

MEETING MINUTES  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
April 11, 2023

The April 11, 2023, Montgomery County Council Meeting was held at 9:00 am at the Community Meeting Room of the Montgomery County Government Center. In attendance were Council President David Hunt and Council Members Jake Bohlander, Gary Booth, Brett Cating, Joyce Grimble, Steve Loy and Matt Nelson. Auditor Mindy Byers was present, along with Attorney Dan Taylor, Commissioner John Frey, County Administrator Tom Klein and Financial Consultant Jeff Peters.

- I. CALL TO ORDER: Council President Hunt called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer.
- II. CONSENT AGENDA: Council Member Bohlander moved to approve the Council Meeting minutes from March 14, 2023 as well as the claims from Peters Franklin and Taylor, Minnette, Schneider & Clutter. Motion was seconded by Council Member Nelson. Motion carried 7-0.
- III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: None.
- IV. MONEY MATTERS:

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS:						
Fund	Fund Description	Dept #	Department Description	Account	Account Description	Additional Amount Requested
1170	LIT Public Safety	0005	Sheriff	30017	Comms	\$33,291.84
4905	Court Referral	0235	Probation	11023	Instructors	\$1,200.00
4905	Court Referral	0235	Probation	11125	Probation Off/Sub Ab	\$50,196.90
4905	Court Referral	0235	Probation	20006	Class Materials	\$500.00
4905	Court Referral	0235	Probation	30001	Travel Expenses	\$1,000.00
4905	Court Referral	0235	Probation	30051	Interpreter	\$500.00
4905	Court Referral	0235	Probation	32100	Dues & Subscriptions	\$400.00
4905	Court Referral	0235	Probation	33500	Seminars & Training	\$1,250.00
4996	Sheriff Special Donation	0005	Sheriff	30100	Vehicle/Equipment Repair	\$6,123.88
TOTAL:						\$94,462.62

- A. Council Member Loy moved to approve the additional appropriation requests from the Sheriff; this was seconded by Council Member Bohlander. Motion carried 7-0.
- B. Council Member Grimble moved to approve the additional appropriation requests from the Probation Department; this was seconded by Council Member Bohlander. Motion carried 7-0.

TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS:								
Fund	Fund Description	Dept #	Department	From Account	Account Description	To Account	Account Description	Transfer Amount Requested
1000	County General	0006	Surveyor	11106	Drainage Tech	30009	Aerial Photography	\$3,993.44
TOTAL:								\$3,993.44

- A. Council Member Booth moved to approve the transfer request from the Surveyor. This was seconded by Council Member Cating. Motion carried 7-0.

- V. NEW BUSINESS:
  - A. Financial Consultant Jeff Peters of Peters Franklin LTD provided those present with his in-depth fiscal projection study. The 47-page report provided a depth of fund-by-fund analysis of the County's current fiscal status, as well as a projection out to 2026. The following summary looks at the proposed Projects/Questions:

Projects /Questions:

- 1) ~\$243,700 for 2024 pay raise for merit deputies (ongoing).
- 2) ~\$20,000 starting in 2024 for Commissioners vehicle lease (ongoing).
- 3) ~\$? For HR Person (ongoing).
- 4) ~\$? For Marketing Person (ongoing).
- 5) ~\$? For Economic Development Person (ongoing).
- 6) ~\$ for new SRO (ongoing).
- 7) ~\$217,000 from ARPA to Drainage to reimburse for Mace Project (one-time).
  - a. Currently funded in the Fiscal Plan under the ARPA Fund.
- 8) ~\$50,000 from Riverboat for CDC (one-time).
  - a. Currently funded in the Fiscal Plan under the Riverboat Fund.



- 9) ~\$130,000 SRO start-up costs with ~\$47,000 reimbursed from NMCSC (one-time).
- 10) ~\$99,000 for interim Jail Roof Repair (one-time).
  - a. The County could issue Lease Rental Bonds repaid with new property tax for the new Jail projects.
- 11) ~\$425,000 for permanent Jail Roof Repair (one-time).
  - a. The County could issue Lease Rental Bonds repaid with new property tax for the new Jail projects.
- 12) ~\$753,797 for Jail capital projects, excluding roof (one-time).
  - a. The County could issue Lease Rental Bonds repaid with new property tax for the new Jail projects.
- 13) Retain ARPA \$ / alternative funding for Purple Heart Parkway (one-time).
  - a. Subject to Bond Counsel's opinion, the road project cannot be repaid with property tax unless the total project cost was less than \$2.0 million and met the requirements of a Public Works Loan under IC 36-9-41. Repaying road bonds with LIT is still subject to the GO Bond cap, unless structured as a lease, which is somewhat complicated for the road. We would need to work through the specifics with Bond Counsel, if the County wishes to try to lease finance the road project and repay the debt with LIT. Also, the repayment through LIT would reduce the current LIT allocations to specific funds which produces the Operating Excess above unless the County were willing to impose a new LIT. If the County were to issue GO LIT bonds, then that amount would be limited to the GO Bond cap of ~\$2.7 million.
- 14) Spread payments on Bridge #79 (one-time).
  - a. The payments are already spread across 10 years and are not callable. Therefore, no options here.
- 15) Spread payments on Government Center (one-time).
  - a. The payments are already spread across 20 years which is the property tax maximum and the Fiscal Plan anticipates funding these payments through property tax beginning in 2024. Therefore, no options here.
- 16) Remodel the Courthouse (one-time).
  - a. The County could issue Lease Rental Bonds repaid with new property tax for the new Courthouse projects.
- 17) Nucor Road Bridge engineering for "shovel ready" (one-time).
  - a. This might also be paid from current TIF cash. However, this would reduce TIF cash available for future TIF projects.
- 18) Nucor Road Bridge match (one-time).
  - a. The County should be able to issue TIF Bonds backed with a taxpayer guarantee and County LIT for the Nucor Road Bridge project.
- 19) Rain Day Fund transfers (one-time or ongoing).
  - a. Transfers can be made from unrestricted cash to the Rainy Day Fund less than or equal to 15% or 10% of budget, depending on certain years. However, if the Fiscal Body is actively watching yearly revenues, expenditures, and cash balances, as does Montgomery County, then there is really no need to segregate money to the Rainy Day Fund. Expenditures of excess operating cash can be made directly from those operating funds rather than going through the Rainy Day Fund.
- 20) Restructure EDIT for economic development. (ongoing).
  - a. The County could reduce EDIT for Property Tax Relief (PTR) or it could simply increase EDIT under the "expenditure rate" of LIT and use the distribution for economic development. Reducing the PTR would increase Circuit Breaker Credits which results in a reduction in property taxes collected versus levied. The amount of that impact should be studied prior to any reduction to PTR. Montgomery County currently has .55% available in its "expenditure rate" for LIT, after its LIT increases in 2022. An EDIT LIT would be shared with the Cities and Towns, similar to how Public Safety LIT is shared. Any new implementation of LIT would reduce the amount available under the cap and for other future purposes.

B. Consideration of ERPS Committee Recommendations – County Administrator Tom Klein presented the results from the ERPS Committee meeting with regards to requests from the following departments:

1. Courts – 2% increase over requested increase amount from 2022. ERPS Committee did not

recommend this increase. Judge Barajas reported that the roles for Court employees had changed significantly with since they Odyssey system had been introduced, as well as a countywide increase in the overall caseload being put before the courts.

2. Assessor – found that this amount was already budgeted and mandated by the state statute. No ERPS decision needed.
3. Treasurer – increases for all positions. ERPS Committee recommended that this be looked at during the 2024 Budget process.

Mr. Klein reported that the ERPS committee agrees that it is time for a countywide compensation study and an update to the process for requesting pay changes. This was echoed by Council Members Hunt, Booth and Cating as well as several department heads.

A motion to accept the ERPS committee recommendations as presented was made by Council Member Booth, seconded by Council Member Bohlander. Motion carried 7-0.

#### VI. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Clerk Karyn Douglas' request from February that had been tabled was revisited. The Council had been awaiting the annual projection report from Jeff Peters before proceeding. The request was to have the Election Coordinator position returned to the current year budget. This was to bring a Deputy on staff and make certain that s/he is prepared to run the 2024 election, for which a large turnout is expected. A motion to approve the request from February to restore the \$33,500 budget line in 2023 budget was made by Council Member Cating. The motion was seconded by Council Member Loy; motion carried 7-0.

#### VII. REPORTS:

- A. MCCCC Director Sherri Henry reported that her office was also dealing with personnel shortages. That has been an ongoing problem, and turnover is high. Dispatchers can make \$5k more just a county over, and they have lost personnel for that very reason. Director Henry also reported that it was currently National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week and that she and her staff were very grateful for all of the gifts and support.
- B. Sheriff Ryan Needham also spoke in favor of a professional compensation analysis. He thanked the Council for their approval of the SRO request, and reported that staffing in his departments would be taking a hit from upcoming retirements, also. There has also been a struggle to find viable candidates – recent attempts to find a new Merit officer found that only 1 in 6 candidates met specifications, and then that one candidate decided to pursue another offer. The Sheriff added that turnover is constant in their departments as well, even with the most recent \$5k increases. Council Member Cating asked Sheriff Needham about the state of the Jail facility. The Sheriff reminded the Council Members that there was a need for roof work. The current roof has been in place for 16-17 years and has several patches in place that are currently keeping water damage at bay.
- C. Assessor Sherri Bentley also agreed that there needs to be a compensation study done, and would like to see it handled by a professional firm.
- D. Clerk Karyn Douglas agreed with the same and asked that current staffing salaries be looked at, as there are several instances where County employees within departments will make more than department heads due to cost of living increases over the years.
- E. Auditor Mindy Byers reported that tax bills were scheduled to mail on April 12<sup>th</sup>. She also has published the 2023 tax rates in the newspapers as well as the county website's transparency portal. Auditor Byers reported that the Attendance on Demand software development is proceeding and that requests for users to interface with the system were going out, so that test data from all departments could be tracked against the programming. She also reiterated the importance of getting all county employees on the same pay cycle, since currently we are processing some employees' payrolls prior to completion of the pay cycle.

#### VIII. RECESS: At 10:25 Council President Hunt called for a 5-minute recess before the beginning of the joint Council & Commissioner Strategic session. (Council Member Bohlander did not return from the recess.)

#### IX. JOINT STRATEGIC SESSION:

- A. Commissioner Frey began the conversation for the Joint Strategic session by discussing communication, the importance thereof, and the methods by which the County's goals and initiatives should be shared with all.
- B. Priorities were discussed. Those were listed as:

**\*Controlled Growth**

-Increase population (50,000)

**\* Quality of Place**

**\* Health and Safety of our Citizens**

**\* Maintain and Improve our Assets and Infrastructure**

**\*Create the Environment People, Business and Industry can Thrive**

-Job creation and Retention, and a better way of life

**C. Projects were also discussed. Those were listed as:**

**Nucor Overpass**

**Purple Heart Extension**

-Ladoga Rd

-Comfort Dr

**Truck Route**

-300 S to Ladoga Rd

-300 S east to 136

-300 S to I74

-775 E to 32

-Connector Comfort Dr to 300 S (250 E extension)

**Jail Remodel**

**Courthouse Remodel**

**Government Center payoff?**

**Childcare Center**

**Memorial Drive Extension**

**Shelly Drain**

**CDC Grants**

**ED Department**

-Director

-PR

-Marketing

**Nucor Expansion/Other new industry requests**

**Water Main to 500 S**

**Sewer Treatment Plant Expansion**

**Utilities on Nucor Rd from 32 to 400 E**

**Comp Plan refresh**

-Thoroughfare plan/Road Safety plan tyin

**Strategic Plan**

-South side of C'ville

**D. Financial Consultant Jeff Peters was called upon to provide information regarding the funding for these priorities and projects. Mr. Peters described there being several funding options. Including realignment of Local Income Tax uses – shifting funding away from property tax replacement**

credits towards certified shares or economic development funding. He recommended that this only be attempted after careful contractual analysis, as it strongly affects circuit breakers, unit income and tax bills. Other options mentioned were General Obligation bonds or Corporation lease rentals. GO bonds are subject to statutory limits, while Corporation lease rentals are less restrictive, but still must be carefully analyzed to not commit to annual payments beyond the county’s means. We have some debt that is nearly paid off, and new debt could be taken on for other projects with little impact felt by taxpayers.

- E. RDC President Ron Dickerson also added that there needs to be actual funding and assistance for Tom Klein in responding to Economic Development marketplace inquiries and information requests from interested businesses. Discussion then turned to the need for housing. Studies indicate that the most sought-after price range for housing in the county is in the \$250-\$300K range. Council Member Booth asked if was Housing TIF’s were viable options to fund residential development. Jeff Peters weighed in that again, a thorough analysis of the composition of properties within the Housing TIF would need to be studied, and as mentioned before, an examination of Property Tax Replacement Credit impacts would need to take place. Council Member Booth agreed with this.
- F. Chief Probation Officer asked that all consider the internal hits taken by County departments as a result of the growth. Her department and the Sheriff’s will both most likely need to add more programs and staffing positions to meet the increased needs associated with growth. Commissioner Frey agreed, and that if the right investments were made in our development, that could stay ahead of the costs of growth.
- G. Council President Hunt agreed that there was much to consider and study. He also acknowledged the requests for compensation studies from Department Heads. All of the changes afoot mean that we need to proceed very carefully.
- X. ADJOURN: Council Member Nelson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Loy. Motion carried 5-0 (Council Member Grimble had to leave early).

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David Hunt, Council President

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Jake Bohlander, Council Vice President

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Gary Booth, Council Member

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Brett Cating, Council Member

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Joyce Grimble, Council Member

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Steve Loy, Council Member

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Matt Nelson, Council Member

Attest:

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Mindy Byers, Auditor

