

**JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL  
MARY GORDON ELLIS EXECUTIVE BUILDING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
APRIL 15, 2009  
2:30 P.M.  
BUDGET WORKSHOP**

**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:**

VICE CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR GAVE THE INVOCATION.

**BUDGET PRESENTATIONS:**

**BETH MCNAIR - AHJ LIBRARY:**

MS. MCNAIR PRESENTED THE COUNCIL WITH AN ACCOUNTING OF THE INCREASE IN PEOPLE USING THE LIBRARIES. MS. MCNAIR SHARED HER VISION OF NEW LIBRARIES IN ALL THE POPULATION CENTERS IN THE COUNTY. MS. MCNAIR LISTED THE VARIOUS ACTIVITIES AT THE LIBRARIES AND THAT EACH DAY THERE ARE 50-75 STUDENTS AT THE LIBRARY WORKING ON COMPUTERS OR DOING RESEARCH. MS. MCNAIR

SAID THAT ADULTS USE THE LIBRARY FOR READING MATERIAL, RESEARCH, AND EVEN WORKING ON THE COMPUTERS TO TRY AND FIND A JOB. STORY TELLING HOURS ARE HOSTED BY THE LIBRARY FOR THE YOUNG CHILDREN, MS. MCNAIR STATED. MS. MCNAIR REQUESTED AN INCREASE TO THEIR APPROPRIATION OF \$7,000.00. MS. MCNAIR TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT EVEN WITH THE INCREASE, THEY WILL STILL NOT HAVE ENOUGH FUNDS FOR DOUBLE COVERAGE IN THE LIBRARIES. GLESSIN WATTS, A MEMBER OF FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY, DISCUSSED THE INCREASE IN NUMBERS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LIBRARY TO THE CITIZENS. MS. WATTS SAID THAT THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY ORGANIZATION TRIES TO HELP, BUT SHE ASKED THE COUNCIL TO PLEASE CONSIDER INCREASING THE ALLOCATION TO THE LIBRARY.

**MS. GABBARD - JASPER ANIMAL RESCUE MISSION:**

MS. GABBARD INTRODUCED THE STAFF, VICE PRESIDENT, AND VOLUNTEERS THAT WERE AT THE MEETING. MS. GABBARD EXPLAINED THE FUNCTIONS OF JARM AND THE NUMBER OF ANIMALS THAT HAVE BEEN TURNED IN TO THE SHELTER. MS. GABBARD STATED THAT FROM JULY, 2008 TO PRESENT THEY WERE ON TRACK TO MEET OR EXCEED 2007-2008 NUMBERS. MS. GABBARD SAID THAT IN 2007 -2008 THERE WERE 2,243 DOGS, CATS, PUPPIES AND KITTENS TURNED INTO JARM. MS. GABBARD SAID THAT ON AVERAGE THERE ARE 85-100 ANIMALS AT THE SHELTER EVERY DAY. MS. GABBARD SAID THAT THE SHELTER ALSO TAKES IN ANIMALS FROM HARDEEVILLE AND RIDGELAND. MR. MORRIS PROVIDED THE COUNCIL WITH A LIST OF SHORT AND LONG TERM ITEMS THAT WILL BE NEEDED AND ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET REQUEST. MS. GABBARD SAID SHE WAS REQUESTING \$157,100.00 AND SHE WAS NOT ASKING FOR AN INCREASE. MS. GABBARD SAID THAT THE REQUESTS COVERED PAYROLL (\$140,000.00), UTILITIES AND TELEPHONE (\$13,800.00), AND CANNED FOOD (\$6,000.00). MS. GABBARD SAID ALL THE DRY FOOD WAS DONATED; HOWEVER, THERE WERE SITUATIONS WHERE CANNED FOOD WAS NEEDED.

**VERNA GARVIN - TREASURER:**

MS. GARVIN, JASPER COUNTY TREASURER, REQUESTED AN ADDITIONAL FULL TIME EMPLOYEE. MS. GARVIN SAID HER DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE TO START ISSUING DECALS SINCE THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT WILL NO LONGER BE DOING IT. MS. GARVIN LISTED VARIOUS LINES IN HER BUDGET THAT SHE WOULD ELIMINATE TO HELP COVER THE EXPENSE OF A NEW EMPLOYEE. CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED IF SHE WAS GOING TO NEED EQUIPMENT TO ISSUE THE DECALS AND MS. GARVIN RESPONDED THE STATE WILL PROVIDE THE EQUIPMENT.

**BUDGET DISCUSSION:**

MR. FULGHUM PRESENTED THE COUNCIL WITH A REFERENCE SHEET OF WHERE THE STAFF IS CURRENTLY IN THE BUDGET PROCESS.

MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE STATE CUT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING ONCE AND THEY MAY CUT IT AGAIN AND THEY MAY CUT THE STATE FUNDING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOTALLY.

MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THEY HAVE LOOKED AT ALL THE POSSIBILITIES AND THAT THEY WERE SUGGESTING THAT THE EMPLOYEES PAY THE \$93.40 MONTHLY THAT THE COUNTY CURRENTLY PAYS FOR THEIR PORTION OF HEALTH INSURANCE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THIS WOULD SAVE \$125,000.00 PER YEAR. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT 41% OF THE EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM.

THE ADMINISTRATION PROPOSED CREATING SPECIAL FIRE DISTRICTS FOR RIDGELAND, HARDEEVILLE, AND LEVY. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE SPECIAL FIRE DISTRICT TAXES WOULD PAY FOR THE FIRE SERVICE CONTRACTS FOR THOSE AREAS.

MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE ADMINISTRATION WAS SUGGESTING THAT ALL NON CRITICAL EMPLOYEES BE FURLOUGHED ONE DAY PER MONTH FOR A YEAR. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THIS WOULD SAVE THE COUNTY \$120,000.00 PER YEAR. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE CRITICAL EMPLOYEES ARE THE SHERIFF DEPUTIES, THE FIREMEN AND PARAMEDICS AND DETENTION GUARDS.

MR. MALPHRUS INFORMED THE COUNCIL THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS RECOMMENDING MOVING \$1,000,000.00 FROM THE RESERVE FUND TO BE CARRIED FORWARD.

MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS RECOMMENDING CUTTING THE APPROPRIATIONS BY \$500,000.00.

MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT EACH DEPARTMENT WOULD HAVE TO CUT AN ADDITIONAL 4% FROM THEIR BUDGET AND THIS WOULD INCLUDE THE ELECTED OFFICIALS. MR. MALPHRUS STATED THAT AN ADDITIONAL 2% CUT IN EACH DEPARTMENT BUDGET IS ANOTHER OPTION. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT WOULD BE A TOTAL OF A 6% CUT IN FUNDING TO EACH DEPARTMENT.

THE COUNCIL DISCUSSED THE SUGGESTION OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO CAPITALIZE EXPENSES ON THE COURTHOUSE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE TIME THE EMPLOYEES SPEND WORKING ON ANYTHING RELATED TO THE COURTHOUSE RENOVATION CAN BE PAID FOR OUT OF THE BOND.

MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT \$5,200,000.00 WOULD BE SAVED IF THE COUNCIL APPROVED THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATIONS. COUNCILMAN TYLER ASKED IF WHAT THEY CALLED GROWTH CAUSED THE PROBLEMS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT GROWTH WAS PART OF THE PROBLEM BECAUSE OF ADDED EXPENSES, BUT THE LOSS OF REVENUE IS WHAT CAUSED THE PROBLEM. COUNCILMAN TYLER ASKED ABOUT THE FUNDS THAT WERE CARRIED FORWARD. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THOSE FUNDS WERE ALREADY APPROVED. COUNCILMAN TYLER ASKED IF IT WAS NECESSARY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE COURTHOUSE RENOVATION OR COULD IT BE POSTPONED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE BONDS ARE ALREADY OUT THERE AND THE COUNTY WOULD STILL HAVE TO MAKE THE PAYMENTS.

COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED HOW MUCH OF THE RESERVE FUND WAS PUT INTO LAST YEAR'S BUDGET. MR. MALPHRUS SAID \$4,100,000.00. COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED IF THEY PAID ATTENTION AS THE CRISIS WAS HAPPENING AND EVERYONE ELSE WAS CUTTING BACK AND YOU CONTINUED TO SPEND. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID A LOT OF MONEY WAS SPENT AND THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CONSERVATIVE. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT NOW THEY WERE IN A BAD SITUATION AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE PUNISHING THE EMPLOYEES BY MAKING THEM PAY THE \$93.00 FOR INSURANCE AND FURLOUGHING NON-CRITICAL EMPLOYEES ONE DAY PER MONTH. COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED IF FURLOUGHING THE EMPLOYEES WOULD SAVE EVERYONE'S JOBS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THEY WERE SUGGESTING THE \$93.00 FOR INSURANCE AND FURLOUGHING THE EMPLOYEES ONE DAY PER MONTH. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID YOU ALSO DISCUSSED INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL NOT BE FURLOUGHED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE MAGISTRATE AND PROBATE JUDGE'S SALARY ARE SET BY STATE LAW. COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED ABOUT THE RESERVE FUND. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT AT THE END OF THE 2008 BUDGET YEAR, THERE WAS APPROXIMATELY \$7,000,000.00 IN THE RESERVE FUND AND THAT THEY DO NOT GET THE ACTUAL FIGURES FOR ABOUT A YEAR, BUT THEY HAVE TO BE CAREFUL AND THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO MAKE UP WHATEVER THEY USED OF THE RESERVE FUND BY COLLECTING MORE AND SPENDING LESS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THEY DID NOT MAKE UP ALL OF THE \$3,000,000.00 IN THE 2007-2008 BUDGET AND THEY DID NOT KNOW THE FUND BALANCE DROPPED UNTIL JANUARY. MR. FULGHUM SAID HE FELT THEY WERE VERY CONSERVATIVE NUMBERS AND IN 2007-2008 BUDGET THEY ONLY SPENT \$1,000,000.00 OF THE MONEY FROM THE RESERVE FUND. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THIS YEAR THEY USED \$4,000,000.00 FROM THE RESERVE FUND AND THEY ARE NOT GOING TO GET ANY OF IT BACK. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT LAST YEAR THE COUNTY COLLECTED \$640,000.00 IN BUILDING PERMIT REVENUE WHICH WAS MORE THAN THEY PROJECTED. THIS YEAR, THEY PROJECTED \$500,000.00 IN THE CURRENT BUDGET AND SO FAR THEY WILL BE LUCKY IF THEY COLLECT \$250,000.00. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE QUESTIONED THAT THEY COLLECTED MORE MONEY THAN PROJECTED AND STILL SPENT FUNDS FROM THE CASH-CARRY FORWARD. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED WHY IT TAKES SO LONG TO GET THE AUDIT. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE COUNTY PAYS BILLS THROUGH AUGUST AND THE AUDIT REALLY CANNOT GET STARTED UNTIL SEPTEMBER. MR. FULGHUM SAID IF THE ADMINISTRATION HAD TO PRESENT THE BUDGET TODAY, THEY WOULD BE PRESENTING THESE RECOMMENDATIONS. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THEY ARE GOING TO ASK EACH DEPARTMENT TO CUT THEIR BUDGET BY 6% AND IF THEY HAVE TO LAY OFF EMPLOYEES, SO BE IT.

COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED HOW DO THEY COME UP WITH THE TAXES FOR THE FIRE DISTRICTS, AND IF THERE WERE ANY MAGISTRATE VACANCIES NOW.

CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THAT A LOT OF THE SHORTFALL THE COUNTY IS EXPERIENCING IS BECAUSE OF THE DECISIONS OF THE LEGISLATURE. CHAIRMAN HOOD CONTINUED THAT THE SCHOOLS ARE GOING TO BE VERY SHORT THIS YEAR AND WILL HAVE LAYOFFS. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID HE DID NOT THINK ANYONE SAW THIS COMING.

MR. MALPHRUS SAID THEY KNEW THE ECONOMY WAS DOWN, BUT HE FELT THEY WERE CONSERVATIVE IN THEIR PROJECTIONS.

COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS SUGGESTING TO REFINANCE THE EQUIPMENT AND HE WANTED TO KNOW HOW MUCH WAS OWED. MR. FULGHUM RESPONDED THAT IF THE EQUIPMENT IS REFINANCED, THE COUNTY SHOULD GET A SIMILAR INTEREST RATE. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE QUESTIONED THE CAPITALIZATION OF EXPENSES ON THE COURTHOUSE AND HE SAID THAT THIS WOULD BE LIKE BORROWING \$200,000.00, SPENDING ANOTHER \$1,000,000.00 FROM THE RESERVE FUND, AND REFINANCING THE EQUIPMENT AND HE SAID THE EMPLOYEES ARE GOING TO BE HURT, BUT THEY WOULD STILL KEEP THEIR JOBS. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SAID THIS WAS GOING BACKWARDS. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED HOW LONG THE BOND WAS FOR AND HOW MUCH WAS THE PAYMENT. MR. MALPHRUS RESPONDED THAT THE BOND WAS FOR 28 YEARS AND THE FIRST PAYMENT OF \$300,000.00 WAS INCLUDED IN THE NEW BUDGET. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE PAYMENTS INCREASE AFTER THE FIRST YEAR. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED WHY THEY WOULD BORROW \$200,000.00 FROM THE BOND AND PAY ON IT FOR 28 YEARS. MR. FULGHUM RESPONDED THAT MORE PEOPLE WILL BE PAYING ON IT IN THE FUTURE AND WHILE YOU DON'T GET AHEAD, YOU ARE JUST DELAYING THE PAIN FOR A WHILE.

COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED IF THAT THEY ARE SUGGESTING TO RAISE TAXES TO THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE INCREASE ALLOWED WOULD BE 7 MILS AND THE PEOPLE IN THE SPECIAL FIRE DISTRICTS WOULD HAVE AN ADDITIONAL TAX THAT IS DETERMINED BY THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTS IN THE DISTRICT. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED IF A SPECIAL FIRE DISTRICT IS ESTABLISHED WILL THE PORTION OF THEIR TAXES FOR EMS BUDGET BE DEDUCTED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO CHECK INTO THAT AND MR. FULGHUM SAID THEY WERE STILL RESEARCHING THAT AND SINCE THE PEOPLE ARE GETTING A HIGHER LEVEL OF FIRE COVERAGE THE FIRE DISTRICT TAX WOULD PAY FOR IT. MR. FULGHUM SAID THAT THEY HAVE BEEN RUSHING TO GET THE BUDGET TOGETHER SO THAT THE COUNCIL WOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO WORK FROM. MR. FULGHUM COMMENTED THAT IS WAS NO FUN BEING THE ADMINISTRATOR RIGHT NOW.

COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED HOW MUCH DOES THE COUNTY PAY FOR THE DELEGATION OFFICE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID \$52,000.00. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED IF THE COUNTY WAS REQUIRED TO FINANCE THE OFFICE. COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED WHAT DOES THE \$52,000.00 COVER. MR. MALPHRUS SAID MOSTLY SALARY AND BENEFITS FOR THE EMPLOYEE.

COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED WHY THE DECISION WAS MADE TO PURCHASE 20 VEHICLES ALL AT THE SAME TIME. MR. MALPHRUS RESPONDED THAT THE VEHICLES ARE ROTATED OR REPLACED EVERY THREE YEARS.

COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED IF ANY EQUIPMENT WAS IN THE BUDGET AND MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT A PICK-UP TRUCK FOR THE SHOP FOREMAN AND A FUEL TRUCK. MR. MALPHRUS SAID BOTH VEHICLES WERE NEEDED.

CHAIRMAN HOOD ASKED THE ADMINISTRATOR TO CONTACT THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND TO TELL HER NOT TO FILL ANYMORE VACANCIES.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR ASKED THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ALSO ASK THE CHIEF JUSTICE TO EXEMPT JASPER COUNTY ON THE FURLOUGHING OF MAGISTRATE JUDGES AND THE PROBATE JUDGE.

MR. MALPHRUS ASKED IF THE COUNCIL WANTED TO INCORPORATE THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE BUDGET.

MR. FULGHUM TOLD MR. MALPHRUS TO INCORPORATE IT IN THE BUDGET SO THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE A DOCUMENT TO WORK FROM AND THEY CAN DECIDE WHAT THEY WANT TO DO.

CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THE COUNCIL WILL REVIEW THE BUDGET LINE BY LINE AND SOME EMPLOYEES MAY HAVE TO DOUBLE UP ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN SOMEONE RETIRES. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THEY ALREADY LOOKED AT THAT. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THAT THE COUNCIL NEEDED SOMETHING TO WORK FROM. COUNCILMAN TYLER SAID THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM. CHAIRMAN HOOD SAID THEY ARE GOING TO NEED TO MAKE DECISIONS THAT WILL MAKE THE LEAST IMPACT OF THE PEOPLE.

COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH EACH DEPARTMENT TO BE SURE THE ADMINISTRATOR IS MAKING THE BEST RECOMMENDATIONS. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO HAVE ANYONE LOSE THEIR JOB, BUT THERE NEEDS TO BE A SHUT DOWN ON HIRING UNTIL THE COUNCIL CAN SEE WHERE THEY ARE FINANCIALLY. COUNCILMAN GREGORY SAID THAT JASPER COUNTY NEEDS TO HOLD ON TO WHAT THEY HAVE.

MR. MALPHRUS DISCUSSED A BILL THAT THE LEGISLATURE IS ALSO CONSIDERING REGARDING THE ASSESSABLE TRANSFER OF INTEREST AND IF THE PROPERTY IS SOLD PRIOR TO THE NEXT REASSESSMENT IT WOULD REMAIN THE SAME ON THE COUNTY BOOKS AND NOT INCREASE TO THE ACTUAL MARKET VALUE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT THE LEGISLATURE WAS ALSO LOOKING INTO MAKING IT RETROACTIVE TO 2007 AND THE

TAXES WOULD HAVE TO GO BACK DOWN AND THAT COULD BE A SUBSTANTIAL LOSS IN REVENUE.

**ADJOURN:**

COUNCILMAN GREGORY MOTIONED AND COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH ALL MEMBERS PRESENT VOTING IN FAVOR.

THE MEETING ENDED AT 4:20 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