

**Lamar County Board of Commissioners  
Special Called Meeting  
Administration Building  
May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023**

**10:00 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:00 a.m. on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chair Thrash, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Gilles, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson.

**Towaliga Judicial Budget**

District Attorney Jonathan Adams addressed the board regarding the impact the personnel has on their budget. Last year they added an IT position that would support the criminal courts and complete all sentencing for all criminal convictions. The new position was 19 percent in the requested FY 22 budget. At the request of Butts County, they had a vacant Associate District Attorney (ADA) position to help reduce the 19 percent increase. They created a six-month hiring freeze resulting in a \$34,000.00 savings to their request. Last year they requested \$734,00.00 total for the Towaliga Judicial Circuit (Circuit), which would have been \$188,000.00 for Lamar County. Because of the six-month hiring freeze, their approved budget was \$700,000 with \$180,000.00 for Lamar County. This meant the FY23 budget was 13 percent over FY 22 for the Circuit or 8 percent over FY 22 for Lamar County. This year the position is filled, and they received grant money from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), allowing them to hire three ADA's. They have the \$34,000.00 added back into the budget. This year they have requested \$205,000.00, which is an 8 percent increase. This covers raises and operation costs.

District Attorney Adams provided a history for FY22. He said they received grant funding to hire a Juvenile Victim's Assistant. There was a grant matching for this position called Victims of Criminal Act Administrators (VOCA). They carried this forward in FY23 and lost the grant funding for FY24, so the position is gone. Before this, there was a zero percent increase in FY21, a six percent increase in FY20, a negative five percent decrease in FY19, and a negative four percent in FY18. The Victim's Advocate Program is a mandated program, and they currently receive zero funding from the State. Still, they receive several hundred thousand dollars from the Federal Government as a VOCA Grant. The VOCA Grants are being reduced by a minimum of \$80,000.00. This starts in October of 2023. The State has picked up one position, so this will cover the \$80,000.00. They expect continuing reductions in the VOCA funding. District Attorney Adams said they use five percent funding to support the Victim's Advocate Program. They do not know what they will collect from year to year in five percent funding because it is based on fines issued and collected by the local courts. Some people cannot pay their fines, so they base \$20,000.00 of their collections of five percent towards their VOCA program every year. They keep about six months of funding in reserve in case they lose the VOCA funding. The Local Victim's Assistance Program (LVAP), the statutory name, and the five percent funding is decided by the Commission. Monroe County gives their entire five percent to the Care Cottage, Butts County gives the entire five percent to the DA's office, and in Lamar County, they have traditionally maintained 2.5 percent to the DA's office and 2.5 to the Sheriff's Office. The Lamar County Sheriff's Office is not continuing the LVAP

services this year. District Attorney Adams said he is not asking for the Sheriff's Office's 2.5 percent, but he is asking they not take their 2.5 percent and reallocate it to another agency. Vice-Chair Thrash inquired about the Sheriff's Office employee who handled the Victim's Advocate duties. District Attorney Adams said the employee primarily handled early notifications because they handle every case the law enforcement brings to them. The Sheriff's Office budget is \$2,700,000.00, and their budget is less than \$200,000.00, yet they handle every arrest in Lamar County, Barnesville, Gordon State College, Milner, GBI, and State Patrol. They have to provide victims services to all the victims they get, but this does not mean it covers every single victim. There are crimes committed that do not always result in an arrest. They also conducted Temporary Protective Order's (TPO). There are districts supported by Victim Service Programs; Southern Crescent, Care Cottage, Haven House, Crisis Line, and Safe House. The services in Lamar Count can be picked up by one of these programs. The Victim's Service Program includes emergency shelter and clothing and comes with a cost; the five percent funding is used for this.

Commissioner Lovett handed out information regarding the Judicial Circuit Budget. He said the five-year increase in the DA's budget was 72 percent over five years. There was a five-year staffing increase of 32 percent, and the budget-to-employee ratio was four percent. Lamar County's growth rate is 3.8, 4.4, and 4.3 percent. He said they are outpacing them in double or triple digits yearly, and Lamar County cannot keep up. Commissioner Lovett said he is asking for a reduction in the amount of increase. Commissioner Lovett asked for an annual reduction from 14.3 to 11.53 for the District Attorney's office. This is a reduction of just under \$5,000.00 and a reallocation of the 5 percent VOCA funds to the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program. They can also take a reduction in the CASA program for Lamar County only. Lamar County has only seen a five-year case increase, and Circuit-wide, only a 7 percent increase. The staffing increase is 32 percent. Commissioner Lovett said the ARPA fundings for the Towaliga Judicial Circuit received was \$643,000.00, and it is not reflected anywhere, and they are available for more in FY24. District Attorney Adams said there were increases in FY20, FY21, and FY22, 23 percent to 25 percent to 27 percent by Lamar County. Commissioner Lovett said they went down, and from FY22 to FY23, they went from 27 percent of the budget to 25.73 percent of the budget, and while the percentages went down, the total cost of the budget went up. District Attorney said they had a six-month hiring freeze, and his request this year is only eight percent. It is not 14 percent. This IT position serves the entire court. District Attorney Adams said with a \$500,000.00 budget, and you are looking at adding a position, they have .60 cents on the dollar cost to them for a State paid reimbursement. Commissioner Lovett said the State is way out of site, and it is one of the reasons they requested, several years ago or looked at moving their employees to County insurance. Commissioner Lovett said they would be working on this, and he would invite them back to the table to look at moving their employees to reduce their costs. Commissioner Lovett said they would not be doing this for six months.

Vice-Chair Thrash said she did not know anything about this. Commissioner Lovett said they had an entire meeting about it, they have already made their request to Monroe County, and he invites them to come to the table. Commissioner Lovett said as they go forward, their numbers need to increase to get a value for their insurance, and the more people you have, the cheaper your insurance can get. Vice-Chair Thrash said historically since the new Board of Commissioners has taken office, there are things that are happening by one or two Commissioners that the entire board does not know about. Commissioner Lovett said he

invited them to talk to them about this, and they had an entire conversation about how Lamar County moves forward. He said if they are looking at savings across an entire circuit and how they can help fellow employees in their district. Vice-Chair Thrash said Commissioner Lovett's summary sheet was based on the five percent for Victim's Advocate. She said that Commissioner Lovett wants to take the five percent and give it to CASA and take it away from the other groups.

Vice-Chair Thrash said with the IT and Sentencing position, she wants to know, for example, if someone molests one of her grandchildren, rapes her mother, or there is a home invasion, that they have the ability to run the background, and it is accurate on that person. She wants to know if the DA knows about that person's history. In all fairness, she wants to know if the Public Defender knows everything about the defendant he represents. Vice-Chair Thrash said she is 100 percent behind the IT and Sentencing position because she has seen it happen in Magistrate Court. The Magistrate Judge is supposed to look at someone's history when he decides the bond. If he looks at the history and no one is keeping up with that, you did the victim an injustice. Vice-Chair Thrash said the IT and Sentencing position is very important. Commissioner Lovett said the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) has been available to law enforcement for as long as the database has been available, and the IT Department is another way to pull the same data they have been pulling for years. District Attorney Adams said it is not just IT; you are talking about sentencing and every sentence entered by their court after conviction. He travels the Circuit every time they have court. Commissioner Lovett said as a Constitutional Officer, he cannot tell District Attorney Adams what to do with the money, and he is not debating the program, but he is looking at numbers that are unsustainable for Lamar County. District Attorney Adams said Commissioner Lovett is looking at the wrong numbers; you do not add the hiring freeze into the budget. The budget increase is only eight percent and not 14 percent. District Attorney said Commissioner Lovett was not in office last year, and the previous board agreed that he would have a six-month hiring freeze and bring on the IT and Sentencing position. Commissioner Lovett said ARPA funding puts this in perspective, and he is asking for a reduction. Commissioner Lovett said the growth rate is 4.3 percent, which is the math that County Administrator Townsend gives him, and this is how it affects Lamar County. Commissioner Lovett said District Attorney Adams had doubled the growth rate of Lamar County; eight percent is over the growth rate. Commissioner Lovett said the Towaliga Judicial Budget is the first one to the pay window, and they will take it all. He said there are guys coming behind you that pave the roads, run the Health Department, run the Recreation Department, and they will need increases too. Commissioner Lovett said they had a \$300,000.00 hit in insurance last week, and he wants them to reduce their budget. Commissioner Lovett said the reduction for CASA is a \$10,000.00 direct reduction to the general fund and is supplanted by the five percent from VOCA.

District Attorney Adams pointed out Commissioner Lovett is asking to re-direct all the five percent funds from VOCA, which is \$20,000.00. Commissioner Lovett agreed it would be an increase to the program. District Attorney Adams said he serves every single victim in the Superior Court and asked why he would take 2.5 percent from his program and give it to CASA, who did not request it. Commissioner Lovett said CASA has an underfunded budget, and they are the only ones who continue to come up as a zero. Vice-Chair Thrash said they have nothing to do with Victim's Advocate. Commissioner Lovett said they do too because they advocate for the children. District Attorney Adams said in Juvenile Court if they are victims of a crime, they will provide victims services. CASA only provides services for those

children in juvenile court, dependency hearings, and foster care. They ask you for an amount, and the County agrees to give them an amount, and if you want to reduce your budget, reallocate the Sheriff's 2.5 percent to them. District Attorney Adams said he has an issue with re-directing the DA's 2.5 percent. Commissioner Lovett said he would be fine with this and said he was the only Commissioner who presented the numbers and said they only needed three votes. Commissioner Lovett said they had a 32 percent increase in staff and a seven percent caseload over the five-year period and asked the District Attorney to help him. District Attorney Adams said the 2.5 percent re-directed to CASA is in line with what Commissioner Lovett is asking for and said he appreciated what Commissioner Lovett was trying to do because he is a taxpayer too. District Attorney said they added a person last year, which cost the Circuit and created an eight percent increase. Commissioner Lovett said he is looking for \$4,987.90. District Attorney Adams suggested they take the \$10,000.00 from the Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Lovett said he would give the CASA program \$20,000.00, but instead, they got a \$10,000.00 raise, and the District Attorney took their raise. District Attorney said he reduced the County's budget requirement by \$10,000.00. Commissioner Lovett said they do not get anything else, and they are an underfunded program.

Public Defender Doug Smith address the board. Public Defender Smith passed around his cellphone number to all the Commissioners and said whether they voted for him or not, he wanted to answer everyone's questions. Public Defender Smith took office in 2013 and came into a bad situation with many issues. He said he cleaned it up and was able to do some things to save cost. He said in FY2022; they had an increase. Since the County is on a calendar year budget when they meet in the Spring for the next Fiscal Year, it is taking a six-month hit. They got another position because the caseload increased by 200 cases from the previous year. Last year, he agreed not to raise his budget and came under by \$3.25. He said everyone in his office is either a State paid Attorney or a County funded State paid Attorney. Public Defender Smith said he is in the Executive Branch, not the Judicial Branch, and under the Governor's Office. The Governor gave raises to all State employees last year, and they are getting another raise this year. This raise does not cover a County Funded State employee, and he needs to make up this gap for them. Public Defender Smith said everyone in his office is on a State Pension Plan, whether the traditional percentage a year or the 401K matching. Around three years ago, he met with Monroe County, and they decided they did not want them on their employee insurance plan. Public Defender Smith said he has an office in Lamar, but it is split between three attorneys that also help out in Monroe County. When someone leaves his office, it is huge hit because of the number of cases they are running and the personnel he has. He said that for County employees, the thing to consider is whose covering the insurance and worker's compensation they are under. He said, for example, if they get in a wreck on the way to Lamar County and they are a Monroe County employee, whose insurance or worker's compensation plan takes a hit for that. Public Defender Smith said the percentage of the State Retirement Plan went up by 8.31 percent. He said as of 2009, there is no State Pension, the retirement plan where you receive 2 percent per year worked. In the long term, the State retirement percentage should decrease as employees pass away.

Public Defender Smith said he had an Attorney go to Henry County, and they could not match what they offered him. Because they did not have trials for a long period the civil cases backed up, the plaintiff's attorneys and insurance defense attorneys did not have trials. Now that things have opened back up, they are bringing in Senior attorneys to open up as many courtrooms as possible. The students coming out of law school with no experience are getting paid

\$95,000.00 plus bonuses. Vice-Chair Thrash asked if there would be an increase in caseload. Public Defender Smith said his office has leveled out other than the dependency cases. District Attorney Adams said they had a 500-case backlog. Public Defender Smith said with the DA's and the Judges' assistance, they opened earlier than other courts, and their backlog is not as bad as Fulton's. Fulton County is drawing from Clayton and Henry County and the Griffin Circuit. He had a position he was unable to fill. He said a \$72,500.00 salary with benefits costs about \$124,000.00. He brought in two contractors at \$60,000.00 each to handle the caseload and saved around \$42,500.00. He had an employee he could keep because they liked where they worked, and he did not have to match it and agreed to do this through a supplement. The only item he had to pay was the FICA in the budget. He saved 64 percent on his salary by doing it through supplements. The budget from last year to this year is a 14 percent increase, but 8.31 percent is the increase in retirement. When he got the position from 2021 to 2022, he got some help from Atlanta. He does not have access to the same types of grants the DA's office has, but he did get help from the State for the second position. Public Defender Smith said he agreed to handle dependency cases for kids needing services. He is not required by law to handle these cases. This year it went from 150 to 199 dependency cases over last year. The County does not have to pay for these cases he is handling; that never goes away. They represent the first child in every case. The Juvenile Attorney, in addition to handling their cases, handles those dependency cases. Public Defender Smith said he spoke to the Commissioners who were in office last year about adding another person to handle these cases, and they found it was not feasible financially. He has an intern coming in, but they are graduating in the Summer and planning on taking the bar exam. Hopefully, that could work into a full-time person. Public Defender Smith said he handles the murder cases and the appeals when a case has gone to trial. He said the 8.31 percent for the insurance is something he cannot control, so he is only asking for a 6 percent increase. Public Defender requested to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel after the meeting.

Commissioner Lovett said there is the same problem with the caseload. He said there is a 35 percent five-year increase. There is a staffing increase of about 20 percent and a 35 percent increase in budget. Commissioner Lovett said it is outpacing the increase they can get in their tax revenue. He asked them to look at their budget and see where they could help because they were the first guys at the pay window, and he counted it up, and he gets to do this at least 12 more times. Commissioner Lovett said they have a big double-digit budget. Public Defender Smith said he did not increase his budget last year, and some Commissioners were not in office. He said from 2016 to 2021, he experienced a 62 percent increase in caseload and has addressed getting another attorney. He said some people will say misdemeanor cases are easy, but they are not. The toughest punishment is 12 months in jail, but it is pretty scary to most people if you have never been in jail. People have more incentive to try these cases, which can be more time-consuming. Public Defender Smith said they handle about 80 percent of the cases, and he has a different amount of staff. The State provides one attorney per judge, he figures into that, and the DA's office does not. Public Defender Smith said this should be even because he does it with less staff. The other issue is the 50 dependency case increase. This is 200 cases he should not have to handle. He said they could speak to Butts and Monroe County about the cost. Public Defender Smith said he handles 80 percent of the cases with one investigator for all three counties. He has no GBI, local law enforcement, or a State crime lab he can call on. He said they try to have an application on a person within 48 hours of an arrest. They work with understaffed jails but they do an excellent job of letting them see their people.

They are not an entitlement program; you must qualify for their services. If they find out the person arrested has resources they haven't listed, then he will ask for tax returns. In some instances, an arrestee had to get a private attorney. They try to collect the \$50.00 application fee straight to the County, but the judges can waive it. Some people struggle to pay their light bill, but they try to collect the application fee. They are doing their best to move the cases, and he works well with the DA's office. They had a complete shutdown for two months but continued moving the cases as quickly as possible. The operation costs have remained constant. He benefits from the IT and Sentencing position, but he gets IT help from their central office, and locally Monroe County helps them out. If it is a computer issue, he gets State help because they fund the computers. He has to take the computer to Atlanta. District Attorney Adams said they provide IT support in the courtroom if they have digital programs to present to the grand jury, but they are not allowed to touch their computer because of attorney/client confidentiality.

Steve Giglio, Director of the Towaliga Accountability Court (TAC), addressed the board. He said the District Attorney and the Public Defender's office are great in providing a referral to their office. He said they have had over 100 referrals this year; last year, they had 50 to 60 referrals. Director Giglio said the TAC is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. The programs under the TAC are Drug Court, Mental Health Court, and Veterans Court. For years and years, they only had the Drug Court. The Director of CASA, Mary Ann Leverett, used to be under the umbrella, but they split off from TAC. The Mental Health and the Veterans Court joined the Drug Court in July of 2022 to bring services to the Circuit. Vice-Chair Thrash said last year, the Commissioners voted to approve the funding for those two new courts, which was in the budget. Director Giglio said he is reminded of a term his Daddy taught him, "No good deed goes unpunished." He said the Board of Commissioners had supported them in the past, and he appreciated this from all the counties. Director Giglio said last year, he had a lot of meetings with Chairman Glass and County Administrator Townsend, and they went over a lot of things via telephone, email, and in person to get the \$14,000.00 per court. He said what you do not see is \$42,000.00 to run each program, so they cut it to get to the \$14,000.00, and it is bare bones. He said they cut a lot last year to even start the programs. Director Giglio said the Sheriff from Butts County referred a case to the Mental Health Court because he paid \$4000.00 weekly for medication in jail. They could not put him in the Mental Health Court, but they got him out of jail and referred him to a treatment facility. They saved Butts County over \$60,000.00, which is not reflected in their budget. He said Chairman Glass said you cannot say that Accountability Courts save this much money, but they do save on medication costs, incarceration cost, and other types of things. Still, it is not a check coming directly to Lamar County. It is a deferred saving, and it saves you somewhere else. He said they had 27 graduates in Drug Court, and they saved them a little over \$1,000,000.00 over two years of deferred savings in FY 21 and FY 22. The cost for incarceration was around \$700,000.00 of \$1,000,000.00. There were over \$40,000.00 in participant fees. You apply all the Statewide formulas locally where they do not have to pay health care costs. They had two babies born in Drug Court. This saves the State taxpayers when they are not born in jail or prison or a hospital and taken into custody; this is around \$63,000.00 per child over the last two years. Director Giglio said a lot of things need to show up in the TAC budget, and they need to get credit for what they do in the community. He said as a Veteran himself, he wants to advocate for the Veterans Court; the Veterans Administration (VA) does a good job of getting in the community, and in Pike County, they are having a hard time with staff, so they send a lot of

people to Atlanta or Dublin. The idea is that the VA is not in Lamar County, but there is a Veteran's service in Lamar County. Over the last ten months, it has expanded its reach to the Veterans in Lamar County. They had a fundraiser in the fall, and there was a lot of community excitement and involvement with the Mental Health Court and the Veteran's Court. With State Grants, you do not get the money upfront; you have to spend all the money and hopefully get reimbursed later. He said there is no money for the first 90 days when you start up a court, and they did not want to come to the Commissioners, so they raised \$53,000.00 via a fundraiser. He said \$25,000.00 came from the Sheriff in the Circuit from confiscated drug funds, and then the rest of the funds came from Churches, Civic Organizations, Clubs and Individuals. There are a lot of good organizations behind the TAC, and the \$14,000.00 budget request is the Board of Commissioners' contribution to the same good cause. Director Giglio said next year, if they are not where they need to be, they will make the appropriate adjustments, but he is hoping \$14,000.00 is not a bridge too far to request.

Commissioner Gilles inquired about the services in the Accountability Court. Director Giglio explained that the courts are all similar. They take criminogenic behavior, and they try to retrain people. They try to give them better thought patterns and better choices. They drug test them three times a week in Phase 1, and in Phases 2, 3, and 4, they test them twice a week. They have to stay clean and go to classes. There are over 800 hours of therapeutic intensive intervention classes. It is a two-year intensive outpatient treatment program, and they must complete all 800 hours to graduate. They take cognitive behavioral interventions, thinking for a change, seeking safety, and things where they are learning how to think in a different pattern. They did not get into the problem overnight, so you will not get out of this program overnight. They put them around new people and places and get them a job. They pay taxes and child support. They keep them out of the Emergency Rooms (ERs). There are a lot of good benefits to the community by them being in the program.

Chairman Traylor said the part the Accountability Court played at the Senior Center in renovating the outside of the facility was awesome, and he thanked them for that. Director Giglio said every graduating class has a Capstone project, which they did at the Senior Center. He said they had done food drives, the Butts County toy drive at Christmas, and other things that help the community. This is the 12-step give back because they owe the community because they took from the community for so long. Vice-Chair Thrash encouraged the Commissioners to attend one of the Drug Court graduations. She said she sits in on a lot of the Drug Court hearings. She said when you see someone in an orange jumpsuit and shackles, you can see their skeleton features where cocaine and crack has destroyed their life. Then you see what the Drug Court has offered them and what they do for these people. They come to the Drug Court graduation and they are buff and have meat on their skin. They stand there and say, "Judge Fears, Judge Wilson, thank you for sentencing me to this program". Director Giglio invited the Commissioners to a Drug Court Graduation on Friday at 10:00 a.m. with the guest speaker being Supreme Court Justice Verda Colvin. The Drug Court graduate who worked at the Senior Center will be honored; she is 73. She had been homeless on the streets of Macon, Georgia, for decades, and her daughter from Lamar County brought her to the Drug Court.

Commissioner Lovett said what they are doing is admirable. This started as the Veterans program, and they added in the Drug Court, and then it was rolled into an Umbrella called the Accountability Court. You have a single umbrella that handles everyone, and you see the

expansion of Government, and the umbrella keeps getting bigger. Commissioner Lovett said he has spoken to the people in law enforcement, and they are huge advocates for Mental Health and asked it not to be touched. But the other ones can be rolled in; accountability is accountability, it is a universal term. Commissioner Lovett said the best thing he can do for the Veterans in his community is not to burden them with another court. Accountability Court is incredibly important, and Commissioner Lovett said he is an advocate for it but asked that they only have the Drug Court and the Mental Health Court. Director Giglio said that the State returns \$2.00 for every dollar spent. He said the way it was structured in the OCGA (Georgia Code), there is a Council of Accountability Court Judges (CACJ), and each court is established separately and mandated in the code. The Adult Family Drug Courts, The Veterans Treatment Court, Adult Mental Health Court, the Drug Impaired Driving (DUI) Court, and the Family Treatment Court are all established in the code. They are all rolled under the TAC umbrella but have different needs and issues. Commissioner Lovett said he looks at this from an Administration standpoint, and County Administrator Townsend manages a variety of different paths, and that is what he would ask the Accountability Court to do. He said there is only a certain amount of money coming in, and every time we burden the taxpayer with more, they have less to spend. Commissioner Lovett said economic issues drive people to the court system next to drugs. He said the war on drugs is similar to the 1960s, but he can advocate for the citizens of Lamar County, the TAC, and the State by asking for a more reasonable approach to come to them than the increases they are seeing.

Chairman Traylor said this is an educational opportunity, and there are a lot of new Commissioners that are still learning. He said he appreciates all the Towaliga Judicial Circuit Courts do for the community and the citizens.

### **Executive Session**

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to go into Executive Session at approximately 11:19 a.m. to discuss personnel. Vice-Chair Thrash seconded the motion. The board came out of Executive Session and resumed the meeting.

### **Towaliga Judicial Budget**

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to approve the Towaliga Judicial Budget. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. Commissioner Lovett said this is his first budget meeting with a particular group, and he has done this for 30 years. He said they would not get anything if they did not ask for something. If they do not get anything here, they have set a dangerous precedence, and the next group will follow this suit and ask for 20 to 30 percent increases. You are probably 12 to 14 percent on the street Consumer Price Index (CPI), and they have to start holding costs. They have been nearing \$1,000,000.00 in increases over the last five months. They are quickly outrunning the projections for revenue growth. If you do not want to have a horrible discussion about the millage rate, he suggests they start looking at this. These numbers are not fabricated; you did not hear any of these people push back. The DA's office staffing is up by 32 percent, and the Public Defender's Office is up by 20 percent. The caseloads are up by seven percent, and these are their numbers. Commissioner Lovett encouraged the other Commissioners to vote accordingly, knowing it was coming down the pipeline. If they hold the line for a few more moments, they will come back with more realistic



numbers that will benefit the constituents and the employees of Lamar County and the surrounding counties.

Vice-Chair Thrash said they did push back on the numbers and did a good job, and the only thing they asked for was what they needed to operate their offices and maintain their employees. Vice-Chair Thrash said Commissioner Lovett made the statement that it is an expansion of Government and asked if it was that or if it is an expansion of people who are genuinely in need of these services.

Commissioner Lovett and Commissioner Gilles opposed the motion. Chairman Traylor made a motion to approve the Towaliga Judicial Budget as presented, breaking the tie of a 2 to 2 motion. The motion passed 3-2.

Chairman Traylor stated there was a discussion about the Victim's Advocate five percent, the 2.5 percent going to the DA, and the other 2.5 percent going to CASA. County Administrator Townsend said this would have to be handled via reallocation with the DA's office. Commissioner Lovett said he spoke to the lady at CASA, and they are cut to the bone, and the idea is to take the five percent and cut it in half, leaving around \$9,000.00, and she was willing to take a general budget reduction for these funds. He said they could offer the \$9,000.00 in the five percent money for a \$5,000.00 reduction in general funds. It gives them more money and costs them less money. This will be added to the June Regular Business Meeting.

### **Board Appointments**

#### **McIntosh Trail Community Service Board**

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to table the McIntosh Trail Community Service Board appointment until the Regular Business meeting. Commissioner Lovett said Roberts's Rule of Order says you have to have a motion, a second, and then a discussion. He said a discussion needs to happen on this subject so they can have a meaningful motion and a second to move forward. He said Roberts's Rule of Order states he can only speak once the Chairman asks for a discussion on a motion. Commissioner Lovett said he would love to discuss this because he has a strong opinion about why he wants to table this, but he has to get to the discussion. Chairman Traylor said there has always been a discussion before a second discussion. So, the second discussion is usually a discussion on a motion. He could have said, "Do you have any discussion or conversation about the McIntosh Trail Community Service Board." Chairman Traylor repeated the motion of table died for lack of a second. Chairman Traylor called for discussion. Commissioner Lovett said in the Regular Business Meeting, they tabled the motion so the McIntosh Community Service board could evaluate everyone that could apply for the job. He said there were many people who showed up in public interested in that appointment, and he does not want it to be perceived as they tabled something and came into a Special Meeting and did it anyway because it is more like a Workshop. Vice-Chair Thrash pointed out, for the record, a Special Called meeting is not a Workshop. Commissioner Lovett said he feels like whoever McIntosh Trail Community Service wants on their board deserves a very clean public appointment to that board. Vice-Chair Thrash asked why it would not be clean. Commissioner Lovett said when he recently took the Ethics class with ACCG, they stressed that perception is as violent as the act, and he does not want to be perceived as an ethics issue. They had a public meeting in front of a large crowd, then they tabled a motion

and came in here with just the Commissioners, and they passed a motion, and everyone is good? Vice-Chair Thrash asked Commissioner Lovett if he had contacted McIntosh Trail Community Service and asked them how putting this appointment off might affect their board. Commissioner Lovett said he failed to do this. Vice-Chair Thrash said Dr. Traylor has one of the best resumes she has ever seen, and she is more than qualified to be on this board, in her opinion. The fact someone insinuated that because she is Chairman Traylor's wife for some reason, she should be denied to serve on this board and do a great job. Vice-Chair Thrash said that as Commissioners, they have a job to do, and she hears everyone talk about transparency, and they do their best to be transparent. If they keep backing up ten steps trying to do their job, it does not help anyone. They take two steps forward and ten steps back. Vice-Chair Thrash said they needed to move forward with the board appointment because it is not their job to tell them who to appoint. If they do not want the person who is on the board, then they can decide that. Vice-Chair Thrash said they are doing a disservice to the McIntosh Trail Community Service by not voting on an appointment and letting them move forward with their business. Vice-Chair Thrash said Chairman Traylor does not have an unethical bone in his body, and it infuriates her that some people in this community are determined to destroy everything they try to do in this community. Commissioner Lovett said he supported everything Vice-Chair Thrash said, but what he wanted for McIntosh Trail Community Service and whoever they decide to appoint for their board was to be a very clean and very public meeting. He said to make it clean, and it will be in front of the entire community attending those meetings versus this meeting. Commissioner Lovett noted the motion of the table died for lack of second.

Commissioner Gilles made a motion to approve the appointment of Dr. Jessica Traylor, based on her resume and the nomination to the board from the Chairman and the Board of the McIntosh Trail Community Service board. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Lamar County Board of Health-Licensed Physician Actively Practicing in the County

Vice-Chair Thrash said she did not like how COVID was handled in Lamar County and does not know how to address this but would take her concerns to the board. Commissioner Lovett made a motion to table the appointment to the Lamar County Board of Health-Licensed Physicians Actively Practicing in the County to clarify their role in appointing this person. Vice-Chair Thrash said she did not have an issue with Dr. Woodall and this appointment but rather with the Department of Health Board. Commissioner Gilles pointed out that bylaws stated that the Chairman could make the appointment to the Lamar County Department of Health board. Chairman Traylor said the Commissioners always make the appointment. Vice-Chair Thrash said it clearly states the Chairman of the Commissioners can make the appointment. Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to table the appointment of Dr. Lee Woodall to the Lamar County Board of Health-Licensed Physician Actively Practicing in the County. Commissioner Lovett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Round Table**

Commissioner Lovett said he appreciated the fact they looked at what he presented. He said his intentions were not to hurt any programs but to ensure that everyone best serves the people they represent in the community. He said there is an extra shift for a Waffle House waitress

based on what they did, and he wants to make sure each of these that come forward he will present the same type of information.

Vice-Chair Thrash said she hopes everyone can come to the Drug Court graduation.

Chairman Traylor said after 6 to 7 years of having this many Special Called meetings, which is fine but with the budgets coming up, he encouraged everyone to dive into those so when they come before them, especially with the Departments, they can have questions already prepared.

Chairman Traylor said he has been speaking to Dave Wills and other counties about having a Youth Commission. They get young people in the community involved as a sounding board, and they can give feedback on things, but you also teach them parliamentary procedures, and they get to be a part of local Government. He will be sending out emails with resources. Vice-Chair Thrash said they did this type of program years ago where a young person mirrored the Commissioner, but the board did not want to do it again.

County Administrator Townsend said they need to have a mid-year review sometime in July. It is usually a marathon from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Vice-Chair Thrash requested County Administrator Townsend prepare the Department heads regarding providing a five-year plan and what big things they need so they are not blindsided. She wants to know what their goals are and where they see their Departments in the next three to five years.

**Adjournment**

Vice-Chair Thrash made a motion to adjourn the Special Called Meeting at approximately 11:53 a.m. Commissioner Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

---

Ryran Traylor, Chairman

---

Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chair

---

Jarrod Fletcher, Commissioner

---

Jason Lovett, Commissioner

---

Ashley Gilles, Commissioner

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk