

#4

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Print Name and Subject

DATE 6/28/2021

	NAME	SUBJECT
1.	✓ Morris Steward	Address Citizens
2.	✓ Stan Farmer	"
3.	✓ Ricky Hata	Public Safety
4.	✓ Mark & Mary Lee Lyle	re plat
5.	✓ Chris Woolsey	EMS
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Dear Citizens,

As another budget year rolls around, the Navarro County Sheriff's Office Command Staff feels that they have a responsibility to all NCSO employees and to the citizens we serve to provide some information regarding our experiences over the past year and hopefully provide some insight into what we are needing for the upcoming budget. This is something we rarely discuss with the citizens we serve but last year has reminded us that the functions of a Sheriff's Office, who are part of County Government, really perform a distinctly different function that is unlike any other government office that serves Navarro County.

When it comes to budget needs and salary requests, usually county offices and departments tend to be "lumped" together with the Sheriff's Office in some aspects. The Sheriff's Office constitutes a large portion of the overall budget because of its size and function. There are state and federal guidelines and rules that must be followed in order for us to operate. As you have probably seen from Sheriff Tanner's posts on our Facebook page, the Navarro County Jail passes all state inspections and we work diligently to make sure that any issues are addressed as quickly as possible in order to continue meeting state standards. The same standards go for all other divisions within the Sheriff's Office.

During the past year and dealing with COVID, the Sheriff's Office still had to continue to fully function at the same levels as prior to COVID. Protocols were put into place to ensure as much protection as possible was provided for both employees as well as the inmates being held in the Navarro County Jail. There were no NCSO employees that were given modified schedules or work at home options. "First responders", "essential personnel", as we are titled, were required to continue to provide the same duties and services to the county as before and find a way to continue doing so as safely and efficiently as possible. Because of the title, "first responders", or "essential personnel" all employees at NCSO were required to work their scheduled work days and use their earned personal time if they wanted to take any time off. This is when the difference between the Sheriff's Office and other county offices was apparent. The required level of responsibility was met and exceeded as employees of NCSO stepped up and did whatever was needed or asked of them. We are very fortunate to have the group of professionals that we have. Now with that being said, we want to keep them and find more like them! The citizens of our county deserve to have quality employees and all we are asking is to make a \$5,000 salary adjustment for the NCSO employees so we can stay competitive enough to retain our qualified and trained employees. At least one other local police agency, Corsicana PD, is predicting a substantial raise with their new budget. If this happens and the salary request is not approved for the NCSO, the loss of trained and tenured employees will continue and recruitment of new employees will be hampered in the same manner as Corsican Fire Department is currently experiencing.

During the past year the Sheriff's Office as a whole worked with a shortage of approximately 10-14 personnel at any given time. That means 10-14 positions in which the county was not having to pay salary or benefits. As always, we strive to be proactive in our hiring practices but we have found that with the pay differential between us and agencies around us, it is difficult to recruit and retain a full staff. Sheriff Tanner has worked diligently to change this during his terms as Sheriff and progress has been made. Now we are asking for the county and its citizens to help us continue on the right path.

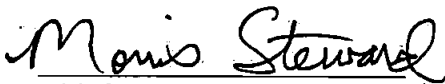
Right now there is serious concern and discussion regarding continuing to use the Corsicana Ambulance Service. There is no question that they provide a professional, quality service and Navarro

County has been very fortunate to have been able in the past to fund their previous requests for Ambulance services. The question is not the quality of service; it is the cost of said services.

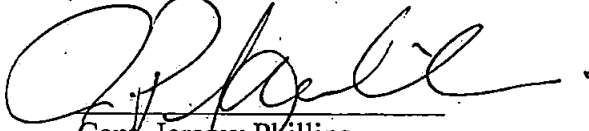
When an entire county is depending on the county government to make the best choices for the county and its citizens they are tasked with a huge responsibility. The operations of the NCSO affect all our citizens on a daily basis. We are hopeful that the Navarro County Commissioners Court will approve our minimal salary increase which will allow us to maintain our trained and certified employees at the NCSO and therefore allow us to become competitive in recruitment of new employees. As we stated, we understand that this is an enormous responsibility that we know is not being taken lightly, we just hope that there is a considerable amount of effort put into approving our salary request.

The past, current, and future goals of the Navarro County Sheriff's Office is to hire quality personnel, provide a superior training program, provide the necessary tools for all NCSO divisions to adequately perform the function of their jobs, retain employment, reward long-term employment, provide the absolute best service to the citizens of Navarro County, and continue to meet or exceed all state and/or federal requirements. We understand that we are working under budget constraints and that the funds must be available in order for us to succeed. We are asking that you, the citizens, reach out to your Commissioners and let them know that you support us; we are asking that the employees of the NCSO also reach out to their Commissioners. We are hoping that the with all the elements that go into a county budget that the Sheriff's Office's requests are seriously considered. The Sheriff's Office is not asking for anything that is not necessary. There is much thought, planning, and discussions that take place on our part prior to introducing and making yearly budget requests.

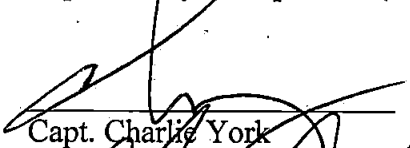
We want to say thank you to everyone that supports us. Just know that we will always strive to bring the absolute best service to Navarro County and its citizens.



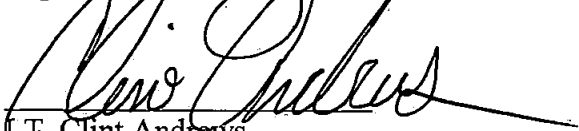
Chief Morris Steward



Capt. Jeramy Phillips



Capt. Charlie York



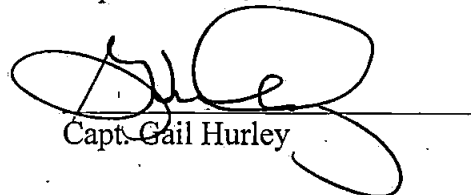
LT. Clint Andrews



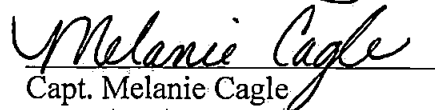
LT. Robin Woodall



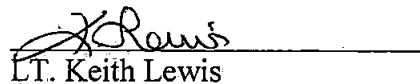
Capt. Stan Farmer



Capt. Gail Hurley



Capt. Melanie Cagle



LT. Keith Lewis

At what Expense?

What will an almost one million dollars do to the projected budget? What will have to be given up in order to do that? Will Personnel once again be told, “thank you for all you do, but no raises this year”? Just keep coming to work and don’t worry about the possible significant salary increase the City of Corsicana is looking to give their employees? Let’s not take into consideration that ALL NCSO employees worked their regular schedules for the entire year during COVID and if they wanted to take off they had to use their own earned time. NCSO employees did not have the option to: work for two weeks, then stay home for two weeks, or be able to even use our personally earned time whenever we wanted. We worked every day. We were required to be at work every day because NCSO employees are defined as “essential workers”, unlike the other county employees.

Since the pay restructure several years ago we have been progressing in the right direction to help us retain and hire quality staff. It is still a work in progress, but if the pay continues to be considerably lower than agencies around us, we will never be able to be competitive and reach our goals. We have submitted our budget requests and are all concerned that there will have to be significant “cuts” or unapproved requests because there will be a “short fall” in the budget.

In 2020 medical calls made up a total of 5.98% of our entire call volume. Although the service is excellent and very much needed, the cost needs to be affordable. Hopefully there is not already an agreement with no other options discussed. You all have a tremendous responsibility, especially at budget time. There are so many of us counting on you to make the very best decisions you can for the employees and the citizens of Navarro County.

We, the Command Staff, at the sheriff’s office with 10, 20, and 30 plus years of service are all here to ask you all to please do not rush to make a decision that could negatively impact all of us. We ask that agreements regarding the ambulance service and its cost to the county be seriously discussed and viable options considered. For us, business will continue like normal, no matter who provides the service. Corsicana EMS is absolutely the best choice; nobody is arguing that. Just please make sure that the cost is worth it.