

3-22-17 County Judge's Article

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT PAY ADJUSTMENT

In the Commissioner's Court meeting on March 13 and in the workshop meeting before that on the 9th we discussed a request from Sheriff David Greene for a pay adjustment for sheriff's deputies and jailers and associated staff totaling \$3000 per person per year.

He stated that the 2% increase being given, and the \$1000 adjustment given to most of the jail staff last year would be deducted from the \$3000 and the net would be the additional amount each would receive and that he could make these adjustments within his current budget. He would do this by leaving one deputy vacancy unfilled and by other budget reductions.

He had requested this amount of increase last year but we only approved the \$1,000 adjustment for the jailers due to the uncertainty of the Luminant situation.

The Commissioner's Court approved the additional \$2,000 for the jailers plus the \$3,000 for the sheriff's deputies and the rest of the staff at this time because we felt that the need still existed for the greater adjustment for retention purposes, plus the fact that the uncertainty of the Luminant tax payment had now passed.

Sheriff Greene and his staff are making huge contributions to our financial situation by housing inmates from out-of-county and by assisting in a major way with traffic control in the county. The sheriff reported in the meeting that we currently had 46 out-of-county inmates housed at the jail. In 2016 we grossed some \$850,000 from housing out-of-county inmates and sheriff's deputies brought in over \$200,000 in traffic fines.

The jailers and deputies are in harms way every day. As an example, in the meeting jail director Doug Veach pointed out that we currently have four jailers with injuries caused by assaults by inmates. These out-of-county inmates usually aren't their best behaved ones that are sent to us. You see the headlines just like I do were deputies, DPS officers, and city policemen face criticism and potential indictment for their actions. I've personally heard stories from some of our guys telling about what it's like to be shot at, and so on.

I do a salary survey each year of surrounding counties and we try to keep up with counties of similar size but I can tell you we're not even close to being competitive on law enforcement pay with the larger counties like Bell, Williamson, Travis, Brazos, and the like, we're 15 to 25% behind. So this adjustment was important.

So I voted for the \$3,000 pay adjustment for our deputies and jail staff as did the four commissioners, and appreciate the sheriff's effort to pay for this out of his budgeted funds and for all they do for our county in raising additional funds and for their law enforcement efforts on our behalf.