

LOUDON COUNTY COMMISSION
STATE OF TENNESSEE
COUNTY OF LOUDON
July 15, 2013

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

- (1)**
Opening of Meeting **BE IT REMEMBERED** that the Board of Commissioners of Loudon County convened in a Special Called Session in Loudon, Tennessee on the 15th day of July, 2013. The **Honorable Roy Bledsoe** called the meeting to order.
- Commissioner Yarbrough** opened the Special Called Meeting, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and gave the invocation.
- (2)**
Roll Call Present were the following Commissioners: **Jenkins, Meers, Maples, Quillen, Franke, Bledsoe, Duff, Yarbrough, Harrelson, and Miller: (10)**
The following Commissioner was **Absent: (0)**
Thereupon **Chairman Bledsoe** announced the presence of a quorum.
Present was the **Honorable Mayor Estelle Herron.**
- (3)**
Agenda Adopted **Chairman Bledsoe** requested that the July 15, 2013 Special Called Meeting Agenda be adopted.
A **motion** was made by **Commissioner Franke** with a second by **Commissioner Quillen** to adopt the Agenda.
Upon voice vote the motion **Passed** unanimously.
- (4)**
Comments: Agenda Item **Chairman Bledsoe** asked that any visitor wishing to address the Commission regarding the items on the agenda come forward.
Richard Truitt came forward to speak on the School Budget noting that the highest paid teachers in the U.S. are in the District of Columbia at \$58K per year and that Tennessee ranks 30th in the nation in teacher's pay. Despite this, some Tennessee counties in the local area are ranked top in the country for scholastic achievement. The School Board says that Loudon County is ranked 3rd in GPA scores. This is true but GPA is an in-house score. Looking at the ATC scores is a better test and 36 is considered a perfect ATC score. Several surrounding counties are closer to this score than Loudon County which stands at 18. He questioned how you can score 3.55 on the GPA scores but only score 18 on the ATC. He noted that Loudon County started a retirement incentive program for teachers last year and that teacher's pay had been reduced from \$45,000 to \$43,000 a year with the average U.S. teacher's pay being \$47,000. He stated that it's hard to understand the School Board's complaint that the teachers aren't paid enough when they're purposely reducing the pay of current teachers. He said the Schools make unrealistic demands. Loudon County has 395 teachers and 100 assistants – a ratio of about 10 teachers for every student and that fewer personnel would allow better pay. He said that the schools over budget every year and then roll the extra funds into their salary bank and this is a terrible practice. He feels that for the Commission to approve this school budget is to vote for another tax increase for the County.

He also spoke about the Sheriff's budget saying that the Loudon County Sheriff's budget is \$1.4M more than Monroe County and \$700,000 more than Roane County. He said that buying police cars out of the Capital Projects Fund when the well is dry is simply deficit financing and something we complain about the Federal Government doing.

Pat Hunter spoke about the increase in property tax rates from \$1.7869 to \$1.8987 stating that this was an increase of .1118 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. She and her family do not favor this increase on the heels of a tax increase in late June 2011 when the Commission approved a 20 cent per \$100 assessed property tax hike when only 12 cents was needed for the \$45 million School Building Program. She stated that she sees no property tax relief in sight or a curb in spending. She cited the various budget proposals that represent increases and noted that her family does not favor borrowing the \$1.3M to fund new Police cars, renovate the County Office Building and other items on the County wish list. She questioned renovations to the County Office Building when the Courthouse Annex Building lower level floods every time there's a heavy rain and has been for some time and nothing is being done to correct that. She asked that they trim this list down and spend taxpayer's money on absolute essentials and pay for these from the County's Reserve Fund. She urged them to not spend money that they don't have, trim their budget, and learn to live within their means.

Chairman Bledsoe asked if there was anyone else to speak and hearing none he proceeded with the meeting.

Chairman Bledsoe asked **Mayor Herron** if she would like to speak. She thanked her Budget Committee for their hard work and said that she feels that this is the best budget the County has had in quite some time. She noted that not only does it address the 2013-2014 budget requirements but also puts aside money in a reserve for things that the County has not been able to do in the past. She again thanked the Budget Committee for making this possible.

Chairman Bledsoe asked **Budget Director, Tracy Blair** to present the proposed 2013-2014 Budget Resolutions for the Commission's consideration. **Ms. Blair** presented the following resolution, first explaining that in the past the Commission had considered this by voting for each individual Fund within the proposal but that they had the option of voting on the Resolution as a whole if they chose to.

(5)
Appropriations
Resolution
Approved

1. A Resolution Making Appropriations for the Various Funds, Departments, Institutions, Offices and Agencies of Loudon County, Tennessee for the Year Beginning July 1, 2013 and Ending June 30, 2014.

Chairman Bledsoe asked if there was a **motion to consider this Resolution in its entirety** and **Commissioner Duff** responded by saying that he would make this motion but he would like to make a comment prior to his motion if possible.

Chairman Bledsoe allowed him to proceed. **Commissioner Duff** stated his understanding of the current budget situation saying that the present concern is that County revenues are \$910,000. short of covering the expenses and that one possible solution for this was to move this money from the School Reserve Fund to balance the budget. Another possible solution would be to reduce expenses or still another option would be to leave the money in the School Reserve Fund and use property taxes or other funds to get the \$910,000. He noted that \$400,000. was used from the Reserve Fund to balance the 2012/2013 budget and that the 2011/2012 year used \$1,400,000 from the Reserve Fund to balance that year's budget. He stated that it appears that the Commission has set a precedent regarding how to fix budget shortfalls. He then proceeded with his motion on the Resolution.

A motion was made by **Commissioner Duff** with a second by **Commissioner Miller** to approve this Resolution as recommended by the Budget Committee and the Loudon County School Board and as presented.

Commissioner Yarbrough asked for clarification on Capital Projects borrowing of \$1.3M with a pay back over 3 years and **Ms. Blair** responded that this was correct. She then said that the Capital Projects Committee had made recommendations regarding cars for the Sheriff's Department but that somewhere in the budget process these had been changed. **Commissioner Miller** responded that the Budget Committee had received several recommendations and that they went back to the Capital Projects Committee and asked them to prioritize their requirements. The result of this was a requirement for 8 vehicles for the Sheriff but the Budget Committee had decided on 5. The Sheriff's Office came before the Budget Committee and presented a convincing case for the need of 10 vehicles. The Budget Committee agreed to provide the 10 vehicles while negotiating agreement with the Sheriff's Department to establish a yearly schedule for the purchase and maintenance of the vehicles that calls for the purchase of 5 vehicles each year to allow budgeting on a yearly basis vs. many cars in a single year's budget. This also allows better scheduling and budgeting of maintenance expenses for each set of vehicles. The Sheriff's Department representative nodded agreement to this approach. **Mayor Herron** has set aside one tax penny in the Capital Projects Fund to finance this plan.

Commissioner Miller noted that, while they have agreement on this approach, the Commission must maintain the political will to stick to this plan year after year.

Commissioner Yarbrough then asked about the proposed renovations to the County Office Building for \$300,000. She asked if a needs assessment was done and were there architectural drawings and who did them. **Mayor Herron** responded that this was all done during the recently retired Purchasing Director, Leo Bradshaw's term.

Commissioner Yarbrough then said that she was concerned that not all the Department Heads had an opportunity to come before the Budget Committee. **Mayor Herron** responded that every Department Head had the opportunity to come to the Budget Committee meetings and present their case. **Commissioner Miller** agreed with the **Mayor** and cited departments that did come to the Budget Committee.

Commissioner Yarbrough said that she had requested copies of the Budget Committee Meeting Minutes and she had not received them. She said that she was concerned about borrowing money when there was money there that could be drawn from. She said that she didn't feel that she had enough information to vote on the issues in the budget. She asked about the County employee's pay raise and whether or not it would cover the increase in their medical insurance premium.

Commissioner Franke responded that the 2% increase would cover it and that, on average, the result would be about a \$58. pay increase per pay period after the health insurance premium is deducted.

Commissioner Meers spoke about **Mr. Davis** from the Sheriff's Department coming to the Budget Committee and bringing their chief mechanic, **Pete McGinley**, to explain the need for additional cars for the new SRO's and several other requirements that supported the purchase of the 10 vehicles. He said that he was in favor of borrowing the money because he didn't want to keep drawing down on existing funds because of the future unknowns of the Kimberly-Clerk and Staley's outcome that could impact the funding situation for next year's budget. He also noted that there's a need for maintenance on the Convenience Center that's leaking and there are very old records in the basement of the Court House that need to be protected.

Commissioner Franke commented that the Budget Committee met many times in preparation for this budget and that the Department Heads had ample opportunity to come to these meetings to make requests.

Commissioner Quillen voiced concern about continually taking money from the General Fund and asked about the opportunities for replacing these funds.

Commissioner Meers responded that they had brought this concern to the School Board's attention and encouraged them to give the teachers bonuses this year rather than raises but the School Board wouldn't agree to do this.

Commissioner Miller said that this was not a good way to operate and he certainly wouldn't do it this way if he was running the School Board. In response to **Commissioner Quillen's** question, he said that the School Board says it now has a \$6M fund balance and one year from now they forecast having \$5.7M which represents a decline of about \$300,000.

Chairman Bledsoe called for a vote on the motion.

Upon roll call vote the following Commissioners voted **Aye: Meers, Maples, Quillen, Franke, Bledsoe, Duff, Harrelson, Miller, and Jenkins: (9)**

The following Commissioner voted **Nay: Yarbrough: (1)**

The following Commissioner was **Absent: (0)**

Therefore the Chairman declared the motion **Passed: (9,1,0)**

Resolution 071513-A

(6)
Tax Levy
Fixed for
Fiscal Year
2013-2014

2. A Resolution Fixing the Tax Levy in Loudon County, Tennessee for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2013.

Commissioner Franke commented that technically this is not a tax increase but is a "rate adjustment" by the State so it's a zero sum gain – some properties will pay more and some will pay less.

A **motion** was made by **Commissioner Franke** with a second by **Commissioner Harrelson** to approve this Resolution as recommended by the Budget Committee.

Upon roll call vote the following Commissioners voted **Aye: Maples, Quillen, Franke, Bledsoe, Duff, Harrelson, Miller, Jenkins, and Meers: (9)**

The following Commissioner voted **Nay: Yarbrough: (1)**

The following Commissioner was **Absent: (0)**

Thereupon the Chairman declared the motion **Passed: (9, 1, 0)**

Resolution 071513-B

(7)
NonProfit
Organizations
Appropriations
Approved

3. A Resolution Making Appropriations to NonProfit Organizations Serving Loudon County, Tennessee for the Year Beginning July 1, 2013 and Ending June 30, 2014.

Commissioner Miller made a comment prior to voting on this item that not all the funding being recommended is for charities - \$900,000 of this is going to the Fire Department, E911, and the Economic Development Agency.

A **motion** was made by **Commissioner Yarbrough** with a second by **Commissioner Meers** to approve this Resolution as recommended by the Budget Committee.

Upon roll call vote the following Commissioners voted **Aye: Quillen, Franke, Bledsoe, Duff, Yarbrough, Harrelson, Miller, Jenkins, Meers, and Maples: (10)**

The following Commissioners voted **Nay: (0)**

The following Commissioner was **Absent: (0)**

Thereupon the Chairman declared the motion **Passed: (10, 0, 0)**

Resolution 071513-C

(8)
Capital Outlay
Notes of
Loudon County
NTE \$1.3M
Approved

4. A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of Interest Bearing Taxable General Obligation Capital Outlay Notes of Loudon County, Tennessee, in an Aggregate Principal Amount of Not to Exceed One Million Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (1,300,000.).

A **motion** was made by **Commissioner Harrelson** with a second by **Commissioner Jenkins** to approve this Resolution as recommended by the Budget Committee. Upon roll call vote the following Commissioners voted **Aye: Franke, Bledsoe, Duff, Harrelson, Miller, Jenkins, Meers, Maples, and Quillen: (9)**
The following Commissioners voted **Nay: Yarbrough: (1)**
The following Commissioner was **Absent: (0)**
Thereupon the Chairman declared the motion **Passed: (9, 1, 0)**
Resolution 071513-D

(9)
Adjournment

Chairman Bledsoe asked if there were any further comments and, upon receiving none, he asked for a motion to adjourn.

There being no further business, a **motion** being duly made and seconded, the July 15, 2013 Special Called Meeting stood adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

COUNTY CLERK

COUNTY MAYOR