

Continuation of Budget Hearing

August 7, 2001

The Board of County Commissioners, in and for the County of Otero, State of New Mexico, met in a Budget Meeting at the Otero County Courthouse in Alamogordo, County and State aforesaid. Meeting called to order by the Chairman at 4:00 p.m., August 7, 2001; and he announced that reasonable notice for this meeting was given to the Alamogordo Daily News, Holloman Sunburst, El Paso Times, Mountain Monthly, and to Radio Stations, KPSA, KINN and KYEE.

Present:

Richard L. Zierlein	Chairman
Tim McGinn	Vice-Chairman
Michael Nivison	Member
Ruth Hooser	County Manager
Robyn Silva	Deputy Clerk

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The Chairman reconvened the Budget Hearing that was recessed on Thursday, August 2, 2001 at 4:00 p.m.

Commissioner Zierlein stated that the Commission is prepared to approve the final budget for Otero County for the fiscal year 2001/2002. He further stated that a lot of people took a lot of tough cuts. The Sheriff's Department salaries of those employees in the collective bargaining unit only will be held in abeyance pending approval of salary in collective bargaining. Commissioner Zierlein also stated that the personnel package is being approved with a 4% increase for County employees along with the promotions that were requested. He further stated that this has been the toughest budget for everybody to deal with that he has seen since he has been a County Commissioner, and if we don't fix the revenue flow this year it is going to be worst next year. The

revenues are being harmed because of the mandates being passed down from the Federal Government and we have no control of it. Commissioner Zierlein stated that we have a balanced budget but we need to make one change by taking an additional \$10,000 out of Administration's over-time line item. That should be included as part of the motion. Also, when we approve the budget we are approving that we go to an HMO for the employee's health care because that will save the County several thousand dollars.

Commissioner Nivison made a motion to approve the Otero County final budget from July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002 with the additional \$10,000 of over-time taken from the Administration's budget. Commissioner McGinn seconded the motion. Discussion was held. Under Sheriff Dave Plotner stated that they realize that the budget is tight for everyone and they realize that everyone has had to take a lot of cuts to balance the budget. There was even an additional \$195,000 taken out of their budget last week. However, he stated that there are a couple of line items, such as vehicles and equipment, that they really don't know how they are going to make it through the year on the low amount that they have been budgeted. He stated that they may have to come back later in the year for a budget increase. Commissioner Zierlein stated that if we have the money at mid-year then we will look at it. He stated that the vehicle line item is where he's most concerned. What we may have to do is share some of the cars and park the other ones. He stated that that is not what he wants to do, but we have no alternative. Commissioner Nivison stated that we have cut our community services and he would like to send them out a letter like we did last year to that effect. As a matter of policy, we should take care of our internal employees first. Commissioner Nivison stated that we are going to have to look at this, month by month, and very hard at the middle of the year. Sheriff Lee was concerned with the comment made about collective bargaining and whether it should be a part of the motion. Mrs. Hooser stated that it does have to be a part of the motion.

Commissioner Nivison amended the motion, stating that the Sheriff's Department salaries of those employees in the collective bargaining unit only will be held in abeyance pending approval of salary in collective bargaining contract. Commissioner McGinn seconded the amendment. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. See pages _____.

The time being 4:11 p.m., the Chairman adjourned the meeting.

Chairman

ATTEST:

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OTERO COUNTY CLERK