

TERM OF COMMISSION: December Session of the November Adjourned Term

PLACE OF MEETING: Hearing Room One, Boone County Courthouse

PRESENT WERE: Presiding Commissioner Don Stamper
District I Commissioner Karen M. Miller
District II Commissioner Linda Vogt at 9:12 a.m.
Deputy County Clerk Michelle Malaby
Auditor and Chief Budget Officer June Pitchford

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m.

SUBJECT: Budget Work Session

Human Resources Director Mark Stone was present to discuss the Assessor's request to upgrade salary ranges for appraisers. Mr. Stone stated he called several counties, the City of Columbia and the State Highway Department to determine where the County stands with its range for appraisers, range 19. The County is not competitive with the City of Columbia and the Highway Department. The Highway Department uses right of way agents as appraisers. The Assessor's request for three range levels is similar to the Highway Department structure. Based on the information gathered, he developed a competitive salary structure and hiring guidelines for three levels of appraisers. Mr. Stone summarized the hiring guidelines as outlined in documentation provided. Step one would be an entry level position. Step two would be for an individual who has at least two, but less than four, years of experience. The City of Columbia is in a class by itself. They require less and pay more. Their position requires a high school diploma and three years experience. The top of their range is \$36,000. Mr. Stone stated the Assessor has five appraisers, which would impact his original request to have two appraisers at each level. Mr. Stone proposed the range of the vacant position be lowered to range 18, or \$20,862. Existing staff would fill the two middle level positions. To minimize the initial cost of implementing the hiring guidelines, the two positions should be at the base of the new range 23. The cost to raise the salary of one employee would be \$2,100. The other employee's salary would remain the same.

In response to a question from Commissioner Stamper, Mr. Stone replied the two employees have nine and ten years of experience. Continuing, Mr. Stone stated the salary of another employee, who meets the guidelines for level three, would be increased to the base of range 25. Mr. Schauwecker spoke about an individual who might be interested in a position if the County could provide a competitive salary. He considered that individual's experience in his calculations. In posting the position, someone else might be hired which would impact the figures presented.

In response to questions from Commissioner Stamper, Mr. Stone replied the top of the range would be \$29,411 for an Appraiser I; \$35,817 for an Appraiser II; and \$38,916 for an Appraiser III. Based on the hiring guidelines, if the Appraiser I position is posted and the County recruits someone with a bachelor's degree and two years of related experience, the individual would be hired at a salary above the base of the salary range. In discussing what level of appraisers are needed with the entities he contacted, there were two schools of thought--hire all top level appraisers or hire a spread from the top to the bottom.

Commissioner Stamper asked would approval of the request create inequity with other positions in the Assessor's office or with the right of way agent at the Public Works Department?

Mr. Stone replied he would have to look at the positions in question.

In response to a question from Commissioner Miller, Mr. Stone indicated he would like to use hiring guidelines for all positions. The County's policy of always hiring at the base of a range can disregard experience a desirable applicant has. Flexibility in selecting the best applicant is lost.

Ms. Pitchford commented her office is responsible for reviewing whether starting salaries comply with policy. She would feel most comfortable moving in the direction proposed if Mr. Stone assumed that function. He is in the best position to determine where an individual should be placed on a continuum.

In response to a question from Commissioner Stamper, Ms. Pitchford replied the additional cost of the proposed salary ranges is \$17,800. Half the cost would be reimbursed by the State.

The Assessor's need for another Appraiser III was debated.

Commissioner Stamper stated the majority of appraisals they do are probably average. A handful are probably difficult. The number appealed to the State is probably even smaller.

The Commission discussed whether ranges change should be made at this time. Commissioner Stamper and Commissioner Miller expressed a preference to look at all positions, rather than changing only the Appraiser ranges at this time.

Commissioner Vogt stated if the Assessor needs an Appraiser III, she does not want to stand in his way. Ideally, all ranges would be evaluated at one time, but the Commission directed Mr. Stone to review these ranges. She prefers to budget the positions as outlined by Mr. Stone.

In response to a question from Commissioner Stamper, Mr. Stone stated he does not have the applications for the Appraiser III position. He did not pursue obtaining them. He does not have a preference as to whether the ranges are changed now or later.

In response to a question from Ms. Pitchford, Mr. Stone replied five or six departments have submitted their job descriptions. There are fifteen to sixteen departments.

Ms. Pitchford stated the range review will not be completed according to the original schedule.

Following further discussion, the Commission agreed to invite the Assessor to the work session this afternoon.

Commissioner Stamper stated the consensus among officeholders is the fairest hiring process for the purchasing director is to post the position and interview applicants.

In response to a question from Ms. Pitchford, Mr. Stone replied the hiring policy was discussed with the Personnel Advisory Committee last week. They agreed all positions should be posted to ensure equal opportunity. If the proposed centralized recruitment policy is approved, the position of purchasing director can be used as an example. He recommends posting the position for internal and external candidates. As always, an individual who has related experience is preferred.

Commissioner Vogt stated at that meeting it was pointed out that the Sheriff's Department posts positions internally to allow current employees an opportunity to move to a more desirable shift.

Mr. Stone replied that is correct. It was agreed to simultaneously post the positions internally and externally. Again, an applicant who has Boone County Deputy Sheriff experience is preferred. However, if another applicant who just moved to this area has twenty years of experience and excellent qualifications, the Sheriff would likely prefer that applicant.

Commissioner Stamper stated two officeholders he spoke with indicated they had no difficulty with the person the Commission proposed to promote to the position of purchasing director, but they have no idea what their vision is. The interview process provides an opportunity for applicants to express their vision. That issue convinced him the position should be posted. The Commission will place restructuring the Commission office on hold until the individual is hired.

Ms. Pitchford stated it would be helpful to separate the two decisions. The County needs a purchasing department. If the County can afford it, the County should recruit for the position. If the Commission needs to restructure its office before, during or after that process, it can.

The Commission agreed the position of purchasing director should be posted

Turning to the issue of what range the position should be posted at, Ms. Pitchford stated the position is budgeted at range 23, \$25,417 to \$35,817.

Mr. Stone stated the City of Columbia and University of Missouri require a bachelor's degree and five years experience. The City's salary range is \$33,800 to \$46,000. The University's salary range is \$34,500 to \$55,000.

Commissioner Miller stated the volume of purchasing is not comparable.

Mr. Stone stated most County department head positions require a bachelor's degree and three years experience. He recommends the range be competitive--range 25, \$27,539 to \$38,916.

In response to a question from Commissioner Stamper, Ms. Pitchford replied the Human Resources Director is at range 25, the Data Processing Director is at range 35, the Planning and Building Inspection Director is at range 27, the Facilities Maintenance Director is at range 30, and the Public Works Director is at range 36.

Commissioner Miller stated in deciding whether to budget purchasing in 1995, she needs to evaluate what has to be removed from the budget in order to do so. She would rather postpone purchasing until 1996 and do it right.

Commissioner Vogt stated it can be done right in 1995. She is willing to cut things from the budget.

Ms. Pitchford stated yesterday the Commission discussed having Human Resources and purchasing share support staff and asked Mr. Stone for his reaction to the proposal.

Mr. Stone replied the question does not surprise him, but he has concerns. His work keeps his assistant busy. Sharing the employee would impact the range evaluation process. However, he is willing to be flexible. There is the question of where the purchasing function will be located. He prefers his location in Johnson Building. It fosters confidentiality.

Ms. Pitchford stated County operations are growing tremendously. Expansion is occurring in Planning and Building Inspection, Data Processing, and the Sheriff's Department; the County is changing to a County Counselor arrangement; moving administrative offices to a new building; and getting a firm handle on facilities maintenance. That is enough for 1995. Financially, she does not know what the Commission would eliminate in order to fund purchasing.

Commissioner Stamper stated he prefers every effort be made to initiate purchasing in 1995. It may pay for itself over time. He has heard it discussed for four years. It is time to act. Commissioner Stamper stated there is agreement--even though it is not unanimous--to proceed.

Mr. Stone left the meeting.

Commissioner Stamper stated the Sheriff called this morning. Members of his staff read in the St. Louis Post Dispatch that the County was awarded one officer, rather than four, through the Justice Department grant process. The three year funding amount is \$56,300. Yesterday, the Commission decided to approve the request associated with that grant. The Sheriff would also like to receive approval for the Community Traffic Safety Program. If he cannot have both, his preference is for the Community Traffic Safety Program. He is willing to attend the work session this afternoon.

Ms. Pitchford stated Recorder of Deeds Bettie Johnson would also like to attend.

Commissioner Miller stated in regard to the issue she agreed to look into--environmental health inspections--she found the Department of Planning and Building Inspection can perform the inspections. They performed them prior to adoption of the on-site wastewater disposal regulations. Director Shawver indicated it was a function they enjoyed relinquishing. Commissioner Miller recommended not approving the Health Department's request for an additional half time inspector and that the future of the program be evaluated in 1995.

The Commission agreed.

Commissioner Stamper stated it appears the Commission is within \$150,000 of the amount targeted by Ms. Pitchford for the core budget. Commissioner Stamper asked Ms. Pitchford if she is open to reevaluating the target amounts?

Ms. Pitchford stated she does not object, but she does not believe it would result in a big change. General fund revenue has shifted over the years from property tax to sales tax. The County has enjoyed strong growth. The down side would be if there is an economic downturn.

Commissioner Stamper stated reserves are adequate to provide the luxury of taking some risk.

Ms. Pitchford stated the County plans to spend some reserves on single year expenditures.

Commissioner Stamper stated if possible, he prefers to adjust the target amount rather than rehash decisions which have been made.

Ms. Pitchford stated she will review the figures.

Commissioner Vogt stated funds are not included in the budget for a long range planning survey. She has been remiss in submitting an amount. At least \$5,000 needs to be budgeted.

The Commission agreed the amount should be included.

Ms. Pitchford stated her concern with exceeding target amounts is mitigated by the knowledge that the County will retain the savings realized from competitive bidding rather than letting offices and departments reallocate the funds.

The Commission debated the approach which should be taken with the Public Works Department reallocating excess funds.

Ms. Pitchford stated not using the bulk of the emergency fund will also soften the impact of changing the target amounts.

The meeting recessed from 11:35 p.m. to 3:35 p.m.

Recorder of Deeds Bettie Johnson was present to discuss her request for a photocopier which the Commission did not approve. Those present discussed the type of photocopier needed for public use.

Commissioner Stamper stated he is not opposed to placing a machine in the research area of the office. The question is what type of photocopier is needed.

Ms. Johnson stated the photocopier needs to be capable of reducing and enlarging, using 11 x 17 paper, and have an autotron or coding system to record the number of copies being made.

The Commission agreed to budget a new machine with a copy level of 15,000 copies per year, which would have a lower maintenance cost. Ms. Johnson will provide the amount to the Auditor.

Ms. Johnson requested an opportunity to discuss the permanent part-time range 12 position previously held by Barbara Spiegel who was employed by the County for 37 years. The position became part-time at Ms. Spiegel's request. When the change was made, the work load in the office was lighter during the Winter, which is when Ms. Spiegel worked fewer hours. Over the past several years, that has not been the case. The cost of the position was \$15,050. Ms. Johnson requested the position be converted to a full time range 9 position at a cost of \$15,790. The office will begin imaging real estate records in 1995 which will impact the work load in the office. There will be approximately 1,400 hours of additional ongoing work associated with imaging the records. They will continue microfilming documents to meet archival requirements. The number of employees in the office has not increased in five years. Automation of the office is largely responsible.

In response to questions from Commissioner Stamper, Ms. Johnson replied Ms. Spiegel was budgeted to work 1,397 hours per year. She worked half time. When the imaging project originated, they discussed whether the work should be done in house or contracted out.

Commissioner Stamper recalled when the program was discussed there were assurances that additional employees would not be needed because the program would make the office more efficient. If he had known employees would be needed he might not have supported the program.

Ms. Johnson stated she cannot say she envisioned the amount of time needed to scan the records, cross index them and microfilm them.

In response to a question from Commissioner Miller, Ms. Pitchford replied the cost of benefits would be the same for a range 9 or range 12 with the exception of the FICA amount.

The Commission advised Ms. Johnson they would consider her additional request. Ms. Johnson left the meeting. The Commission ultimately decided to fund a range 9 position at 1,397 hours.

Sheriff Ted Boehm was present to discuss his budget request. Commissioner Stamper advised Sheriff Boehm the Commission decided yesterday to approve the request associated with the grant from the Justice Department and not approve the request associated with the Community Traffic Safety Program.

Sheriff Boehm stated he was assured he would receive the four officers as a result of the crime bill. A formula--2.5 percent of the total number of officers--was used to determine the number of officers to be provided. The Department was granted one officer for three years with a 25 percent--or about \$6,000--match to be provided by the County. He was advised this afternoon the State's offer to provide an officer for the Community Traffic Safety program for four years is no longer valid. He would like to retain the officer included in the 1995 budget. If funding the Community Traffic Safety program jeopardizes retaining the officer, he cannot support the program. Sheriff Boehm stated the State advised the County can submit an application for funding in the new fiscal year.

Funding the Community Traffic Safety program was discussed. Ms. Pitchford stated 35 percent of program costs and Director's salary and benefits is \$12,361. The County's share of expense for the Community Traffic Safety officer is \$10,863. The cost of the officer associated with the Justice Department grant is about \$8,900.

The Commission agreed to fund the Community Traffic Safety program for an additional year and to accept the grant from the Justice Department. Sheriff Boehm will pursue the provision of \$6,000 for the program by the City of Columbia.

Assessor Tom Schauwecker was present to discuss his request to upgrade appraiser salary ranges.

Commissioner Stamper requested Mr. Schauwecker state his need for the number of appraisers at each level and to discuss the impact upgrading the ranges would have on the rest of his office and other County positions.

Mr. Schauwecker stated if he had a choice he would have all State certified appraisers, or at the top level. His most immediate need is to fill the void left by one of his State certified appraisers this year. The number of appraisers at each level will fluctuate as they attain State certification. He is not requesting a certain number at each level, but that current employees be placed in the structure proposed by Mr. Stone and that the vacant position be filled at the highest level.

Commissioner Stamper stated the Commission and Assessor are taking different approaches. The Assessor is taking the approach of where current employees should be placed according to their credentials. The Commission is taking the approach of what level of appraisers are needed?

Mr. Schauwecker stated in 1989, assessments on 35 parcels were appealed to the State Tax Commission. In 1990 and 1991, two assessments were appealed. In 1992 and 1993, three assessments were appealed. In 1994, no appeals were made. He needs competitive salaries. The

person he would like to hire to fill the vacant position will not take it at the current salary level. He would like to offer the person \$31,000.

The Commission agreed the Assessor has a problem recruiting employees at the current range levels. The question of what number of appraisers are needed at each level was debated.

Mr. Schauwecker left the meeting. During discussion, the Commission agreed there need to be appraisers with different levels of experience. It was agreed professional credentials are not recognized in other offices. The Commission agreed to use current hiring practices until new hiring practices are adopted for use by all departments. The Commission did not approve the Assessor's request to upgrade ranges for appraisers.

The Commission turned to a discussion of purchasing. Ms. Pitchford estimated the cost of salary for a range 25 director and a range 12 support employee and operating expenses at \$60,362. If the Commission approves that structure, the target for the core budget will be exceeded by \$100,000, a level which she can tolerate. The Commission approved the structure.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Don Stamper
Presiding Commissioner

Attest:

Wendy S. Noren
Clerk of the County Commission

Karen M. Miller
District I Commissioner

Linda Vogt
District II Commissioner