



**JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
BUDGET WORKSHOP
MAY 4, 2011
3:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

OFFICIALS PRESENT: CHAIRMAN LEROY BLACKSHEAR, VICE CHAIRMAN SAMUEL GREGORY, COUNCILMAN HENRY ETHERIDGE, COUNCILMAN THEODUS L. DRAYTON

OFFICIALS ABSENT: COUNCILMAN L. MARTIN SAULS IV.

STAFF PRESENT: CLERK TO COUNCIL-JUDITH FRANK, DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION - RONNIE MALPHRUS

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 BLACKSHEAR CALLED THE BUDGET WORKSHOP TO ORDER AT 3:00 P.M.

DISCUSSION

3:00 PM - JASPER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT - MS. MCHUFF PROVIDED THE COUNCIL WITH A POWER POINT PRESENTATION AND INFORMATION REGARDING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT. MS. MCHUFF SAID THERE WERE TWO CAMPUSES THAT HAD AN ENROLLMENT OF 3,300 STUDENTS AND 460 TEACHERS. MS. MCHUFF EXPLAINED THE VARIOUS SOURCES THAT FUND THE SCHOOLS AND SHE ALSO INFORMED THE COUNCIL OF FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN CUT. MS. MCHUFF SAID THEY DID NOT PLAN TO DO STEP INCREASES AND SHE DISCUSSED THE VARIOUS OTHER OPTIONS THEY ARE CONSIDERING TO BALANCE THE BUDGET. MS. MCHUFF SAID THE MAXIMUM INCREASE ALLOWED WAS 4.6 MILS WHICH TOTALED \$308,850 AND

THAT IS WHAT THEY WERE REQUESTING. COUNCILMAN SAULS ASKED WHAT THEY WERE CONSIDERING TO GET THE BUDGET TO BALANCE. MS. MCHUFF SAID THEY HAVE NOT MADE ANY DECISION, BUT ARE LOOKING AT SEVERAL ITEMS. COUNCILMAN SAULS SAID THAT SAVANNAH CUT 97 TEACHERS POSITIONS TO BALANCE THEIR BUDGET. COUNCILMAN SAULS ASKED ABOUT FORLOUGHS AND MS. MCHUFF SAID THAT IT COULD BE DONE IF NECESSARY, BUT WHEN IT WAS PRESENTED THEY FELT IT NEEDED TO BE DONE IN A MORE TIMELY MANNER TO BE FAIR TO THE EMPLOYEES. COUNCILMAN SAULS ASKED ABOUT RAISES. MS. MCHUFF SAID NO ONE WILL BE GETTING AN INCREASE. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED ABOUT THE INCREASE FOR RETIREMENT. MS. MCHUFF SAID THAT RETIREMENT AND HEALTH INSURANCE HAVE BOTH INCREASED, BUT THEY WILL NOT KNOW THE ACTUAL NUMBER UNTIL AUGUST AND THE NUMBER PROVIDED IS AN ESTIMATE. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED ABOUT THE INCREASE TO WORKERS COMPENSATION AND MS. MCHUFF EXPLAINED THAT THE INCREASE WAS DUE TO THE NUMBER OF CLAIMS. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED HOW MANY EMPLOYEES HAVE TO BE TERMINATED AND MS. MCHUFF SAID 7 EMPLOYEES AND THEY ARE STILL LOOKING FOR OTHER AREAS TO CUT. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON ASKED WHAT TECHNICAL ASSEST FUNDS WERE AND MS. MCHUFF EXPLAINED THE FUNDS WERE FEDERAL FUNDS THAT HELPED WITH SCHOOL OPERATIONS. MS. MCHUFF SAID THE TEACHERS EACH GET ABOUT \$275 AND IT COULD BE USED FOR SALARIES; HOWEVER, 70% MUST BE SPENT IN THE CLASSROOM. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON ASKED IF EMPLOYEES OTHER THAN TEACHERS WERE BEING CUT. MS. MCHUFF SAID THAT SINCE THE STATE SUPPORT WAS LOWER, THE COUNTY SUPPORT NEEDED TO INCREASE. MS. MCHUFF SAID THEY WERE WORKING HARD TO IDENTIFY AREAS THAT CAN BE CUT. COUNCILMAN GREGORY ASKED HOW THE COUNTY FUNDS THE SCHOOLS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THEY ARE FUNDED THROUGH PROPERTY TAX. VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY SAID THE SCHOOL DISTRICT FEELS THAT THEY ARE NOT GETTING AS MUCH MONEY AS THEY SHOULD FROM THE COUNTY. MR. MALPHRUS SAID HE MET WITH THE AUDITORS AND HE WAS PREPARING A SPECIAL SHEET AND THEY WILL BE MEETING AGAIN. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE COUNTY HAS NOT COLLECTED ANY MONEY FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT WAS NOT TURNED OVER TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT. VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY ASKED MS. MCHUFF HOW SHE FIGURED THE COUNTY OWED THE SCHOOL DISTRICT MONEY. MS. MCHUFF SAID THEY COMPARED VARIOUS REPORS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID HE AND THE AUDITOR REVIEWED THE ACTUAL AMOUNT COLLECTED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID HE WILL BE REVIEWING THE AMOUNTS ACTUALLY COLLECTED WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT. VICE

CHAIRMAN GREGORY ASKED WHEN HE WAS GOING TO DO THE COMPARISON. MR. MALPHRUS SAID ON FRIDAY. VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY SAID THIS NEEDS TO BE CLEARED UP AND IF THE COUNTY OWES THE SCHOOL DISTRICT MONEY THEY NEED TO DECIDE WHAT THEY CAN DO. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THAT TAX COLLECTIONS HAVE BEEN SHORT AND HE DIDN'T THINK ANY MONEY WAS OWED THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE COUNTY PAID THE SCHOOL DISTRICT EVERYTHING COLLECTED FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT. VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY ASKED WHAT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WAS DOING TO SAVE JOBS AND MS. MCHUFF SAID EVERYTHING THEY CAN. MR. MALPHRUS SAID AN INCREASE OF 4.26 MILLS WOULD AMOUNT TO ABOUT \$25.00 ON A HOME WORTH \$150,000. COUNCILMAN DRAYTON ASKED HOW MUCH MONEY DID THE SCHOOL DISTRICT THINK THE COUNTY OWED THEM. MS. MCHUFF RESPONDED ABOUT \$11,000,000 AND THIS NEEDED TO BE RESOLVED. MS. MCHUFF SAID THE \$11,000,000 WAS BASED ON 10 YEARS; HOWEVER, 4 YEARS WERE MISSING. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED ABOUT THE \$1,788 PER STUDENT. MS. MCHUFF SAID THAT ALL SCHOOL SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE STATE USE THAT NUMBERS AND THE AMOUNT IS NOT UP TO WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED ABOUT THE COUNTY COSTS AND MS. MCHUFF SAID IT COSTS ABOUT \$5,000-\$6,000 PER STUDENT AND THE COST IS TIED TO THE TAXPAYERS ABILITY TO PAY. COUNCILMAN SAULS SAID THE AMOUNT OF \$11,000,000 COULD BE MORE OR LESS DUE TO THE YEARS OF MISSING DATA. COUNCILMAN SAULS ASKED ABOUT DELINQUENT TAXES AND MR. MALPHRUS ASKED IF THE REPRESENTATIVE LOOKED AT THE YEARS WHEN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT RECEIVED MORE MONEY THAN THEY EXPECTED AND MS. MCHUFF SAID THEY DID. VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY ASKED HOW THIS COULD HAVE BEEN OVERLOOKED ALL THESE YEARS AND WHY WAS IT NOT DISCOVERED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE COUNTY AUDITOR WORKS WITH THE TREASURER AND MAKES SURE THE MONEY COLLECTED FOR THE SCHOOL GOES TO THE SCHOOLS. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THE COUNTY DOES NOT AUDIT THE SCHOOLS MONEY AND SOME MONEY THEY THOUGHT WAS SCHOOLS MONEY WAS NOT ACTUALLY SCHOOL MONEY. VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY ASKED HOW THIS WAS GOING TO BE RESOLVED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID HE HAD THE AUDITOR GO OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS AND HE GOT THE REPORTS FROM THE TREASURER THAT SHE SENDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE TO COMPARE. MR. MALPHRUS SAID HE HAS NOT DISCUSSED THIS WITH THE TREASURER AND HE DOES NOT SEE THE SCHOOLS NUMBERS ON A REGULAR BASIS SINCE IT IS HANDLED BY THE TREASURER AND THE INTERNAL AUDITOR. VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY ASKED IF THE

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATOR WERE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MONEY COLLECTED BY THE COUNTY. MR. MALPHRUS SAID THEY DO A BUDGET EACH YEAR, THEY SET THE MILLAGE FOR THE SCHOOLS AND THE LAST THREE YEARS THE SCHOOLS HAVE COME UP SHORT AND SO HAS THE COUNTY. MR. MALPHRUS SAID IF THE MONEY IS NOT COLLECTED, THEY CAN'T GIVE IT. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED IF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT HAS THE SAME AUDITOR. MS. MCHUFF SAID THEY HAVE A NEW AUDITOR. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED IF THE NEW AUDITOR CAUGHT THIS AND MS. MCHUFF SAID HE DID AND HE HAD A HARD TIME GETTING THE INFORMATION. COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE ASKED ABOUT THE WAY THE SCHOOL TAXES ARE COLLECTED. MR. MALPHRUS SAID IN 2006 THE RESIDENTIAL EXEMPTION CAME INTO EFFECT. MS. MCHUFF SAID THE MISSING YEARS WERE 2002 TO 2005. CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR SAID THE COUNCIL WILL CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE THIS FURTHER AND THEY WILL TAKE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S REQUEST FOR THE MAXIMUM INCREASE ALLOWED OF 4.6 MILS WHICH TOTALED \$308,850 UNDER CONSIDERATION. DR. WASHINGTON TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT QUARTERLY MEETINGS WERE NEEDED BETWEEN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE TREASURER SO THAT THE COLLECTIONS ARE CLEAR AND CONSISE. DR. WASHINGTON SAID SHE HAS BEEN IN JASPER COUNTY FOR 11 MONTHS AND SHE HAS EMBRACED THE COUNTY AND COUNCIL SHOULD WANT TO EDUCATE THE CHILDREN. DR. WASHINGTON ASKED FOR A FRESH NEW BEGINNING OF COMMUNICATION. DR. WASHINGTON SAID THAT SHE REALIZES THE TREASURER IS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL, AND THE WAY THE INFORMATION IS REPORTED NEEDED TO BE UPGRADED AND THEY NEED TO MAKE SURE THE PAPERWORK LINES UP. DR. WASHINGTON SAID THERE ARE YEARS OF INFORMATION THAT IS NOT AVAILABLE AND SHE KNOWS THE COUNTY DOESN'T HAVE THE \$11,000,000, BUT THE COMMUNICATION HAS BEEN VERY POOR DEALING WITH THE FINANCES AND THEY NEED TO ESTABLISH REGULAR MEETINGS TO DISCUSS THE MONEY COLLECTED. COUNCILMAN SAULS THANKED DR. WASHINGTON FOR THE JOB SHE WAS DOING AND SAID THE COUNCIL WOULD PLEDGE ITS SUPPORT TO HELP MAKE THE SCHOOLS BETTER. VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY ASKED IF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TREASURER WAS WHAT IT SHOULD BE AND DR. WASHINGTON SAID THAT IT WAS, BUT THE REPORTS WERE STILL BEING DONE WITH PAPER AND PENCIL AND DR. WASHINGTON WANTED TO IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP TO BE OPEN AND HONEST. VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY SAID THAT COUNTY COUNCIL NEEDS TO DO EVERYTHING IT CAN AND HE WILL VOTE TO GET THE SCHOOL WHAT IS NEEDED TO EDUCATE THE CHILDREN.

CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO HAVE AN EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: COUNCILMAN SAULS MOTIONED AND VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY SECONDED THE MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION. THE MOTION WAS CARRIED WITH ALL MEMBERS PRESENT VOTING IN FAVOR.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION: COUNCILMAN SAULS MOTIONED AND COUNCILMAN ETHERIDGE SECONDED THE MOTION TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH ALL MEMBERS PRESENT VOTING IN FAVOR.

CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR SAID THE COUNCIL DISCUSSED A PERSONNEL MATTER AND NO ACTION WAS NEEDED.

CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR ANNOUNCED THAT THE COUNCIL WILL MEET PRIOR TO THE 3:00 BUDGET WORKSHOP. CHAIRMAN BLACKSHEAR CALLED FOR A 10:00 A.M. MEETING ON MAY 11, 2011. THE AGENDA WAS TO INCLUDE BUDGET DISCUSSION AND AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE COUNCIL MEMBERS ONLY.

MR. MALPHRUS ASKED THE COUNCIL ABOUT THE REQUESTS FOR A-TAX FUNDS. IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE COUNCIL TO HEAR THE REQUESTS AT THE MAY 18, 2011 BUDGET WORKSHOP.

ADJOURN - VICE CHAIRMAN GREGORY MOTIONED AND COUNCILMAN SAULS SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADJOURN. THE MOTION WAS CARRIED WITH ALL MEMBERS PRESENT VOTING IN FAVOR.

THE MEETING ENDED AT 5:45 P.M.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

JUDITH M. FRANK, CCC
CLERK TO COUNCIL

LEROY BLACKSHEAR
CHAIRMAN