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Cover photo, courtesy of Buck Driggs, Driggs Design Group, shows 230th Avenue north of Interstate 70. This is a high-priority capital project for Ellis County to improve safety, access to highway transportation and economic development.





Commissioners, Elected Officials and Residents of Ellis County:

Welcome to Ellis County's budget for 2020. Ellis County's finances operate on a calendar-year basis. This budget, adopted by the County Commission on August 12, 2019, and financed in large part by property tax collections (the first installment of which are due on December 20, 2019), funds County operations for January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020.

For 2020, Ellis County's assessed valuation (the value of property upon which taxes are levied) increased by 3.3%. Meanwhile, due to the state property tax lid, the maximum amount of property tax that the Commissioners could levy for 2020 increased by only 2.6% compared to the amount levied for 2019. What this means is that the mill levy rate for 2020 will actually decrease slightly, despite the need for additional revenues to cover the costs of maintaining County services at the same levels. As a result, this budget once again decreases funding for important services. These include:

- Reducing the amount spent on allocations to outside agencies from \$1,052,000 to \$928,800 (a cut of 11.7%). This reduces funding for important community services such as mental health care, supports for the developmentally delayed, assistance to senior citizens, and public transit.
- Continued reductions in departmental budgets, averaging 2.8%. While the impacts vary from department to department, examples of reductions include leaving positions vacant in the Appraiser's Office, County Attorney's Office, Road & Bridge, and Emergency Medical Services.

The resulting budget, which includes \$21,686,061 in General Fund expenditures (with an additional \$1,143,000 in budget authority projected to roll into 2021), is the lowest level of General Fund spending authorized since 2013. You can see where the County's General Fund monies come from and where they go on page 63 of this document.

While these reductions represent tough choices, they help significantly in stabilizing the County's long-term financial picture. A five-year projection reveals that the County will attain its goal for carry-forward cash (15% of expenditures) at the end of 2020 and the picture for 2021 has improved significantly since the beginning of the budget process. Nonetheless, concerns remain beginning in 2022 and therefore the Commissioners on September 16, 2019, voted to put in front of voters in the spring of 2020 a special mail-ballot election for two countywide sales tax options.

Thank you for your interest in Ellis County's budget. If you have questions about the County's budget, please do not hesitate to contact the County Administrator's Office.



List of County Officials

County Commissioners

District 1 Robert “Butch” Schlyer
District 2 Dustin G. Roths
District 3 Dean Haselhorst

Elected Officials

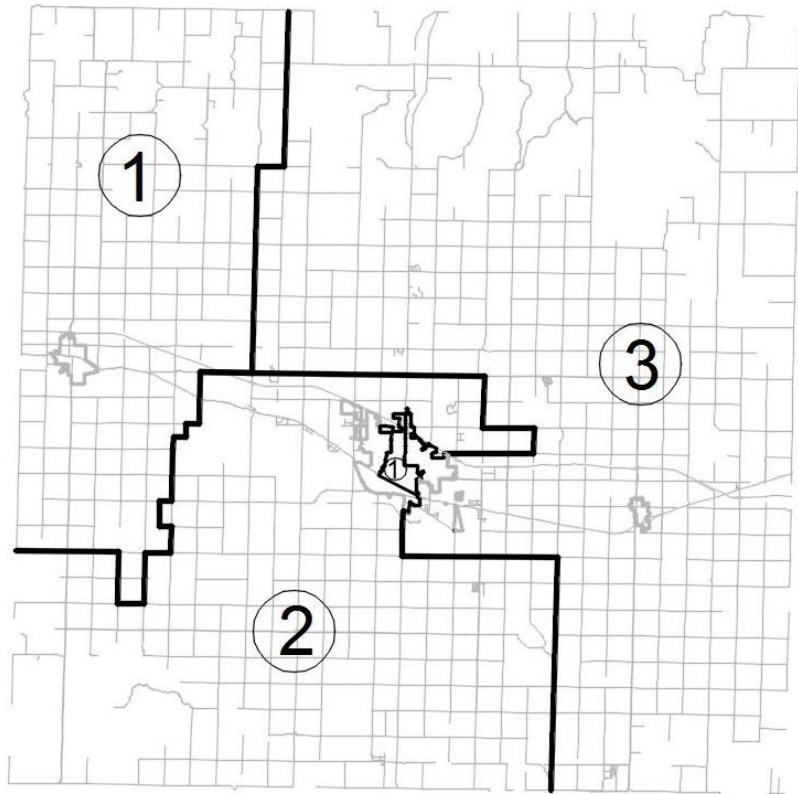
County Attorney Thomas Drees
County Clerk Donna Maskus
County Sheriff Ed Harbin
County Treasurer Lisa Schlegel
Register of Deeds Rebecca Herzog

County Administrator Phillip Smith-Hanes

Appointed Department Heads

County Appraiser Lisa Ree
Director of Fire & Emergency Management Darin Myers
Health Services Director Kerry McCue
Information Technology Director Michael Leiker
Public Works Director William Ring

County Commission Districts:



ELLIS COUNTY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

