

Special Meeting/Budget Hearing

May 8, 2000

The Board of County Commissioners, in and for the County of Otero, State of New Mexico, met in a Special Meeting at the Otero County Courthouse in Alamogordo, County and State aforesaid. Meeting called to order by the Chairman at 1:00 p.m., May 8, 2000; and he announced that reasonable notice for this meeting was given to the Alamogordo Daily News, Mountain Monthly, and to Radio Stations, KPSA, KINN and KYEE.

Present:

Richard Zierlein

Chairman

Ronny Rardin

DRAFT
Member

Ruth Hooser

County Administrator

Virginia Fletcher

Assistant County Administrator

Kim Chavez

Deputy Clerk

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Commissioner Rardin gave the invocation, Commissioner Zierlein led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance and Ruth Hooser led the salute to the flag of New Mexico.

I. Otero County Budget Hearing for Fiscal Year 2000/2001.

1. Terry Mueller, Fire Chief of the Oro Vista Fire Department approached the Board to request the Commission consider hiring a Fire Marshall for the County. Mr. Mueller gave the Commission a break down of the cost to hire someone. Commissioner Rardin asked whose budget the money would come out of? Commissioner Zierlein stated it would have to come out of the General Fund. The person would also do some code enforcement for the County. Commissioner Zierlein informed Mr. Mueller that the Commission would have to look over the

budget before a decision can made.

2. Consider approving a Compensation Plan and Policy.

Commissioner Rardin asked what happened to the compensation plan that the Commission had already done and where did the new compensation plan come from? Donna Brandon stated that she met with the elected officials and found that this was not a workable plan. The primary reason was because there were five levels for each job. The only difference between the jobs was longevity. That took the County back to where employees would get raises on their longevity and not on performance. Carl Harms, Chief Deputy Assessor stated that for his office he would need 39 different positions. Commissioner Rardin stated that he does not want to go back to where the elected officials go and evaluate the employees and if the employee is liked by the supervisor no matter how their job performance is they can get a pay increase. Ms. Brandon stated that the way the new scale is done is all the employees that are in a grade six, their salaries were averaged and made that the mid point. The next step was to take Leā and Dona Ana Counties plan used and take the low end and divided it by 1.25 and the high end was multiplied by 1.20 and that gave the distance between the ranges. Ms. Brandon stated that those that will get an increase are those at the low end. Commissioner Rardin feels that this will not fix the problem today if there are employees spread hundred of dollars apart. Ms. Brandon stated that maybe they should be spread apart because of the longevity and the way the County has been doing things for the past five or six years. Employees in this County tend to get a raise, just because they don't get fired, it does not matter if they are deserving or not. Commissioner Rardin stated that the longevity does need to be looked at seriously. Commissioner Zierlein stated that now the department heads are going to have to have reasons to give their employees a raise not just because they are their friends. The

employees are going to have to be above average to receive a raise. Ms. Brandon stated that one thing that was done was that the department head would not have the opportunity to move employees to the top of the range. Commissioner Rardin asked if with the new scale is there anyone capped out at the top of the scale? Ms. Brandon stated that there are and they should be because they are all long time County employees who have been in the same positions. Commissioner Zierlein stated that the Department heads need to keep records of their employees work performance. Ms. Brandon stated that something equitable needs to be done as soon as possible. The reason is that at the Detention Center some employees were moved to sergeants and because the wage scale is on hold they are making far less than those that were already sergeants are. The Board discussed the maximum wage increase for any employee in any given year. Commissioner Zierlein stated that there would be a certain percentage that employees can't go over in any given year. If the Commission allows a 2% cost of living pay increase across the Board the elected officials can't give 4% to one employees and no raise to another. The department head or elected official will only be allowed to give the employee 2% or less. Commissioner Zierlein stated that based on performance an elected official or department head doesn't have to give a pay increase. Commissioner Zierlein stated that for promotion there would be a minimum of 5% and no more than 10% increase. Commissioner Rardin stated that he feels that supervisor's should make more than those they supervise. Ms. Brandon feels that each department should submit an inventory of positions that they need in their department. This will keep a department from making positions just to give promotions that are not needed. Commissioner Rardin stated that just because there is a position there it does not have to be filled. Commissioner Zierlein requested that the new compensation scale be drawn up so that a comparison can be done. Commissioner Rardin stated what he sees is happening is that

this new scale is a chance of giving elected officials and department heads the authority of giving their employees an incentive raise but staying within a margin that will fit a budget. If it gets out of hand it will be because the Commission allowed for the promotions. The Commission decided to keep the lump sum every five years for longevity. No other action was taken.

II. Ruth Hooser gave the Commission a brief summary of the budget. Mrs. Hooser stated that with salaries and everything in the budget now there is a little over two million left in general fund in this years budget. Under Corrections it is one million in the red. In the Road Fund is \$746,000.00 in the red. The Environmental Convenience Center is in the red \$40,000.00. The new budget is going to have to come up with money for these funds. The Board discussed the 2000/2001 budget. Commissioner Zierlein stated that there should be a freeze on all capital outlay from now until the budget is done so that the Commission can have a good number of how much money is in the budget.

1. **Data Processing budget:** Data Processing requested a new printer, a vacuum cleaner and a high capacity tape back up system. The Commission requested that \$5,000.00 be taken out of capital outlay.

2. **Purchasing** requested a printer and an office chair for their capital outlay.

3. **Buildings and Grounds:** The Commission added the Weed Building to the **Building and Grounds**. Commissioner Zierlein asked Tony Rogers why he requested \$8300.00 for vehicle maintenance and repairs and has only used \$3,000.00 this year. Mr. Rogers stated that he has a paper with his reason but not with him. Mr. Rogers stated that he added \$26,000.00 to the electric bill for the new Sheriff's office. Mrs. Hooser reminded the Commission that this year's

budget is only through April. The Commission also took out \$100,000.00 from the maintenance and repair line item. The Commission cut the pickup out of the capital outlay.

4. Law Enforcement: The Commission moved the animal control line item up to \$41,000.00. The Enhanced 911 was lowered to \$20,000.00. Commissioner Rardin asked that the Board consider giving the Reserve Deputies per diem when they go to school or when they go pick up prisoners. Commissioner Zierlein stated they would have the County Attorney look at this matter. The Commission cut out \$40,000.00 out of capital outlay and leave \$160,000.00 for vehicles.

5. Rifle Range: The Commission put \$5,000.00 for a part time employee for the range.

6. Detention: Commissioner Zierlein asked if the Detention needs \$8,000.00 under vehicle expenses. Mr. Jenkins stated that he is not sure because now Deming and Transcon are hauling their prisoners. The only problem is that the Detention is waiting for Transcon's rebid. The Commission cut per-diem down to \$2,000.00. The Commission cut maintenance contracts to \$5,000.00. The capital outlay was cut to \$45,000.00.

7. Road Department: The Commission cut the part-time down to \$2500.00 cut surveying to \$10,000.00, cut capital outlay, vehicles down to \$60,000.00, cut out \$50,000.00 out of capital outlay - other and cut capital outlay heavy equipment to \$400,000.00.

8. Library - The Commission budgeted the Library to \$46,000.00.

9. RC & D - The Commission budgeted \$1940.00 as requested.

The Commission gave only the Library and the RC & D an increase and left all other Community

Services the same as last years budget.

10. Indigent Fund - The Commission cut the capital outlay to \$0.00 and stated they already gave money for the new office furniture in last budget year.

11. Environmental/Convenient Center - The Commission cut the Capital Outlay to \$40,000.00 Commissioner Rardin made a motion to put a freeze on all Capital Outlay projects unless the Commission first approves and with the exception of the Fire Departments. Commission Zierlein seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

The Commission discussed the Ruidoso Fire. Commission Zierlein asked that the Commission informed Lincoln County that they are willing to help if needed. No other action was taken.

The Commission recessed the meeting until Wednesday, May 10, 2000 at 4:00 p.m.

APPROVED:

CHAIRMAN

ATTESTED:

COUNTY CLERK