

BUDGET-PUBLIC HEARING

August 4, 2015

9:00 AM

APPROVED

PRESENT: Nancy Brown, Robert Carroll, Sonja Culler, Ross Garland, John Lewis, Buford Peters, L.C. Tester and Ronnie Trivett.

The public hearing was called to order by Sonja Culler.

- Roy Livingston: Mr. Livingston discussed the rescue squad and stated the Budget Committee did not start working on the budget until May. Ms. Culler noted information was requested from outside agencies in February in accordance with the budget calendar.
- Jo Buchanan: Ms. Buchanan said Carter County needs the rescue squad. She would like for the Roan Mountain substation to remain open. She believes if efficiencies are improved within the squad that additional funding would not be needed.
- Nancy Brown: Ms. Brown said there are things in this budget that she does not agree with such as a pay raise for one employee. She gave her remaining time to Ms. Buchanan to finish discussing the rescue squad.
- Unknown: An unknown citizen said he was glad to have the rescue squad when he had a heart attack.
- Pamela Baldwin: Ms. Baldwin said there is nothing more important a government can do to protect its citizens than provide good rescue services.
- Scott Morgan: Mr. Morgan said closing rescue squad substations would be detrimental to the county.
- Jean Bean: Ms. Bean said the rescue squad is a vital part of the Roan Mountain community.
- Bill Caraway: Mr. Caraway said to take the rescue squad out of Roan Mountain would be criminal.
- Terry Arnold: Mr. Arnold said he is trying to keep the rescue squad going. He stated the rescue squad's board of directors has instructed him to close two substations if the requested funding is not received.
- Danny Ward: Mr. Ward said the rescue squad is very important. He feels the county needs to fund the rescue squad.
- Robert Carroll: Mr. Carroll said Carter County is not closing substations that is a decision made by the rescue squad. He cited a CTAS study of the rescue squad which stated additional funding is not required.
- Charles VonCannon: Mr. VonCannon said the rescue squad is a vital aspect of county government. He feels the rescue squad has good response times and substation efficiencies are good as far as he can tell. He also noted the rescue squad director's salary.
- Al Meehan: Mr. Meehan said he would like to know that someone would show up if he had a heart attack. He stated County Commission is not the entity responsible for deciding if the rescue squad substations stay open.
- Jeff Francisco: Mr. Francisco said he is a twenty-five year employee of the rescue squad. He said no one wants to close substations.
- Margo Jones: Ms. Jones said she feels it is not right to give money to the Tweetsie Trail when the rescue squad is in need of funding.
- Mike Hill: Mr. Hill said the \$170,000 in funding the rescue squad currently receives appears to have been set in an arbitrary way. He suggested looking for comparable services to get an accurate idea of what the county should be paying for the services provided by the rescue squad.
- Buford Peters: Mr. Peters said in the original request the rescue squad stated they would hire additional employees with the increased funding and made no mention of closing substations.

- Nancy Brown: Ms. Brown said commission was previously told if they received \$170,000 for a four year period that the rescue squad would no longer need county funding after that point. She also asked why the Hampton and Roan Mountain substations were selected to be closed.
- Frank Johns: Mr. Johns said he does not understand how the entities could not have gotten together to resolve this issue before now.
- Leon Humphrey: Mayor Humphrey said nobody is denying the fact that Carter County needs a rescue squad. When additional funding was requested the committee reached out to CTAS to put together an assessment of the situation. The assessment found that additional funding was not necessary and pointed out opportunities that the rescue squad could take to improve their situation. He noted a workshop was held with CTAS to go over rescue squad best practices. Mayor Humphrey said the county has a moral obligation to provide services.
- Richard Norris: Mr. Norris has represented the rescue squad for eight years. He stated in that time period funding has declined and issues have come up. Mr. Norris said he does not feel the information given to CTAS for review was accurate.

Budget Committee Chair Sonja Culler called the public hearing to an end.

Respectfully submitted,

Christa Byrd

Sonja W Culler

Sonja Culler, Approved for File

Passed Aug 10, 2015

APPROVED