

VALENCIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Budget Workshop

Mid-Year Budget Review/Preliminary 2003-2004 Fiscal
Year Budget Discussion

February 17, 2003

Chairman Gary Daves called the Meeting to order at 9:10 A.M.

PRESENT	ABSENT
Gary Daves, Chairman	
Paul Edward Trujillo, Vice-Chairman	
Aurelio H. Padilla, Member	
Alicia Aguilar, Member	
Mary J. Andersen, Member	
James Fernandez, County Manager	
	Thomas Garde, County Attorney
Tina Gallegos, County Clerk	
Press and Public	

Chairman Gary Daves called the Meeting to order at 9:10 A.M.

Chairman Daves asked Jane Moorman to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Daves asked Mr. Fernandez and each Department Head or Elected Official to have this opportunity to express their concerns on where we are with the mid-year budget. Chairman Daves said he would give this opportunity at this time if each Commissioner would like to express their views on this fiscal year’s budget. Commissioner Aguilar said she would like for the Commission to do today is discuss this year’s budget and have a good understanding of where we are at, we are mid-year and not go into next year. Commissioner Aguilar said she will share everyone’s comments and come to a consensus on the budget format with an understanding on the budget. Commissioner Aguilar said she would like to hear from Department Heads on inventory and what they need to purchase and we need to prioritize the needs for everyone. Commissioner Andersen said she would like to hear from Department Heads on their goals and hopes for next year’s budget, what they think is possible on their needs for each office. Commissioner Andersen said she has a real concern with most of the employees not having a raise in four or five years. Their take home pay is less due to insurances rates going up and this is so unfair, we have to learn to compensate these employees. Commissioner Padilla said he also is concerned with the issue of employees not having a raise, it has been a while and we need to carefully look at the budget. Commissioner Trujillo said he concurs with the comments made by the other Commissioners and certainly compensating the employees but with the constraints of the existing budget we need to look strongly at how to bolster the morale and look at compensation for the employees.

James Fernandez, County Manager said he asked each Department to attend this workshop today with a wish list, what they are going to need for the upcoming year and concerns on this year’s budget. Mr. Fernandez said he had provided the Commission with a breakdown on the actual and projected revenues and transfers in to and out of the General Fund.

Commissioner Daves asked Marcel Reynolds to give a brief report on the Soil Conservation. Mr. Reynolds said as of right now the soil conservation is operating on savings. Basically, we are asking the County for help again. We have two major programs coming on board one is the Department of Agriculture Farm Bill, which presents a large workload on the District and secondly is the Salt Cedar Removal Project. Our annual operating budget is \$23,000, this year we are at \$11, 000 with no funding coming from the County and we were left with the State which was less than \$9,000. We submitted a request of \$20,000 for this year.

Recording/Filing Department/BOE

Mr. Fernandez stated we would start with the individual departments and since recording/filing is first he said that they have expended 56.7% of their budget. Tina Gallegos, Clerk said as far as the existing budget with recording/filing we are doing fine and we will meet the budget requirement but I will ask for one employee in this department. Ms. Gallegos said in Bureau of Elections budget we have expended over in approximately two line items but she said she is not too concerned with that because the school election will reimburse bureau of elections. Ms. Gallegos said what she is looking at for the next budget and understands that this is only a wish list but for the up coming elections in 2003 and 2004 we will need more voting machines. We also need an additional employee for BOE. We will have an increase in poll workers and additional voting sites will have to be looked at in the budget. Commissioner Aguilar asked Ms. Gallegos on the storage of the voting machines. Ms. Gallegos said she has not moved the voting machines as of yet because some of the places that we have looked into are not feasible.

Property Assessments

Mr. Fernandez said the Assessor's Office has expended 52.2% for this department. Beverly Dominguez-Gonzales, Assessor stated her office is in need of one more appraiser and this would be for livestock only. She said the livestock board has asked her to put all livestock in the county on a pro rate basis for tax purposes. Ms. Gonzales asked to keep a temporary employee on until the next budget. Ms. Gonzales said on travel she has her own 420 fund to cover this expense. Ms. Gonzales said this fund was utilized last year to help the General Fund when county employees went on 32-hour workweek. Commissioner Andersen asked on the issue of correct addresses and how was this being handled. Ms. Gonzales said as they get the change of address either from the taxpayer or from the Treasurer's office these are being changed. But she explained they don't mail the notice of valuation to everyone unlike the Treasurer's Office mail out so address changes are caught but not researched due to shortage of staff in her office. Commissioner Aguilar asked on the protest monies being held in escrow and Ms. Gonzales said they have been paid. Ms. Gonzales said just like any department she would like to see pay raises for her employees especially since some of them have been there for over ten years.

Collections Department

Diana Martinez-Coplen, Treasurer stated her office is in need of one extra employee. She was down four employees but is asking for one additional employee would be helpful. She will not be utilizing any travel monies but will ask for monies for training at UNM for classes for her employees. Ms. Coplen stated she would like to see pay raises for her employees especially for one employee whose duties have increased due to a reduction in staff. Commissioner Andersen said if an employee's job description has changed and need to be rewritten or maybe she should be on a new salary schedule. Commissioner Andersen said giving one employee a raise and not others is something she doesn't condone. Commissioner Aguilar said the personnel policy requires that an employee evaluation be done on each employee annually. Ms. Coplen said she does do employee evaluations every spring so this is being done.

Law Enforcement

Richard Perea, Sheriff said he is trying to familiarize himself with his budget and at this time doesn't have all the facts and figures on some hidden costs left by the previous administration but realizes he is taking over in the middle of a fiscal year. Chairman Daves asked what are the hidden costs and does this affect the current budget? Mr. Perea said what he means are a lot of the costs are vehicle repairs that need to get done as soon as possible. There is a bill for blood draws that needs to get paid out of this budget and a pretty high phone bill. Mr. Perea said so this is why he needs to familiarize himself with the budget so he knows where he can spend in case of an emergency and where he needs to cut back for the next fiscal year's budget. Mr. Perea said his wish list is an additional dispatcher because as it is they are a skeleton crew. Mr. Perea said he would like to see a fund created for an employee that gets injured in the line of duty and workmen's comp only pays a percentage of their salary and they lose their benefit package unless they pay for it themselves. Some of these officers that have lost their health insurance is a loss because they have a family package and this involves not having their families insured.

Animal Control

Anne Aragon, Secretary for Animal Control said she feels that they are doing fine for this fiscal budget year. Ms. Aragon said just like any department we have needs but the major need right now is field supplies. So for the next fiscal budget year there should be a specific line item for these field supplies. Mr. Fernandez said there are bond monies available right now for kennel improvement. Ms. Aragon said also the needs are for two additional employees and the present employee salaries, especially the officers because they do fall within that law enforcement category. Even though they are not law enforcement officers they still serve the public just the same as the law enforcement employees. Commissioner Aguilar said she concurs with Ms. Aragon because this is one of the departments that she feels is left out. We need to look at this department as a whole for vehicles, training, salaries and plus they are on call a major part of the time after the 4:30 hour.

Commissioner Aguilar made a motion to take a lunch break and return in 45 minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Trujillo. Discussion. Commissioner Aguilar voted yes. Commissioner Trujillo voted yes. Commissioner Padilla voted yes. Commissioner Andersen voted yes. Motion carried. 4-0. Time 12:00 PM.

Chairman Daves called the meeting back to order. Time 12:45 PM.

Building Inspector

Richard Padilla said his requests are basically like the other department needs for vehicles and pay raises in salaries. Mr. Padilla said his budget other than that for this fiscal year is fine. They will need monies for registration to attend classes for re-certification of licenses.

Data Processing

Larry Mervine, Data Processor went over some of the goals he would like to see happen. Mr. Mervine said the office when he first started he had two employees and he would like to see that again. Mr. Mervine said he would like to request a Commissioner sit in on the data processing committee meetings that are held once a month. This way the Commission will know the needs of each department. Mr. Mervine said he would like to extend Internet access because right now it is very limited. The GIS addressing system is a program problem and needs to be updated because right now we have four different data bases of addressing, the clerk has one for their voters, rural

addressing has an addressing data base, the assessor has a data base for their notice of valuations and the treasurer has one for their tax bills. Mr. Mervine said he would like to see them linked together but this is mainly a programming problem and coordinating problem and not really money. Mr. Mervine said 80% of the pcs are five years or older and these need to be updated. Mr. Mervine would like to see an overall improvement of training security and disaster recovery plan for our computer plan. We do store data off site so the system can be restored but there is not a plan in place. Mr. Mervine said if something should happen to him, no one else has access to that bank account. Mr. Mervine said we are trying to computerize as many manual processes as we can. Mr. Mervine stressed having a workshop just on computer needs or having a Commissioner attend the monthly meetings. Mr. Mervine said Ms. Gallegos is the chairman for the data processing committee and she would like to comment on the computer needs. Ms. Gallegos said she would like to add to Mr. Mervine's list but added that the data processing committee was established as an audit requirement and we are going into our second year and these are very beneficial meetings that we have monthly. Ms. Gallegos said the needs that Mr. Mervine has stated requires full time attention and not to mention another full time position. Ms. Gallegos said Lawrence Kaneshiro does help out data processing part time but this requires someone full time as Mr. Kaneshiro had six elections last year and wasn't able to dedicate himself solely to data processing needs for the county. Ms. Gallegos said every department does ask for needs based on keeping all data current to where we should be.

Planning and Zoning

Ruben Chavez, Planning and Zoning said his wish list is the same, salaries. Mr. Chavez said his officers are paid in a two-year certification program before they can become certified and they are also commissioned officers and he would like to see his officers reach that certification process. Mr. Chavez said two of the planning and zoning employees were never replaced so this department has taken a big hit in personnel. Mr. Chavez said we need to do some long range planning because as it is he is the planner and the office manager or zoning manager at the same time. We have started a lot of projects due to the ICIP process. We need to be more aggressive with the ordinance revisions. Mr. Chavez said we can only go forward so the office needs some attention as to how we can be organized as well as professional. We need tech support so the data process for planning and zoning needs to be looked at. Mr. Chavez said he needs monies for continuing education for his officers. Mr. Chavez said what he would like to see every department have their own separate travel line item and each department head can control these travel monies.

Fire Marshal

John Cherry, Fire Marshal said the present budget is fine to the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Cherry said the salaries and benefits for his office are taken from the General Fund. The operational budget comes out of fire excise tax. Mr. Cherry said therefore it is pretty easy to maintain his budget even though there are 23 departments total. Each department has three budgets that is if they run rescue, the excise, fire and EMS budget. Mr. Cherry said there is a lack of fire volunteers due to non-paid personnel. We have 10 volunteer fire departments within Valencia County and it would be impossible to put paid people in each department. Mr. Cherry suggested for long range planning is to come up with a plan to pay a minimum amount of paid personnel. They will need to be cross-trained and need to be certified in fire suppression and EMS in various levels. This will get 24-hour fast response to our citizens. At the present time we are averaging 7 to 10 minute fire response and at times 20 to 25 EMS response. We are hurting desperately for volunteers. Mr. Cherry said he is not throwing rocks but Valencia County has never expended any money towards the emergency services. We operate on state monies, excise tax monies and so forth. We are financially sound within our budgets and within our funds but we are not allowed to use any of these monies for benefits or salaries. Mr. Cherry said we need a dispatch center and this is in the works right now. Mr. Cherry said there is also a need for an EMS coordinator.

Road Department

Helen Cole, Road Project Coordinator, representing the Road Department said we are still within our budget. Ms. Cole said the influx of monies for the road department comes later in the spring when we get the funding for the state projects. Chairman Daves said he would still like a management audit of the road department that give us a fundamental recommendation and hopefully we can discuss this in the upcoming executive session that is scheduled. Chairman Daves said clearly this road department budget is not enough, there is a shortage of employees, there is inadequate equipment and there needs some development of policy for chip sealing and paving chip sealed roads. Commissioner Andersen agreed because the needs of the road department are monumental and we need to look at the complete structure of that organization. Commissioner Aguilar said she has changed her position on when we are talking about a management audit her feeling is we need an operations manager. It is not only the road department but to help out in other departments. The road department has had equipment at Conejo Landfill and there was a problem with the audit that stated we shouldn't have had equipment at this landfill that they needed to have their own equipment. Chairman Daves said thanks to Commissioner Aguilar for those comments because he too feels that we need someone to get some recommendations on how we can improve in these areas. Ms. Cole said don't forget salaries. We have an employee getting \$7.00 as a heavy equipment operator and Chairman Daves said he expects he earns his money but just doesn't get paid more than that. Commissioner Aguilar asked on the computer needs of the road department because when she talked to Ms. Cole she stated that the computer data was deleted. Ms. Cole said for the last couple of years she has mentioned this to the data processor that the road data is backed up to which he does do daily back-ups but the road data is on discs and sometimes those discs get ruined so therefore the data is destroyed or lost. At times they have lost a whole year of data entry and this is impossible to retrieve. So this is a problem especially when we have a citizen getting killed on these

roads and when the attorneys ask for this data we can't produce it. Ms. Cole said she has asked for software to keep this data stored. Commissioner Aguilar said she had one last question for Ms. Cole, what about GASB? Ms. Cole said she didn't know.

Older American Program

Ms. Gonzales said this fiscal year has been a difficult one, we have had state mandates to comply with for example every Senior that comes into the center we have to register them even though they may just come in for that day to eat. We don't get reimbursed if we don't comply with this type of registration. There has been a lot of paper work involved between the centers. Ms. Gonzales said it has been difficult also in the hiring process because of low wages and if an applicant does get hired they don't stay long because they move on to a higher pay. Ms. Gonzales said just like the other departments we would like to see increased pay for staff and look at the positions there because a majority of them are under \$7.00 per hour. Ms. Gonzales said another request is to replace the meal site manager in Belen; this would help in trying to run the center more effectively. Ms. Gonzales said another request is an additional \$15,800 added to the amount the County budgets for this program. Ms. Gonzales said the Del Rio Center we need to look into a different site for the voting machines that are being stored there because they need the space for recreation. Ms. Gonzales said the State needs for the Older American Program to submit the overall budget to them this week with the additional monies added into the budget.

Indigent Revenues Department

Barbara Baker, Administrator for Indigent Department said she would like to add an employee to her department due to the applicant workload of claims. Ms. Baker said this would be a temporary position and salary would come out of the indigent department fund. Ms. Baker said for this fiscal year she is doing fine. Ms. Baker said she would also ask for an increase in pay for her department.

County Commission

Mr. Fernandez has expended 69.75 of this budget but there some one-time items that have been paid which are the workman's compensation and multi-line insurance. The bond payments of the revenue bonds have already been paid. Mr. Fernandez said GASBE has been mentioned briefly but there is \$50,000 allotted for the implementation for the remainder of this fiscal year. We have a \$20,000 contract with Neff and Ricci for the technical support. What we need to look at for the next meeting is a transfer of a portion of that money to hire the temporary individual for on site inspection for only this year. Mr. Fernandez said we will need to look at maintenance up keep for the older County owned buildings; we have spent \$11,000 towards repairs. Mr. Fernandez said utilities are still within reason or where they should be. Commissioner Aguilar said on travel or capital projects they should be taken out of the Commission budget and put into the individual department budgets. Mr. Fernandez said we need actual justification from the individual departments and he would caution the Commission is that when an individual wants to utilize he wouldn't be used as a slush fund for themselves and this is one of the reasons we incorporated into the fund that it is so it could be monitored. Mr. Fernandez said it could be stated on each individual department line item for specific training that holds each department to that only.

Cooperative Extension Service

Mr. Fernandez said the approved budget for this next fiscal year is \$35,000.00. Commissioner Aguilar said this needs to be discussed because she feels we are not funding this program at 100%. Commissioner Aguilar said this is what got us in trouble in December of 2002 and there are a lot of needs coming up from each department. Commissioner Aguilar said we need to keep it at \$35,000.00 and not increase it.

Adult Corrections

Mr. Fernandez said what has been expended is 58.38%. Commissioners discussed the Cornell contract and how it will affect the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Fernandez said we need to make sure we have the contract jail beds in place. Commissioners discussed how this contract affects so many aspects of the County, how it affects the possible pay raises for employees, how it affects the needs of the different departments that they just presented. Commissioner Aguilar discussed having a workshop to go over issues that have arisen especially having two new Commissioners on board and let's review the contract and proceed accordingly. Commissioner Andersen discussed the need for a financial audit and thinks this is a positive step forward.

Juvenile Detention

Mr. Fernandez said what has been expended is 57.41%. We have received a deposit of \$60,000.00 in marketed bed space and that is basically bringing us revenue in the amount of \$147,000.00.

Chairman Daves asked Bill Brown in the public his comments. Mr. Brown said having been an observer for six hours now he does have some observations. The budget before you as his bosses would state is a telephone directory because it is difficult to assimilate the information. They would have an executive summary drawn up which included all assumptions and conditions upon which the budget predicated. Mr. Brown said he has not reviewed this telephone directory but sees that this Commission is flying blind without it. The assumptions and conditions could be as easy as 4% inflation escalation on procurements, selective raises, no raises, 2% raises, average or basically what goes in this. Mr. Brown said he sees what is changed from last fiscal year. Mr. Brown said they need an executive summary to go forward. Mr. Brown said he has sat in on these meetings and due to raises the Sheriff's Dept. should be exempted and the other departments looked at because they have been cheated accordingly. Mr. Brown said there are two kinds of audits that are recognized one is a financial audit and the other is a performance audit. The performance audit costs \$100,000 and

means a very detailed audit of policies and procedures and practices and how something performs to that plan and this Commission should look into this. Most of the budget proposals include capital because a lot of the items want to be procured and follow maintenance. Mr. Brown said there are lot of ICIP issues that are not even part of the budget infrastructure plan. Mr. Brown said he commented since Chairman Daves asked him on his comments and observations of the budget.

Commissioner Andersen said each department should have their own budget, travel, gas and oil, capital outlay defined, telephone, and vehicle line items. Commissioner Aguilar said there is one individual that deserves to be looked at and maybe an appraisal job description and looked at as soon as possible. This would not be a raise but an appraisal of her job description and this would be Monica Mireles.

The next Regular Meeting of the Valencia County Board of County Commission will be held on February 18,2003 at 5:00 PM Executive Session and 6:00 PM Regular Session in the County Commission Room at the Valencia County Courthouse.

Adjournment

Commissioner Andersen made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Padilla. Discussion. Commissioner Aguilar voted yes. Commissioner Trujillo voted yes. Commissioner Padilla voted yes. Commissioner Andersen voted yes. Motion carried. 4-0. Time being 4:00 PM.

NOTE: All proposals, documents, items, etc., pertaining to items on the agenda of the, Meeting (presented to the Board of County Commissioners) are attached in consecutive order as stated in these minutes.

VALENCIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**ss/
GARY DAVES, CHAIRMAN**

**ss/
PAUL EDWARD TRUJILLO, VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**ss/
AURELIO H. PADILLA, MEMBER**

**ss/
ALICIA AGUILAR, MEMBER**

**ss/
MARY J. ANDERSEN, MEMBER**

ATTEST: ss/

TINA GALLEGOS, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: March 18, 2003