

**JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL  
MARY GORDON ELLIS EXECUTIVE BUILDING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
APRIL 1, 2009  
2:30 P.M.  
BUDGET WORKSHOP  
MINUTES**

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

GEORGE HOOD, CHAIRMAN  
LEROY BLACKSHEAR, VICE CHAIRMAN  
HENRY ETHERIDGE, COUNCILMAN  
REV. SAMUEL GREGORY, COUNCILMAN  
HUBERT TYLER, COUNCILMAN

**STAFF PRESENT:**

ANDREW FULGHUM, ADMINISTRATOR  
RONNIE MALPHRUS, DEP. ADM. ADM. SERVICES  
DALE TERRY, DEP. ADM. ENG. SERVICES  
WILBUR DALEY, DEP. ADM. EMG. SERVICES  
WENDY KELLY, DEP. ADM. DEV. SERVICES  
JUDITH FRANK, CLERK TO COUNCIL

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT THE ELECTRONIC AND PRINT MEDIA WERE NOTIFIED.

DURING PERIODS OF DISCUSSION AND/OR PRESENTATIONS MINUTES ARE TYPICALLY CONDENSED AND PARAPHRASED.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

CHAIRMAN HOOD CALLED THE BUDGET WORKSHOP TO ORDER AT 2:30 P.M.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

CHAIRMAN HOOD LED THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

**INVOCATION:**

COUNCILMAN GREGORY GAVE THE INVOCATION.

**BUDGET WORKSHOP:**

**CARRIE FAIR – JCNNA REQUEST FOR UNITY DAY:**

MS. FAIR REQUESTED \$3,500.00 FOR UNITY DAY. MS. FAIR EXPLAINED THAT IN THE PAST THE COMMUNITY HAS RAISED THE FUNDS TO HOLD THIS EVENT AND THIS YEAR THEY WERE REQUESTING FUNDING FROM THE COUNTY. MS. FAIR INFORMED THE COUNCIL THAT JCNNA IS A 501C ORGANIZATION LIKE THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB. MS. FAIR SAID THAT THIS YEAR RIVERS HILL AND STOKES BLUFF WILL BE JOINING THE

ORGANIZATION. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED HOW MANY PEOPLE ATTEND THE UNITY DAY EVENTS AND MS. FAIR RESPONDED THAT 300-350 PEOPLE ATTENDED LAST YEAR. MS. FAIR STATED THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO BUILD AN INVOLVED COMMUNITY. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED HOW MUCH THE EVENT COST LAST YEAR AND MS. FAIR RESPONDED THAT IT COST \$3,500.00. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED ABOUT GETTING DONATIONS FOR THE EVENT AND MS. FAIR SAID THEY CHARGED THE VENDORS \$50.00 AND THE DONATIONS ARE NOT COMING IN LIKE BEFORE AND THAT IS WHY THEY WERE REQUESTING THAT THE COUNTY FUND THE EVENT. COUNCILMAN TYLER ASKED IF THEY WERE ASKING THE COMMUNITY TO HELP FUND THE EVENT. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID HE FELT THEY SHOULD SOLICIT DONATIONS AND BRING BACK THE BALANCE OF WHAT IS NEEDED TO COUNCIL FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER FUNDING. MS. FAIR SAID IF COUNCIL WANTED TO FUND IT, SHE WAS ASKING FOR \$3,500.00 AND THAT NOT EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATES. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE BUDGET AND HOW MUCH WAS DONATED. CHAIRMAN HOOD REMARKED THAT IT WAS GOING TO BE A TIGHT BUDGET YEAR AND HE DID NOT KNOW HOW MANY THINGS CAN BE FUNDED.

**STAFF PRESENTATION OF BUDGET:**

MR. FULGHUM SAID THE ADMINISTRATION IS TASKED TO PROVIDE THE COUNCIL WITH A BUDGET AND HE HOPED TO HAVE IT READY BY THE NEXT BUDGET WORKSHOP. MR. FULGHUM CONTINUED AND SAID THAT THE REVENUES ARE NOT WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST AND HE HAS SOME SUGGESTIONS THAT ARE GOING TO BE PAINFUL, AND THAT THEY NEED TO FIND \$4,000,000.00 TO CUT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE TO RESTRUCTURE THE WAY THE BUDGET WAS DONE IN THE PAST. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED ABOUT THE VARIOUS FEES AND WHERE DID THEY STAND. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THEY BUDGETED \$510,000.00 FOR PERMITS AND ONLY COLLECTED \$94,000.00 THROUGH FEBRUARY. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE COMMENTED THAT THEY BUDGETED \$450,000.00 FOR THE REGISTER OF DEEDS AND ONLY COLLECTED \$86,000.00. CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED IF THERE HAVE BEEN ANYMORE CUTS FROM THE STATE OTHER THAN THE \$200,000.00 ORIGINALLY CUT AND THE \$200,000.00 PASSED BY THE HOUSE. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT HE MET WITH THE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATORS AND THEY HAVE CUT \$250,000.00 OUT OF THE CURRENT BUDGET. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THIS CUT WOULD HELP OFFSET THE CUTS FROM THE STATE AND THE DECREASE IN REVENUE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE NEW BUDGET THEY ARE WORKING ON IS \$26,635,733.00 AND THAT IT IS ACTUALLY LOWER THAN THE CURRENT BUDGET. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE LIMIT THE MILS CAN BE INCREASED IS 5.8%. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE REVENUES ARE DOWN AND THE STATE HAS MADE CUTS TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE INCOME FROM SALES TAX IS ALSO DOWN. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THEY HAVE DISCUSSED

CHANGING THE WAY THE BUDGET WAS DONE IN THE PAST. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT IN THE PAST MONEY FROM THE RESERVE FUND HAS BEEN USED TO BALANCE THE BUDGET AND THE COUNTY HAS BEEN FORTUNATE IN THAT THE REVENUE THAT CAME IN ALWAYS COVERED THAT AMOUNT. MR. MALPHRUS INFORMED THE COUNCIL THAT DUE TO THE LACK OF REVENUE COMING INTO THE COUNTY, THAT MOST OF THE FUNDS FROM THE RESERVE FUND USED TO BALANCE THIS YEAR'S BUDGET WILL NOT BE COVERED AND THE RESERVE FUND WILL GO DOWN TO ABOUT \$2,500,000.00. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR SERIOUS CUTS AND DIFFICULT DECISIONS FOR NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET. MR. MALPHRUS SAID HE HOPED TO HAVE THE ADMINISTRATIONS' RECOMMENDATION FOR THE NEXT BUDGET MEETING.

MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT GENERALLY A RESERVE FUND USUALLY HAS ENOUGH MONEY IN IT TO OPERATE THE COUNTY FOR 90 DAYS. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED WHAT WAS THE BALANCE OF THE RESERVE FUND 2 YEARS AGO AND MR. MALPHRUS RESPONDED \$7,200,000.00. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT IT COST OVER \$2,000,000.00 A MONTH TO OPERATE THE COUNTY. THE COUNCIL DISCUSSED THE VARIOUS SHORTAGES AND FUNDING CUTS. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SAID THE DEPARTMENT HEADS ARE GOING TO HAVE TO SHARPEN THEIR PENCILS AND MAKE CUTS. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY CUT A LOT FROM THE NEW BUDGET. MR. FULGHUM STATED THAT SINCE THE STATE PUT THE CAP, THE COUNTY HAS TO INCREASE THE TAXES TO THE HIGHEST LEVEL BECAUSE IF THEY DON'T, THE FOLLOWING YEAR, THE COUNTY CANNOT PICK UP THE AMOUNT THEY COULD HAVE INCREASED THE PAST YEAR. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THE CITIZENS WILL BE UPSET BECAUSE OF THIS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT EVEN THOUGH THE MILLAGE HAS GONE UP, THE TAXES HAVE GONE DOWN. CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE TO SHARE THE FLOOR WITH THE OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT HE WILL PROVIDE THE COUNCIL WITH A WORKSHEET THAT WILL COVER THE OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES TO A HOMEOWNER. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT PERMANENT RESIDENTS NO LONGER HAVE TO PAY SCHOOL TAX, HOWEVER, HE HAS NOT GOTTEN ANY INFORMATION REGARDING THE SCHOOL TAXES AND HE IS NOT SURE WHAT WILL HAPPEN THIS YEAR. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SAID IF THERE IS GOING TO BE AN INCREASE FOR THE SCHOOLS THAT WILL MAKE THINGS VERY TOUGH. COUNCILMAN GREGORY STATED THAT THERE IS REALLY NOTHING THAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT UNTIL THE ECONOMY TURNS AROUND. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT DUE TO THE CUTS, THE COUNTY NEEDS TO PUT A FREEZE ON EVERYTHING AND ALL POSITIONS. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT IF A POSITION BECOMES VACANT IT SHOULD REMAIN VACANT UNTIL THE ECONOMY TURNS AROUND. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT THE \$4,000,000.00 FROM THE RESERVE FUND USED LAST YEAR TO BALANCE THE BUDGET IS NOT COMING BACK AND THE ADMINISTRATION HAS KNOWN THIS FOR MONTHS AND HE ASKED WHY THEY NEVER

CONSIDERED PUTTING A FREEZE ON EVERYTHING TO SAVE SOME MONEY. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THEY THOUGHT ABOUT IT, BUT DIDN'T PUSH TO DO THAT AS MOST OF THE VACANIES THAT HAVE BEEN FILLED ARE IN CRITICAL POSITIONS. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THAT THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT HAS ADDED POSITIONS AND THEY SAY THEY STILL NEED MORE PEOPLE. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO CUT BACK AND ALSO THEY SHOULD ALL CALL THE GOVERNOR ABOUT THE STIMULUS MONEY. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THE GOVERNOR IS CUTTING FUNDS AND THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO LOOK INTO AVENUES TO CUT EXPENSES AND HE FELT THAT SOME DEPARTMENTS HAD TOO MANY PEOPLE AND SOME DEPARTMENTS MAY NOT HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT THE COUNCIL IS GOING TO NEED TO MAKE SOME CUTS. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT PERHAPS A FREEZE ON ANY NEW POSITIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO SEE ANYONE OUT OF A JOB, BUT MAYBE THEY COULD SEND SOMEONE FROM AN OFFICE THAT WAS OVERSTAFFED TO AN OFFICE THAT NEEDED MORE PEOPLE. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT HAS BEEN DONE IN SEVERAL POSITIONS AND THEY HAVE GONE OVER THE CURRENT BUDGET AND CUT \$250,000.00. COUNCILMAN GREGORY COMMENTED THAT THE COUNCIL CAN VOTE TO HAVE A FREEZE ON EVERYTHING WITH THREE VOTES. COUNCILMAN TYLER COMMENTED THAT THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND WHERE THEY ARE AND WHERE THE FUNDS ARE COMING FROM. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT ONLY POSITIONS THAT WERE NECESSARY WERE FILLED. COUNCILMAN TYLER SAID THAT THINGS NEED TO BE TIGHTENED UP. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT HE FELT THAT POSITIONS CRITICAL TO PUBLIC SAFETY SHOULD BE FILLED AND HE THOUGHT THAT IS WHAT THE COUNCIL WANTED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT IF THE COUNCIL VOTES TO FREEZE EVERYTHING, THEN THAT IS WHAT WILL BE DONE.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR SAID HE DID NOT THINK THE COUNCIL WAS QUALIFIED TO DECIDE WHEN TO FREEZE, HIRE, OR FIRE AND THEY SHOULD NOT FORCE SOMETHING. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT IF A FREEZE IS PUT ON HIRING AND THE POSITION IS NOT REPLACED, THE WORK STILL HAS TO BE DONE AND IT WOULD REQUIRE SOMEONE TO WORK OVERTIME OR NOT HAVE A FIRE STATION MANNED FOR A SHIFT. VICE CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR SAID DOING THAT WOULD PUT THE CITIZENS IN JEOPARDY AND THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO BE CAREFUL HOW AND WHY THEY MAKE DECISIONS AS THERE ARE SOMETHINGS THAT CANNOT BE DONE WITHOUT. VICE CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR SAID THE CITIZENS HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT IF THEY WANT SERVICES, THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE TO PAY FOR THEM. COUNCILMAN GREGORY COMMENTED THAT THE STAFF WORKS UNDER COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL DOES NOT WORK FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR AND THE MAJORITY OF THE COUNCIL MAKES THE DECISIONS. COUNCILMAN GREGORY CONTINUED THAT IF THE MAJORITY OF COUNCIL MAKES A DECISION, THE ADMINISTRATOR HAS TO DO WHAT THE COUNCIL TELLS HIM TO DO AND THE COUNCIL MAKES THE FINAL

DECISIONS. VICE CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR RESPONDED THAT WHAT COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID WAS RIGHT; HOWEVER, IF THREE MEMBERS VOTE ON SOMETHING, IT DOES NOT MAKE IT RIGHT. MR. FULGHUM ADDED THAT THE STAFF IS WORKING FOR COUNCIL SO THAT THE COUNCIL CAN MAKE GOOD DECISIONS. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO BE AS KNOWLEDGEABLE AS POSSIBLE. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THAT THE A CITIZEN ASKED FOR \$3,500.00 TO FUND AN EVENT THAT CAN BE FUNDED BY DONATIONS AND RAISING THE COST FOR THE VENDORS. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THE PEOPLE WANT TO SEE LEADERSHIP AND SOME PEOPLE MAY HAVE TO DOUBLE UP AND CROSS TRAIN AND THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO ASK THE ADMINISTRATION TO INVESTIGATE POSITIONS THAT CAN BE COMBINED. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID IT MAY BE TOUGH TO MAKE DECISIONS IF FRIENDS ARE INVOLVED, HOWEVER THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO ANALYZE THE FACTS AND MAKE THE DECISION. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THERE IS A SHORTAGE IN THE SCHOOL BUDGET AND HE IS NOT SURE THE COUNTY WILL BE ABLE TO HELP. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THE FUND BALANCE WAS DOWN AND THE COUNCIL WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO BUDGET WHAT THEY CAN AFFORD.

COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED IF HE ASKED ANYTHING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING THAT THE COUNCIL DID NOT NEED TO KNOW, AND HE SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO BE TOLD HE HAD A TIME LIMIT. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS ASKING THE QUESTIONS SO THAT HE WOULD BE KNOWLEDGEABLE WHEN SPEAKING TO THE CITIZENS. CHAIRMAN HOOD RESPONDED THAT COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE TAKES UP A LOT OF TIME ASKING QUESTIONS AND HE NEEDS TO FOLLOW PROPER PROTOCOL. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED IF A TIME LIMIT IS SET AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING, BECAUSE HE DOES NOT WANT PEOPLE TELLING HIM HE CAN'T ASK QUESTIONS TO GAIN KNOWLEDGE. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID HE WAS TRYING TO GET THE COUNCIL TO WORK AS A TEAM. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SAID HE HAD NO PROBLEM WORKING AS A TEAM, BUT HE DOES HAVE A PROBLEM REGARDING A TIME LIMIT. CHAIRMAN HOOD TOLD COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE THAT HE TOOK UP A LOT OF TIME AT THE MEETINGS AND DOMINATES THE MEETINGS AND HE NEEDS TO ALLOW THE OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS TO TALK. CHAIRMAN HOOD TOLD COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE THAT HE NEEDED TO LISTEN AND RESPOND AND CHAIRMAN HOOD APOLOGIZED TO COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE IF HE WAS ABRUPT. CHAIRMAN HOOD TOLD COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE HE WAS NEW ON COUNCIL AND HE NEEDED TO LEARN THE PROCESS. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SAID THAT THE COUNTY IS A BIG BUSINESS AND THEY ARE THERE TO REPRESENT THE PUBLIC. CHAIRMAN HOOD RESPONDED THAT THEY WORKING FOR THE PUBLIC, BUT THEY DO NOT HAVE THE FINAL SAY. COUNCILMAN TYLER COMMENTED THAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE HERE TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF JASPER COUNTY AND THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO DO WHAT THEY CAN TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL THE CITIZENS IN THE COUNTY.

COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED WHAT IS A WORKSHOP AND CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THAT A WORKSHOP IS DIALOGUE AND STAFF DOES NOT HAVE ALL THE FACTS TO PRESENT AT THIS TIME. COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED IF A WORKSHOP WAS HELD TO GET ANSWERS, THEN THE STAFF NEEDS TO PROVIDE THE COUNCIL WITH THE RIGHT INFORMATION. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID HE FELT THE COUNCIL NEEDED TO LOOK AT EACH DEPARTMENT AND THE COUNCIL HAS THE RIGHT TO CALL DEPARTMENT HEADS AND HAVE THEM JUSTIFY WHY THE POSITIONS IN THEIR DEPARTMENT ARE NEEDED. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT THE COUNCIL DOES NOT NEED TO BE IN A CLASSROOM, BUT THEY NEED TO ASK QUESTIONS TO GET THE KNOWLEDGE FROM THE STAFF TO MAKE DECISIONS.

COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED ABOUT COMING EARLY AND HAVING A WORKSHOP PRIOR TO THE COUNCIL MEETINGS SO THAT THE COUNCIL WOULD HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE ITEMS ON THE AGENDA. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THAT HE FELT IT NEEDED TO BE TELEVISED BECAUSE IN THE PAST SOME COUNCIL MEMBERS WENT TO THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATOR AND WERE TOLD HOW TO VOTE. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED IF THERE WAS A LAW THAT A WORKSHOP HAD TO BE TELEVISED AND CHAIRMAN HOOD RESPONDED THAT THERE WAS NOT A LAW, BUT THE PEOPLE WERE USED TO HAVING THE COUNCIL MEETINGS TELEVISED.

**ADJOURN:**

VICE CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR MOTIONED AND COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADJOURN THE BUDGET WORKSHOP. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH ALL MEMBERS PRESENT VOTING IN FAVOR.

THE BUDGET WORKSHOP ENDED AT 4:00 P.M.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

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JUDITH M. FRANK, ccc  
CLERK TO COUNCIL

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DR. GEORGE M. HOOD  
CHAIRMAN