

2013 Budget Message - Texas County, Missouri

Now, on this 23rd day of January 2013, being the 8th day of the January, 2013, adjourned term of the County Commission of Texas County, Missouri; comes Donald R. Troutman, Clerk of said Commission, as Budget Officer and presents for the docket and records of this commission, information and estimates for the year 2013 as required by the County Budget Law (Sections 50.525 to 50.745, RSMo.) being in words and figures as follows:

As County Clerk, it is my duty to prepare the County's annual budget message. The financial condition of the county has declined over the previous year. A recent court ruling has and will reduce the amount the county will collect from the three half-cent sales taxes that voters have previously approved. It greatly concerns me that the courts can reduce the sales tax the county has collected since 1981 along with the two sales taxes receiving voter approval for the construction of the Judicial Center, County Jail and the remodeling of the old courthouse which is now known as the Administration Center. I encourage the County Commission to approve the placement of a **USE TAX** proposal before voters this year to recover these lost revenues. Most of the residents in the county would not be negatively affected and if approved would place out of state purchase and local businesses on a level playing field. Currently the out of state vendors have an unfair advantage over local county vendors. The governor is expected to call for a special election in June to elect someone to represent the 8th district in congress. If possible this would be a good time to place the USE TAX proposal on the ballot as the cost of conducting the election would be shared with the state. The county ended 2012 with total revenues of \$8,281,799.10 and total expenses of \$8,651,073.99, which results in a negative figure of \$-369,274.89. However, by adding the beginning fund balance the ending fund balance was \$2,544,369.86. The General County Revenue Fund began the year with a fund balance of \$306,588.95 with revenues of \$3,057,484.44 with expenses of \$3,227,726.61 leaving a yearend balance of \$136,346.78. The money needed for the monthly approved expenditures for the 2013 fiscal year require \$278,380.70.

Your county government maintains forty-two funds. The county has two trust funds with the interest earned on the principal going to the general operations of those trusts. The county has a reserve fund of \$1,500,000.00 being held in trust to better protect the county's outstanding bond obligation. At the end of 2012 the county's outstanding long term debt was \$12,195,000.00.

Your county government did not levy a property tax in 2012 and does not plan on having a property tax for 2013. Keep in mind Texas County operates under the township form of county government and each township has an administrative and road & bridge property tax levy.

Your county government has three voter approved ½ cent sales taxes. One tax reduces the county property tax to zero, one tax provides funding for the maintenance of the Justice Center and County Jail, the third sales tax is used to help in paying the principal and interest on the county's outstanding obligation.

Your county expended \$970,873.02 from federal government awards. The 2012 total assessed county valuation was \$203,286,279.

The county's Assessment Fund continues to be underfunded. This fund pays for the operations cost for the county's assessing process. Due to state cuts the county is receiving less reimbursement funding.

Financial accountability is still lacking in the judicial units of county government. While some improvements have been noted much improvement is still needed to operate the county in a professional and responsible manner. In 2012 there was a total of 20,597 prisoner days logged. At the current rate of \$45.00 per day this totals \$926,865.00. Total board of prisoner reimbursements equaled \$226,670.42. I realize the county jail is not a money making operation but I believe the county could and should recover more than the current amounts being collected.

State government is still mandating numerous duties and responsibilities onto county governments without providing proper funding. I do not believe the county government unit is responsible to pay for election costs for other political sub-divisions.

The **POOR** financial condition of the county's emergency phone system known as Wri-Tex 911 Emergency Phone System greatly concerns me. When voters of Texas and Wright counties approved a fee on land line phone bills, cell phones were very few in the county. Now many residents do not have land line phones and rely only on cell phones. The Missouri General Assembly has refused to allow counties to impose a fee on cell phones and this has caused the revenues that operate the 911 system to decline to a point that major decisions must be made this year before the fund starts

showing negative balances which by state law cannot be done. The Wright County Commission who represents one half of the 911 board is seriously considering splitting off from the two county general operations and running their 911 services from their sheriff's department. If this plan moves forward Wright County would retain its own fees which represents an estimated 40% of the revenue for Wri-Tex 911. I encourage the Texas County Commission to consider a plan I will present to them in late January or early February. My plan calls for the consolidation of current duplication services and to move the current 911 office to the Administrative Center. The old county jail would make an excellent facility for a central dispatch operation along with a central mapping and addressing unit for the county. The county has funds remaining from the 2006 capital improvement project to remodel the area. The use of Title III funds could insure safe roadways for emergency vehicles, a complete inventory of all county bridges, culvert locations, low water crossings and the establishment of a GIS system for the county offices. When completed the system would greatly enhance the services the county could provide to the general public. The County Commission needs to act this year on the 911 financial problems and the wise use of Title III funds so that it does not have to be returned to the federal government for non-use.

I do **NOT** agree with some decisions approved by the Texas County Commission in preparing this year's county budget. As a citizen of this county if you would like to know what I object to please stop by my office at the Administrative Center and I will explain to you in detail my reasons for my objections. As the county budget officer I do not have a vote in the approval or disapproval of the county budget. Rest assured if something goes wrong you can bet who will get blamed. I am often reminded of President Harry S. Truman's statement "The Buck Stops Here".

I would like to commend outgoing Sheriff Carl Watson and Lieutenant Melissa Dunn for their many years of dedicated service to the residents of Texas County. It has been my pleasure working with both of these individuals. A job well done to both of you.

As I am writing this my thirty-fifth budget message I have been informed of the passing away of long time former County Coroner James Gentry. Mr. Gentry was a good friend and served the county very well for forty years.

Texas County residents should be proud of the facilities the county government maintains. Our Judicial Center, County Jail, Administrative Center and County Museum are well maintained inside

and outside and serve the needs of the county well. Elected officials and department heads should have an efficient record retention program in their offices to insure that those records that need maintained are properly placed in storage and/or recorded and those records that can be destroyed are done so. This will insure their available office space meets their needs and overcrowding does not become a problem.

As the county's Budget Officer, I take the duties and responsibilities of this office very seriously and will continue to do my best for what I believe is the best for the county and its residents. During the year, if you have questions regarding the county's operation, please contact me. It is a pleasure serving the residents of this county as a public official.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald R. Troutman,
Texas County Clerk and Budget Officer

I Tammy Cantrell, Collector-Treasurer do hereby take receipt of the 2013 Texas County Budget.

Tammy Cantrell, Collector-Treasurer

Dated this 24th day of January, 2013.

Attest:

Donald R. Troutman, County Clerk & Budget Officer