

**WHITE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET HEARING HELD**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2013 AT 4:30 P.M.**

The White County Board of Commissioners held a Budget Hearing on the proposed Fiscal Year 2014 Budget on Thursday, June 6, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. in the Grand Jury Room at the White County Courthouse. Present at the meeting were: Chairman Travis Turner, Commissioner Terry Goodger, Commissioner Lyn Holcomb, Commissioner Edwin Nix, Commissioner Craig Bryant, County Manager Michael Melton, Finance Director Vicki Mays, and County Clerk Shanda Murphy.

Chairman Turner called the meeting to order.

Mr. Michael Melton made a presentation of the draft FY 2014 County Budget (see attached). Copies of the draft summary budget were made available to the public.

Mr. Melton stated that everyone should keep in mind that the Emergency Services Fund and the Senior Services Fund had been merged into the General Fund during FY 2013. He stated that the merging of funds had increased both revenue and expenses for the General Fund. Mr. Melton also stated the budget being presented was the same as the budget presented at the May Budget Retreat – although the County Retirement Contribution had been reinstated as had been discussed at the last Work Session. He explained that the budget being presented was a balanced budget and would not require an increase in the County's Millage Rate. The General Fund Budget presented was balanced at \$16,074,093.00.

Agency requests made for the FY 2014 Budget were reviewed, noting the following increases: Family Connections / \$13,000.00 increase, Extension Service / \$500.00 increase, Health Department / \$5,000.00 increase, AVITA / \$4,500.00 increase, Drug Task Force / \$9,859.00 increase, and Library / \$4,938.00 increase. The Board had questions regarding an explanation on the agency increases. There was a consensus that AVITA would remain at \$7,500.00 until the Board of Commissioners had an opportunity to review the request for additional funding, that Family Connections would be increased to \$10,000.00 (from \$7,000.00), the Health Department would increase to \$145,000.00 (from \$140,000.00). Ms. Vicki Mays said she would provide each Board Member with a copy of agency requests received.

Chairman Turner questioned the reason for the increase in the Countywide Department (#110) from \$2,331,273.12 to \$3,017,699.98 (\$686,426.86). It was determined that the agency increases above, the entire retirement contribution being applied to the one department, the \$10,028.00 increase in the Enotah Contribution, and the E-911 General Fund Contribution being moved from the Emergency Services Fund to the General Fund accounted for this increase within the Countywide Department.

Commissioner Bryant expressed his concern regarding the amount of funding being provided to the Accountability / Drug Court Contribution (from the Drug Education Fund) in light of State

Grant Funding also being available. Ms. Mays stated that State Grant Funds had not yet been received. Mr. Melton stated that another contribution made out of the Drug Education Fund was \$5,000.00 to the Enotah Anti-Drug Coalition; however the organization was not audited annually as require by the White County Code – for non-profits to be eligible for funding. He explained that the audit would cost the organization a good portion of their total annual budget. There was a consensus that the organization would need to come before the Board of Commissioners in order request an exception from this policy.

Chairman Turner presented a request which had been made by the City of Helen for the County to take over the dispatching of all emergency calls, as they were planning to eliminate their dispatch positions. Mr. Jerry Elkins, Helen City Manager, was present to represent the City's request. Mr. Elkins stated that when E-911 was implemented, the City of Helen elected not to participate fully in the service as the City Commission at that time wanted to retain dispatchers at the City of Helen Police Department. He indicated that over time this mindset had changed and the current Commission realizes the benefits of fully participating in the E-911 service at the level provided to the City of Cleveland and unincorporated White County. Mr. Elkins explained that approximately 5,500 calls were dispatched from the City of Helen Police Department last year and approximately 8,000 calls were dispatched from the White County 911 Center for the City of Helen – since when 911 is dialed it does not go to the police department, it automatically goes to the 911 Center. Mr. Elkins stated that with the funds saved by eliminating the Helen dispatch services, the City would be hiring an additional Police Officer which would improve their public safety service.

Mr. David Murphy, Public Safety Director, stated that within the proposed FY 14 Budget, he had requested an additional Communications Officer, based on current call volume. He explained a staffing analysis he had done and stated that if the County took on the additional dispatching for the City of Helen – he would need to hire an additional Communications Officer. Mr. Murphy indicated that by adding the two (2) additional Communications Officers, he would have staffing levels close to what is needed for the current call volume. He stated the cost of one (1) position was \$37,000.00.

There was discussion of how this change would affect the service delivery strategy which was developed in 1999 and was revised in 2006 – since there will be a change in services and the City of Helen's population is now over 500. Mr. Melton stated this would also require addressing the service delivery strategy with the City of Cleveland.

Mr. Elkins stated that the City Commission would be willing to pay a fair share for the additional use of 911 – in order to supplement the County's increased cost. Mr. Murphy indicated that he had a formula which would accurately calculate the cost of White County 911's service to each user agency on a quarterly basis, based upon 911's budget for the specific budget year – which allows for capital costs to be spread evenly, which would cause the cost per call to fluctuate from budget year to budget year. Mr. Melton stated that the first step in this process needed to be the Board deciding if they wanted to reopen the service delivery strategy. There was a consensus among the Board of Commissioners that they were agreeable to the County providing complete 911 services to the City of Helen. Chairman Turner asked Mr. Melton, Mr. Elkins, and Mr.

Murphy to bring a plan to implement this back to the Board of Commissioners by the June 24, 2013 meeting.

Sheriff Neal Walden stated that another major change would be impacting White County 911, as well as his department – he indicated that with the State of Georgia reducing law enforcement in the State Parks to one (1) ranger for every fifteen (15) parks, the 911 Center’s call volume would be increasing as would his department’s response to this area. The number of calls related to this change is estimated to be 8,000 annually.

In reviewing department budgets, there was a consensus among the Board that the Finance Director position would be taken out of the FY 2014 and would be replaced with a part-time Accounts Payable Clerk.

Sheriff Neal Walden expressed his appreciation to the Board of Commissioners for the County Employee Retirement Contribution being reinstated in the FY 2014 Budget. He stated this would be a great benefit to the employees.

Mr. Melton presented an agreement which had been sent from the White County Board of Education to the Board of Commissioners for consideration. He explained that the agreement required the County to pay the Board of Education \$30,000.00 per year for the use of the school facilities by the YMCA for recreational programs, in addition to requiring the YMCA to employ a school custodian to be present while any facility is being used. Mr. Melton explained that the \$30,000.00 amount was connected to the amount the Board of Education would be reimbursing the White County Sheriff for an additional School Resource Officer; thereby creating a “wash” on this expense for the Board of Education. However, the County would still have an additional expense of \$30,000.00 in paying for the use of facilities (middle school football field and gyms).

There was a consensus that the Board needed additional time to review the proposed agreement presented on behalf of the Board of Education, they wanted the agreement to be reviewed by the County Attorney, and they wanted to address the agreement at the June 24, 2013 voting meeting.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Goodger, seconded by Commissioner Nix there was a unanimous vote to approve the first reading of the FY 2014 County Budget with the changes noted.

Monday, June 24, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. was designated for the next meeting of the Board of Commissioners with a Work Session and Called Meeting to follow. The second reading and adoption of the FY 2014 Budget will be addressed at that time.

Chairman Turner confirmed that based on information received from Mr. Russell Biggers – the workload for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Office, funded by White County, had decreased; therefore funding for this Office is not included in the FY 2014 Budget as presented.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Holcomb there was a unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting.

The minutes of the June 6, 2013 Budget Hearing are hereby approved as stated this 5th day of August, 2013.

**WHITE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

s/Travis C. Turner  
Travis C. Turner, Chairman

s/Terry D. Goodger  
Terry D. Goodger, District 1

s/Lyn Holcomb  
Lyn Holcomb, District 2

s/Edwin Nix  
Edwin Nix, District 3

s/Craig Bryant  
Craig Bryant, District 4

s/Shanda Murphy  
Shanda Murphy, County Clerk