

Budget Workshop
May 22, 2023

The Colfax County Board of Commissioners met on this date in a Budget Workshop in the Commission Chambers with the following members present:

Si Trujillo, Chairman
Mary Lou Kern, Vice-Chairman
Bret Wier, Member – Member

Also present: County Clerk Rayetta Trujillo, County Manager Monte Gore, and Financial Specialist Joana Apodaca.

Chairman Trujillo called the workshop to order at 9:15 a.m. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the Budget for FY 2023-2024.

Others in attendance: Sara Torres, Nick Cardenas, Joseph Martinez, Regina Slade, Virginia Strohm, Tom Vigil, Alfonso Ortiz, Boe Lopez, Diane Garcia, Glen Stevens, and Leonard Baca.

Discussion during the workshop included:

Boe Lopez, from the Colfax County Extension Office, presented his request to the Commission. Mr. Lopez stated he was requesting an increase to \$110,000.00, for this budget cycle. Boe stated he has not submitted for an increase for the last ten years. Boe stated the increase was due to the increase of fuel, advertising, etc. Boe stated the Beatles he releases every year went up from \$0.85 to \$4.00 and the shipping has gone up to \$80.00. Boe stated they have not been able to hire a 4-H Agent. Boe also stated that they are going to have to start charging individuals who wanted to join the Master Gardeners a fee of \$100.00 to be part of the group and that most of the older gardeners have aged out and they are rebuilding. Boe also spoke on behalf of the 4-H Program as well.

Joana Apodaca, Financial Specialist, stated she was going to present the Budget with the 75% PERA to the Commission. Joana stated there is a cushion of \$91,571.00. Chairman Trujillo stated he was concerned with the ending balance. Joana stated she went back to the drawing board and input changes to the Tax Valuation Certificated and changed the rates from the Tax Value Certificated to the 2022 rates, which increased. Joana also stated the Sheriff will now be doing the fingerprints and she increased the revenues for that service. Joana also stated that she went back and reviewed the Delinquent Taxes and the Treasurer's Office has been exceeding the \$250,000.00 so she increased the revenues to \$285,000.00.

Commissioner Wier questioned the interest that is being collected by the County and asked if the increase of the interest revenue is due to the timing of the investments. Commissioner Wier also stated that he had concerns with the Oil & Gas Production revenues and Joana stated that she used the current revenues that have been received by the County. Commissioner Wier stated he had been questioned why individuals that were purchasing property are still paying taxes as the rate the house was valued at prior to the new sales price. Joe stated the only time the County can increase your property taxes more than 3% is if the property is sold. Joe Martinez, Chief Deputy Assessor, stated they send out Sales Surveys to new owners and they do not respond to them and advised Commissioner Wier he had been sent two and they have not received his surveys. Commissioner Wier asked if there was a way to make the new owner submit the forms and was told per State Statue and the individual can be a fined. Joe stated the 3% is only on residential. Commissioner Wier stated he is being contacted about people not paying the correct amount and feels something needs to be done. Alfonso Ortiz, Chief Deputy Treasurer, stated the \$250,000.00 budgeted for interest seems accurate, since they are now getting 4.64% interest rather than the 1%. Chairman Trujillo asked about the Oil & Gas amounts and Joana stated she transferred the amounts which come from Taxation & Revenue. Commissioner Kern requested Joana add a column to show the actuals from last budget. Joana stated all the Debt Service amounts have been included in this Preliminary Budget.

Commissioner Wier stated he is still concerned about the County picking up 75% of the employee's portion of the PERA. He stated he is not sure if the budget can sustain this kind of increase, year after year. Commissioner Wier stated once this is in place, the County cannot go back. Commissioner Wier stated he would much rather see an hourly increase for employees rather than the PERA.