



County Executive's Newsletter to the Commission

August 2012 – Issue #24

Page One

www.roanegov.org



Sustainability and Viability:

Each year we go through a cycle of budget submission, development, review and adoption and often times do not fully explore our core purpose and how we deliver services to our citizens. We further look only year-to-year, not being aware of the near-term or long-term challenges and opportunities. Roane County changed this year to year view about two years ago. I have been extremely pleased with our Commission's acceptance of looking into the future and what future challenges and opportunities await us.

Our goals as public servants are not only meeting the current needs of our citizens but to examine, explore, plan and insure long term sustainability and viability of the government's operation. We look no further than the newspapers and television to see national problems and many state problems. We are fortunate that Tennessee is not mentioned as having some of the same problems that other states have or often experience.

Back to sustainability and viability, governance and decisions we make are often not the most popular or the easiest to make, and often take discipline and many times sacrifice or the postponement of immediate desires. One case in point is the development of a sports complex. Many want a sports complex now and are willing to (1) pass new indebtedness to the next generation or (2) to issue debt and start paying for it over time. As we looked to the future we recognized the TVA would be granting to us available land and helping prepare the sports field. So instead of burning funds to purchase and build we chose to postpone immediate desire and sacrifice for the long term sustainability and viability of government by (1) accepting property from TVA at no cost, (2) allowing TVA to provide grade work and other site preparation at no cost, and (3) building the facility in stages instead of all at once. The sports complex is just an example, as we look forward we are exploring other avenues of sustainability and viability. We understand, however, that a balanced, compromised, collaborative approach is the best governance.

Our primary goal for these first two years was the building of a firm foundation in order for us then to plan out sustainable and viable county government. We will continue exploring opportunities and identifying challenges.

What has been accomplished?

- 1) Multi-year Debt Budget and Annual Report
- 2) Capital Asset Management Plan and Multi-year budget
- 3) Industrial Infrastructure Investment Program

What's next? --- A multi-year operating budget.

The multi-year operating budget will start first with the wastewater treatment operation. Our goal for 2012-13 is to begin this process and to review multi-year budgets for Fiscal 2014.

2013 Budget is Adopted

The County Commission at its July meeting adopted the 2013 Budget along with the tax resolution and non-profit charitable organization resolution.

The total tax rate was not changed; however, there was a shift in tax rates from the debt service to the capital fund. This shift allows the county to set aside funds for matching grants on future industrial prospects. This shift was made available due to the sale of industrial property to VW Corporation of America and the proceeds of the land sale being required to be deposited in the debt service fund in Fiscal 2012.

In compliance with the Debt Policy, an annual debt report was filed with Commission. The debt report is available online at www.roanegov.org - "County Executive" - "Departments" - "Accounting and Budget Department".

We would like to thank all department heads, the budget committee, and the Commissioners for their diligent and hard work on the 2013 Budget.

VA Clinic and Prospective VA Hospital:

The U. S. Veterans Administration established a VA clinic a number of years ago in Rockwood. The VA contracted out the operation of the clinic to a non-profit which has struggled in maintaining a viable operation. The week of July 9 the county was informed the clinic would be temporarily closed, pending hiring new staff.

On July 13th, U. S. Congressman Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, toured the Rockwood VA Clinic, along with the Roane Medical Center (RMC) in Harriman. Congressman Miller represents Florida's 1st District. The RMC is being proposed as a solution to meet veterans' needs for hospital service for a 12-county region. Harriman City is prepared to lease the facility to the VA for \$1.00 per year. The RMC is centrally located between the VA Hospital in Murfreesboro and the VA Hospital in Johnson City. Also touring with Congressman Miller were Tennessee Congressmen Chuck Fleischmann and Doctor Scott DesJarlais, with members of their respective staffs.

Following the tour of the two facilities, a veterans' rally was held at the Pavilion at Kingston City Park.

CTAS Fire Study/July Fire Board Meeting:

The County Fire Board met on July 10 to review and approve releasing the county's quarterly contribution, along with various capital outlay funds. County Executive Woody discussed with the Fire Board: (1) potential changes in financial reporting requirements dictated by the Comptroller of the Treasury, specifically requiring more detailed records of revenues and expenditures, and (2) a brief overview of the 2012 CTAS Fire Assessment Study.

The 2012 CTAS Fire Assessment Study was distributed to the Fire Board for their review. The Office of Emergency Services will be preparing an Executive Summary of this report. The next Fire Board meeting will be an opportunity to fully discuss the assessment report. Woody indicated that a 2005 Fire Assessment Study led to the creation of the County Fire Department and upon review of the 2012 report, the Fire Board could address the issue of the County Fire Department and future fire service opportunities.

Planning Commission – Statement of Disclosure of Interests:

Public Chapter No. 1023 amended T.C.A. §8-50-501(a) and now requires that members of the local Planning Commission are required to disclose their respective sources of income and investments. Counties could begin to experience the loss of volunteers if their private information becomes part of the public domain.

Oak Ridge Reservation Communities Alliance (ORCCA)

The former Local Oversight Committee (LOC) has gone through a reorganization/restructuring and renaming. Reflecting the local governments of the City of Oak Ridge, Anderson, Roane, Knox, Morgan, Rhea and Meigs Counties' an alliance was formed to insure understanding and work with the DOE, TEMA and TDEC. The new organization approved a new name of the Oak Ridge Reservation Communities Alliance (ORCCA). The organization is chaired by Oak Ridge Mayor Tom Beehan and the acting secretary is Roane County Executive Ron Woody.

The new organization is in its infancy but is anticipated to become increasingly more active in understanding, planning and having input on activities related to the DOE Oak Ridge Reservation and the impact of DOE in the surrounding communities.

Employee Benefits - Retirement

Roane County is a member of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System, where, each full-time employee contributes 5% of his/her salary and the county contributes a calculated percentage (changes every two years) based on an actuarial formula allowing funds to be available upon the employee's eligible retirement). The retiree then will draw a defined retirement amount each month.

A 401k defined contribution plan was implemented by the County in May 2012. A defined contribution is where the county contributes a set dollar amount and the employee contributes the same or greater dollar amount. The county started its set dollar amount at \$240 for the year, or \$10 per pay period for 24 pay periods. The Fiscal 2013 Budget approves the county's contributing another \$10 per pay period, making the total \$20 a pay period or \$480 per year.

Success of the 401k program is evident in the employee and employer contributions since inception. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, the county's contribution (all employees except schools) was \$30,004 and the employee contribution was \$35,769, for a total of \$65,773 set aside in the supplemental retirement plan.

If you are a full-time employee and have not joined the 401k plan, we would encourage you to join your fellow workers. Contact Linda Stooksbury to sign up.

2012 Roane County Board of Equalization

The Roane County Board of Equalization convened on June 1, 2012 to begin their annual meeting. There are five (5) Roane County Board of Equalization members, and they are:

- District 1 **Mary Holley** is a new board member and she lives in Harriman. Mary is retired from the restaurant business. She and her husband ran Bonnie’s restaurant in Harriman and retired in 1992.
- District 2 **T. H. Brown, Jr.** He is a native of Oliver Springs. T.H. retired from X-10, ORNL. He has been a county board member since 2005.
- District 3 **Stanley Tilley** is a native of Kingston. He retired from Y-12 after 30 years, and is also a retired real estate agent since 1986. He has been a county board member since 2010.
- District 4 **Freddy Harvey** is a native of Kingston. He is a retired real estate agent and has been a member of the county board off and on for several years.
- District 5 **Donna Davis** is a new board member. She lives in Rockwood and is retired from teaching with the Roane County school system for 32 years.

The Board has heard all the appeal that were submitted to the board and made any adjustments they found necessary. The 2012 session of the Roane County Board of Equalization adjourned on June 29, 2012. **Thank you board members for your service!**

Ambulance Service

The ambulance service in FY11 was scheduled to go out of business with an ending fund balance of \$18,000. County Executive Ron Woody, new Director Howie Rose and the full County Commission were able to keep this from occurring. Several changes were made between the fall of 2010 and the end of the fiscal year June, 2011. To begin with billing processing was outsourced to a 3rd party. The prior Director retired and was replaced with a new Director with a different vision of the path for the Ambulance Service. By FY12 the new Director made departmental changes such as: changing shift captains, eliminating unscheduled overtime, eliminating 6 full time positions by removing one (1) full time ambulance from service. Inventory control became a focus which allowed pharmaceutical expenses to be reduced. Other expenditures that have been reduced are medical supplies and capital equipment.

The biggest change that occurred was cutting 1 ½ trucks from five (5) full time trucks and one (1) day truck to four (4) 24-hour trucks. This reduction saved an estimated \$300,000 over the course of one (1) fiscal year. The fifth truck was cut in November 2011. Should the need arise; the option is available to reinstate the fifth truck back into service at the estimated expense of \$300,000.

To keep the fleet in proper working order, a replacement schedule was devised. Of the (8) ambulances that are owned by the service, each year it is budgeted that two (2) will be remounted. Remounting an Ambulance box on a new chassis is much more cost effective than purchasing an entire new ambulance. The boxes can be remounted several times with no negative effects on the vehicle’s operations.

One penny of property tax was budgeted for FY12 which is a countywide tax. This was reduced from two pennies in FY11. Even through all of the changes made to promote the financial solvency of the ambulance service; it is still an uphill climb. Patient charges have been budgeted conservatively for the upcoming year. It is our hope that this number can be adjusted up during the middle of the fiscal year.

Financial Synopsis:

| | <u>Beginning</u> <u>Restricted for Ambulance</u> <u>Operations</u> | <u>Revenues</u> | <u>Transfer</u> <u>In</u> | <u>Expenditures</u> | <u>Ending</u> <u>Restricted for Ambulance</u> <u>Operations</u> |
|----------|---|------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| FY10 | 696,859 | 2,325,528 | | 2,652,220 | 370,167 |
| FY11 | 370,167 | 2,686,230 | 100,000 | 3,080,074 | 76,323 |
| FY12 | 76,323 | 3,492,500 | 200,000 | 3,174,970 | 593,853 |
| Est.FY13 | 575,000 | 2,836,100 | | 2,976,239 | 434,861 |

August Meetings and Events:

Check the website www.roanegov.org or more information on Committee meetings.

| | | | |
|--------|---|------------------|-------------|
| Aug 2 | GENERAL ELECTION/STATE PRIMARY ELECTION | Voting Precincts | 8 am – 8 pm |
| Aug 6 | Sheriff's Liaison Comm. | CH | 6:30pm |
| Aug 7 | Back Tax Committee | CH | 6:30 |
| Aug 13 | County Commission | CH | 7:00pm |
| Aug 14 | Beer Board | CH | 5:30pm |
| Aug 14 | Fire Board | CH | 6:00pm |
| Aug 15 | Board of Zoning Appeals | CH | 6:00pm |
| Aug 15 | Planning Commission | CH | 7:00pm |
| Aug 23 | Co. Bd. of Public Utilities | CH | 6:00pm |

Meeting with Dr. John Dreyzehner, Commissioner of the Department of Health

Laura Conner and the Roane County Health Department hosted Tennessee Commissioner of Health John Dreyzehner, M.D., M.P.H., on July 2, 2012. Staff of the Health Department met with and gave Dr. Dreyzehner a tour of the facility. In attendance were Senator Ken Yager and County Executive Ron Woody.

Roane County was pleased and proud to show the facility (with new roof) but most importantly to talk about the many services that are provided to the public. Thank you Laura Conner, and your staff, for the meeting and tour.

Boys' and Girls' Club:

For the past several months the Roane County Anti-Drug Coalition and the District Attorney General's office have been discussing, exploring, and planning for an opportunity to create a Boys' and Girls' Club of Roane County. A couple of parcels of land and buildings have been researched, along with having an internal discussion to consider asking the Roane County School system to become a partner in the establishment of the Boys' and Girls' Club of Roane County.

X-10 (Oak Ridge National Laboratory) [Article No. 3 in a series by Robert Bailey, County Historian]

[This is the third of a series of articles about the history of Oak Ridge, the "Secret City." Oak Ridge made a tremendous impact on our area in 1942 and the possibility of a National Park would again have a major impact in our County.]

The X-10 (Oak Ridge National Laboratory) plant was built by DuPont for 12 million dollars and completed in October 1943. The letter "X" was used by the University of Chicago in its description of the area. The number 10 had no special significance. It was much smaller than the K-25 and Y-12 plants. During the war it employed 1,513 people.

The primary mission was to build a Graphite Reactor to show that the production of plutonium from uranium in a reactor could fuel an atomic bomb. Its job was to show that plutonium could be extracted from irradiated uranium slugs, and its first major challenge was to produce a self-sustaining chain reaction. And in 1944, chemists produced the world's first few grams of plutonium. The Graphite Reactor operated from 1943 to 1963.

Among the accomplishments through the years at X-10 were: (1) Production of the first electricity from nuclear energy; (2) The first reactor studying the nature of matter and the health hazards of radioactivity. (3) Providing radioisotopes for medicine, agriculture, industry and other purposes.

The Oak Ridge National Lab is a world-wide known research center for energy, environment and other things. The Graphite Reactor was declared a registered National Historic Landmark in 1966 and is Roane County's only such National landmark.

[The next article will discuss the Y-12 plant].

HVAC UPGRADE STARTING AT COURTHOUSE

A contract has been executed for HVAC upgrade at the Courthouse and Volunteer Mechanical Inc. began work July 2nd on the first phase of a project to upgrade the thirty-eight year old HVAC equipment. The first phase bid price came in at \$288,000. The project is being funded by a \$100,000 Energy Grant with the remaining funds coming from the Litigation Tax fund established to maintain Courthouses and Jails.

The first phase began on the third floor of the courthouse. It consists of new duct work, piping, the installation of units that will allow for zoned cooling and heating and the new control panel that will be used in this and future upgrades. The project is expected to be completed by September 28 of this year. The third floor will be virtually inhabitable during the construction. The Building & Grounds staff will be acting as the liaison between the courthouse employees and the contractor if employees need to go to the third floor for any reason. The public will not be allowed to access the third floor.

The Agricultural Extension office has moved temporarily to the Juvenile building in Midtown. CASA had to find alternative space as well and is now located at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Kingston.

If you have an item of interest related to our county, please submit to Sheila or me. Deadline for submission is the last Friday of the month. Ron