

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES

No new employees were introduced.

BURN BAN (RESOLUTION 2017-4) – DARIN MYERS, DIRECTOR OF FIRE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Darin Myers, Director of Fire & Emergency Management, discussed Burn Ban Resolution 2017-4 and indicated there is no intent to implement the Burn Ban currently. Commissioner Roths had questions about the wind speed of 5 mph. Myers explained about the need for the combustion of materials and why this wind speed was needed for a controlled burn.

ELLIS COUNTY FIRE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT-DARIN MYERS, DIRECTOR OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Darin Myers, Director of Fire & Emergency Management, shared with the Commissioners the 2018 Annual Report for Ellis County Fire and Emergency Management. Myers stated it was another great year for the Ellis County Fire Department (ECFD). He shared a couple of things that were important to him: They responded to 320 calls for service which is a decrease of five percent from the previous year; there was an average of 12 volunteers to each call. On structure fires there was an average of 33 firefighters per incident. The insurance ratings were decreased last year. They had over 242 training opportunities for the firefighters to attend. They continue to staff the Northwest Regional Technical Rescue Team which includes 18 counties. They purchased new radios. Emergency Management installed all new sirens throughout the County. They received a \$130,000 Dane G. Hansen Foundation grant to help accomplish that.

Myers stated he will come back to the Commission to add new appointments to Company 4 due to the retirement of the Fire Chief. He will need to promote a new Chief and Captain. Insofar as the budget, personnel is a very low percentage of the budget. Most of the expenses are for the firefighters, fuel, repairs, utilities to all the buildings, debt to all the leases that are in the process of being paid off; as well as the money that is important that we put back into reserves to pay for our vehicles. Currently we operate 19 different vehicles with an average lifespan of 14.5 years. He does try to get extra years out of them, if possible. Almost every year he needs to replace a vehicle. The years in between the personal protective gear needs to be replaced which is about \$300,000, and hydraulic rescue tools that are about \$30,000 to \$40,000 and there are four of them to replace.

His goals for the coming year are to replace one vehicle and continue with training for the firefighters. He wants to pay off the third of the final four leases. Goals for Emergency Management is to get back into the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG). That can bring in a yearly grant to help with salaries and programs. He estimates that would bring in \$30,000 to \$50,000;

however, we would have to do improvements within Emergency Management by doing training and exercising.

Commissioner Schlyer asked if the 83 firefighters were enough to be sufficiently staffed. Myers indicated there has been a steady increase; but it is a nationwide trend that volunteer firefighters is declining. Ellis County has been lucky because we have steadily increased but we never have enough because of the time of the incidents and they are working their primary jobs, so it is nice to have more.

Commissioner Roths liked the comprehensive report that was given. Asked about the mutual aid we give to other counties and how does that come about. Myers said we assisted other counties nine times last year. There are procedures in place from County-to-County to request additional resources and it goes through the dispatch center and they contact Myers. He makes the decision what to dispatch dependent upon what is going on in Ellis County at that time. They don't bill us, and we don't bill them; it is a mutual agreement to help each other out in a time of need.

Roths inquired about the new radios and if there are any problems with them. Myers indicated there are no problems, and there are a lot of benefits to them like GPS and signal reliability.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WAGE & BENEFITS COMMITTEE – COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR PHILLIP SMITH-HANES

County Administrator Smith-Hanes is asking the Commission to approve employee raises as recommended by the Wage and Benefits Committee which is to implement the step increases for employees with more than five years of service to their positions as of June 30, 2019, and then the following pay period of July 14, 2019 to provide a generally applicable pay increase of 2 percent to all of the employees.

Commissioner Haselhorst asked Smith-Hanes to share with the other two Commissioners the Evergreen study that was done in 2014. A discussion followed to update Commissioner Roths on the Evergreen study that was done in 2014.

Commissioner Roths asked if it was the Union that asked for the Evergreen study. Commissioner Haselhorst indicated it was a combination of the Union and the Commission. A different study had been done before the Evergreen study, but it was never implemented. It was finally decided that the Evergreen study would be implemented.

Commissioner Schlyer was glad to see the salary going up the 2 percent; we need to keep the scale intact.

Roths said one of the concerns he has was the \$136,000 effect on the budget. One thing that needs to be considered is the idea that our benefits package is relatively aggressive. He was put on this commission for some fiscal restraint and sees an impending road about how many employees we

employ. He said some employees deserve raises and he wished we had the funds to do so but sees it as a fiscal restraint.

Haselhorst asked Public Works Director Bill Ring to share with the commission his position on hiring and filling the positions that are presently open in Public Works. Ring indicated he had an interview on Friday that lasted four minutes because the dollar amount for the position came up right away. They have interviews right now but not for the truck driver positions. Roths indicated that we are competing in the free market with these positions. The average age of employees in the Public Works Department of the 48 positions is: 3 are under 30 years of age, 4 are 30-39 range, 9 that are 40-49 range, 18 that are 50-59 range, and 14 that are 60 and above. Roths stated right now is the time for those that work there to be training younger employees. Ring indicated that we don't get many young applicants.

Roths said we don't have a tough time hiring in the County, just in these few positions. Because of our benefits we are filling positions and are not losing people, and we have a benefit package that not very many people can touch.

Commissioner Schlyer said he remembers when this study was done; it was coming to take 1.7 million to complete all at once at that time. We have to be fair with the employees. We have to keep the cost of living increase steady; if not it will be so far behind it won't be worth anything. Haselhorst indicated because of the amount of money the study was going to take to do it all at once, this is why it was decided to take small steps to implement it. We need to do something or we will be back where we were in 2012; so we need to approve it or take it back to the wage and benefit committee.

Motion: Schlyer Second: Roths

To approve the recommendations of the Wage and Benefits Committee and direct the County Administrator to adjust wages to implement the pay plan for the employees with more than five years of service in their position as of June 30, 2019, and to provide a generally applicable pay increase of two percent effective July 14, 2019.

Disposition: Motion carried by a voice vote of two to one (Roths dissenting)

COUNTY COUNSELOR REPORTS – COUNTY COUNSELOR BILL JETER

County Counselor Bill Jeter had no report.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR PHILLIP SMITH-HANES

The County Clerk is pleased to report that Blaine Gabel accepted the position for the Catherine Township Clerk.

Motion: Schlyer Second: Roths

DEAN F. HASELHORST, CHAIR

ROBERT SCHLYER, COMMISSIONER

DUSTIN G. ROTHS, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

BOBBI L. DREILING, DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK