

CLEVELAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

February 20, 2004

The Cleveland County Board of Commissioners met in a ***Special Called Meeting for the purpose of holding a joint meeting with County Department Heads*** on this date at the hour of 10:00 a.m. in the Commission Chamber of the Cleveland County Administrative Offices.

PRESENT: Mary S. Accor, Chairwoman
Willie B. McIntosh, Commissioner
Jerry L. Self, Commissioner
R. L. Alexander, County Manager
David Dear, Assistant County Manager/Finance Director
Wanda Crotts, CMC, County Clerk
Other individual names on file in the Clerk's Office

ABSENT: Ronald J. Hawkins, Vice-Chair
Tom Bridges, Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Accor called the meeting to order.

COUNTY BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2004-2005

Chris Green, County Tax Assessor, accompanied by Jean Mayes, Assistant Tax Assessor, presented the same information concerning the current tax revaluation as was presented at the town meetings.

Commissioners told department heads that citizens had "poured out their hearts" during the town meetings as to how they cannot "take increases" in taxes. Chairwoman Accor noted that many told about being on fixed incomes, being unemployed or underemployed. Commissioners thanked department heads for their efforts in being conservative and implementing budget reductions in previous years, and emphasized the importance of continuing those efforts as they develop their budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year. Commissioners advised they have assured citizens that everything possible will be done to minimize the tax burden on citizens. Chairwoman Accor told department heads that developing the budget this year must be a "heart thing" as they prioritize their budget requests.

Mr. Alexander requested department heads develop a list of "hot button" issues which will affect their departments so Commissioners can help "lobby" the local legislative delegation when the General Assembly convenes. He said after the revaluation appeals are finished in May "we will have a better handle on value."

The floor was opened for comments and there was discussion regarding such issues as the current salary scale; the difficulty in recruitment and retention of employees; restrictions regarding the positions for which the State sets qualifications; Medicaid expenses and the fact those expenses are up due to unemployment; increased health insurance expenses; tax collection procedures; Register of Deeds increased caseloads due to unemployment, lower interest rates and the volume of refinancing; and staff training requirements, especially in the Sheriff's Department. There were suggestions as to possible ways to address some of these concerns, such as department heads getting together and "brainstorming" or sharing employees. Mr. Alexander said he would meet with department heads regarding suggestions.

ADJOURN

ACTION: Willie McIntosh made the motion, seconded by Jerry Self, and unanimously adopted by the Board, to ***adjourn the meeting at 11:20 a.m.***

Mary S. Accor, Chairwoman
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Wanda Crotts, CMC, Clerk
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