- Last year I asked for insurance to be paid by the county for a nurse, the grant she is paid from has a 10% match and insurance would count as a match. I am asking for the 10% to be county paid insurance.

Go up \$1,000 In office supplies

\$1,000 for Medical Waste; we had an audit done and we are not to pay for medical waste out of grant money, the county should pay for that

Increase in money for the septic helpers \$3,000

Septic Applications have increased

SAFE Software for septic's maintenance fee \$1,000

Danica- The cellphones, you are paying for?

Robert- Yes

Commissioner Shuffield- How do we charge for septic?

Robert- The inspectors inspect any septic complaints

Commissioner Shuffield- Are we charging for septic's when houses are being built, for them to inspect?

Commissioner Muegge- That is contracted out

Robert Kirkpatrick - \$410 for a normal system

\$560 for an Aerobic System

\$660 for Commercial system

I have grants for new personnel, COVID- Immunization

I have requested \$765,000, we will have to evaluate how the grant works, I am talking to two providers hoping to work on Evening clinics and weekend clinics. I have posted the positions and hope to hire by mid month

Judge Young- Esme and Amanda, their grants are good until the 1st of the year?

Robert Kirkpatrick- I am not sure if its through the 1st of next year

Judge Young- We have been talking about fixing up the Professional Building, you need to talk to Stan Graves and finish the plans

Robert Kirkpatrick- I sent in my changes yesterday; my staff is excited about the move

Judge Young- We will be able to do vaccinating clinics over there, maybe see about getting a PA

Robert Kirkpatrick- I am writing a grant for that now

10:58am-11:02am- Floyd Ingram- Ag Extension Office

Floyd- We are getting back on track to normal, we are not asking for any increases or decreases. Marcia Felton retired, and we hired her replacement; Carolyn Hux You can see our travel wasn't used much last year because of Covid but we are back to getting out and traveling.

11:03am-11:20am- Jay Beathard- Constable PCT #3

Jay Beathard- What does the county have in mind for raises?

Judge Young- Our revenue did not increase only our ad valorem. There is no budget for raises but we are looking at using ARPA money to give a bonus this year and the first of next year

Jay Beathard- Base pay on constables is low for us, in 1995 I started in the Jail and the constables made the same amount as the Sheriff. Now we are not making what a Patrol Deputy makes. A Patrol Deputy starting pay is \$49,220 and I make \$37,725. We are fortunate to have the constables that we have now but pay is hard to draw interest in the job and then to find qualified applicants. You don't need just a Peace Officers License, we handle Writs, Citations and there is a lot of money involved in some of those proceedings

Judge Young- Figuring out some kind of 5 year plan, 2% doesn't do anything, I am not sure what to do and we just don't have the money, it's an ongoing issue of underpaid employees

Jay Beathard- I would like an increase on vehicle equipment cost, oil base products. I am just asking the Commissioners Court to look and develop some kind of plan, the county is growing, services take more and more as the county grows.

Commissioner Shuffield- So much growth since the census, it won't show for another 10 years.

Jay Beathard- Subdivisions we have no control over that are 10 acres or more. Looking for help on the maintenance of the vehicle

Judge Young- Get it maintained and we will take care of the cost

Commissioner Muegge- How man miles does you car have on it?

Jay Beathard- 107,000- Hard miles

Commissioner Muegge- How is your office?

Jay Beathard- It is in poor shape, I have ceiling tiles falling on me, there are water leaks, the roof leaks but I am thankful I have an office

Commissioner Muegge- Where was your office before?

Jay Beathard- My car

11:21am-11:36am- Jodi Morgan-County Clerk

Jodi Morgan-Gave handout

Jodi Morgan- I want to go over Elections first; SB598 is effective 9/1/2021 this will go to a paper-based system, there is grant money available we have an estimate of \$236,966 to change our equipment out. We are waiting on the State to tell us how much each county will get; but we will move forward as quickly as possible so we can make sure we are covered in grants. I do want you all to take into consideration this county needs an Election Administrator, I hope you will all consider that in the near future. My Election Budget will need to go up from \$51,500 to \$147,000, we have three Elections next year. There are 11 Local positions on the ballot and then we still have Federal and State offices as well. I expect the Primary to be moved from March to May due to the redistricting.

For County Clerk budget I am asking for 2% raises for my staff, last year during Covid we did work even when the county was closed, we caught up on back log of scanning and still handling day to day duties. During the Snowstorm my staff took home laptops and mifi's and worked remotely.

I am asking to go up in Microfilming Records to pay for maintenance on some software and for another indexing computer. The way we are set up at the new annex, I will need another indexing computer and the cost is \$6161.52.

11:36am-12:00pm-Commissioners

Commissioner Shuffield- I did a salary adjustment for some of my guys and did some pay increases. I would like to see the Commissioners get a raise up to \$57,000 or \$58,000. I know we post in the paper, I think this will also improve the people that run for this job.

Commissioner Muegge- How much of the grant do we get a percentage of?

Commissioner Shuffield- \$229,000??

Judge Young- if we get the \$1.4 million

Commissioner Shuffield- Can we put the extra money in road and bridge?

Judge Young- We can look at pay raises, million towards roads, increase your pay and give raises

Commissioner Muegge- can it be used for general everyday maintenance?

Judge Young- Not sure if you can hire help or not with this grant, but you can fix drainage and litigation. Litigation includes transportation

Commissioner Shuffield- I have 9 employees and we stay busy, shredding season keeps us busy too

Commissioner Muegge- Budget for 1st installment payment for the Zipper

Danica Lara- Increase Salary to? \$58,500?

Motion made by Commissioner Shufield, seconded by Commissioner Muegge to adjourn the meeting at 12:02 p.m. This motion having been put to vote prevailed, the vote being unanimous.

The above and foregoing Minutes examined and approved in Open Court this _____ day of _____, 2021.

County Judge

State of Texas:

County of Milam:

I, Jodi Morgan, County Clerk, Milam County, Texas, attest that the foregoing is a true and correct accounting of the Commissioners' Court authorized proceedings for _____, day of _____, 2021.

**County Clerk and Ex-Officio Member of
Commissioners' Court, Milam County, Texas**

STATEMENT OF APPROVAL

Commissioner PCT #1

Commissioner PCT #2

Commissioner PCT #3

Commissioner PCT #4