

THE STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF CAMERON

BE IT REMEMBERED on the 25th day of **SEPTEMBER, 2001**, there was conducted a **REGULAR Public Meeting of the Honorable Commissioners' Court of Cameron County, Texas, at the Courthouse thereof, in the City of Brownsville, Texas, for the purpose of transacting any and all business that may lawfully be brought before the same.**

THE COURT MET AT:

5:30 P.M.

PRESENT:

GILBERTO HINOJOSA
COUNTY JUDGE

PEDRO "PETE" BENAVIDES
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 1

CARLOS H. CASCOS, C.P.A.
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 2

DAVID A. GARZA
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 3

NATIVIDAD "TIVIE" VALENCIA
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 4

Mary Robles **Deputy Clerk**
COUNTY CLERK

ABSENT:

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The meeting was called to order by Judge Pro-tem Carlos H. Cascos, C.P.A., at 5:40 P. M. He then asked Rev. Bob Clark, Brownsville resident, for the invocation and all the Law Enforcement Officers present to lead the Court and the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Court considered the following matters as posted and filed for Record in the Office of the County Clerk on September 21, 2001, at 2:03 P. M.:

NOTE: Judge Hinojosa arrived at this time.

PRESENTATION

(1) **PRESENTATION OF REPORT BY THE PARKS SYSTEM DIRECTOR REGARDING A CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR THE LOSS OF REVENUES OF PARKS FOR THE NEXT THREE TO FOUR MONTHS, AS WELL AS A PLAN ON THE UTILIZATION OF PARK EMPLOYEES**

At this time, Mr. Javier Mendez, Parks System Director, expressed his gratitude to the businesses and concessionaires of the Town of South Padre Island for providing assistance to the persons involved during the difficult time, including the County employees. He reported on the anticipated revenues from September 15, 2001 through December 30, 2001, and noted that the reservations for the Recreational Vehicles (RV) Park had been canceled through January 1, 2002, until definite plans for the causeway were available. Mr. Mendez stated that according to TxDOT, a large ferry was to be in place by the following week, and that it would be able to transport the RVs on and off the Island. He explained that people were on standby for further information after being notified that the causeway could reopen in December.

Judge Hinojosa recommended that a letter be drafted as to the situation, the scheduled options, and what was being done to accommodate the Recreational Vehicles and suggested that the Parks System Department work with his Office on that matter. He stated that the Contract called for penalties and that TxDOT had informed him that the construction would be completed by December 21, 2001. Judge Hinojosa recommended that updated information be provided on a regular basis, and since the arrival of the Recreational Vehicles was after Thanksgiving, the inconvenience would only consist of a three (3) to four (4) week delay.

Mr. Mendez explained that there were Recreational Vehicles stranded at the park, with expired reservations, and were not being charged rent with exception of utilities. He noted that Thomae Park could house forty-two (42) spaces and that only twenty-four (24) spaces were available. Mr. Mendez explained that when the reservations were received, the information was provided to keep the people informed of the situation, adding that the delay in transporting the Recreational Vehicles might not be as long as anticipated.

At this time, there was discussion concerning the transportation of persons to and from the Island, but not the vehicles, the need to have a permanent ferry and the possible construction of a second causeway.

Mr. Mendez highlighted the revenues, the shortfall, and the occupancy rates, noting that they were based on historical numbers.

Commissioner Cascos stated that in the worst case scenario a \$426,000.00 revenue shortfall could be anticipated and questioned what the Parks System planned that would alleviate the shortfall.

Mr. Mendez stated that it was very difficult to mitigate the loses due to the Parks System-s cash being generated from South Padre Island, and that it would have to be made up throughout the year.

Mr. Mark Yates, County Auditor, responded that there were 1.2 million dollars in cash, but that \$650,000.00 had been reserved for the Recreational Vehicles Parks in case of a disaster.

Mr. Mendez stated that the employees were requested to utilize the time available, and that when needed, the employees would be shifted to other parks locations.

Mr. Doug Wright, Commissioners- Court Legal Counsel, stated that the Civil Division would submit an Executive Agenda Item regarding possible litigation and that there was a class action to be followed in South Padre Island.

Judge Hinojosa clarified that the mitigation plan consisted of two (2) items, that being; 1) work with TxDOT to provide the alternative means of access and; 2) to inform the population and to encourage them to continue utilizing the County-s facilities.

Commissioner Valencia moved that the presentation of the Report by the Parks Systems Director, regarding a contingency plan for the loss of revenues of parks for the next three (3) to four (4) months, as well as a plan on the utilization of park employees, be acknowledged.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Garza.

Mr. Yates suggested that the rule of the six (6) month stay at the parks be suspended and that some type of discount be offered.

Mr. Mendez suggested that a type of revenue loss insurance should be considered for the Parks System.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Valencia, seconded by Commissioner Garza and carried unanimously, the presentation of the Report by the Parks System Director regarding a contingency plan for the loss of revenues of parks for the next three (3) to four (4) months, as well as a plan on the utilization of park employees was acknowledged.

The Report is as follows:

████████████████████

(18) **AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PARKS SYSTEM TO
SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY CORP OF
ENGINEERS, RELATING TO THE EXTENSION TO
THE SEA RANCH MARINA DOCK**

Commissioner Valencia moved the Parks System be authorized to submit an Application to the Department of the Army Corp of Engineers, relating to the extension to the Sea Ranch Marina Dock.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Garza.

Mr. Doug Wright, Commissioners-Court Legal Counsel, questioned whether the matter had been reviewed as to the rights and responsibilities, noting that they were building on non County property, but that County property was being attached.

Mr. Mendez explained that the County had the right to the easement.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Valencia, seconded by Commissioner Garza and carried unanimously, the Parks System was authorized to submit an Application to the Department of the Army Corp of Engineers, relating to the extension to the Sea Ranch Marina Dock, pending Legal review.

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(2) **BUDGET AMENDMENTS AND/OR SALARY
SCHEDULES**

Upon motion by Commissioner Cascos, seconded by Commissioner Valencia and carried unanimously, the 2001 Fiscal Year Budget Amendment No. 2001-39, and the Salary Schedule for the Tax Car Theft Division, Fund No. 100-4982 were approved.

The Budget Amendment and the Salary Schedule are as follow:

[REDACTED]

(4) **IN THE MATTER REGARDING MODIFICATIONS, ADDITIONS AND/OR DELETIONS AT THE CAMERON COUNTY DETENTION FACILITY AND SHERIFF-S DEPARTMENT AND ISSUES RELATED THERETO (TABLED)**

Upon motion by Commissioner Valencia, seconded by Commissioner Garza and carried unanimously, this Item was **TABLED**.

[REDACTED]

(5) **IN THE MATTER REGARDING CAMERON COUNTY AND CITIES CHALLENGING THE CENSUS 2000 COUNTS, AND ISSUES RELATED THERETO (TABLED)**

Upon motion by Commissioner Benavides, seconded by Commissioner Valencia and carried unanimously, this Item was **TABLED**.

[REDACTED]

(6) **POSSIBLE ACTION SETTING OF THE TOLL RATES FOR CAMERON COUNTY INTERNATIONAL TOLL BRIDGE SYSTEM FOR THE 2001-2002 FISCAL YEAR, COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2001**

Judge Hinojosa moved that the toll rate be increased by five (5) cents for pedestrians and fifteen (15) cents for automobiles for the Cameron County International Toll Bridge System for the 2001-2002 Fiscal Year, commencing October 1, 2001.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Benavides.

At this time, Commissioner Garza requested that the Budget Item be discussed prior to action being taken on the item.

At this time, Judge Hinojosa and Commissioner Benavides withdrew their motion and second.

[REDACTED]

(9) **CERTIFICATION BY THE AUDITOR OF AN ADDITIONAL \$118,300.00 IN GENERAL FUND REVENUES**

Commissioner Cascos moved that the certification by the Auditor of an additional \$118,300.00 in General Fund Revenues, be approved.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Valencia and carried unanimously.

[REDACTED]

(10) ACTION ON RECOMMENDATION OF CAMERON COUNTY SALARY GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

Judge Hinojosa stated that the Grievance Committee had unanimously approved a six percent (6%) salary increase for the Cameron County Sheriff, and the travel allowance for the District Clerk and County Clerk. He reported that the item to be considered by the Court was the recommendation of the \$5,400.00 auto allowance for the two (2) Justices of the Peace, that being Judge Sally Gonzalez, and Judge David Wise, which were not unanimous.

Judge Hinojosa moved that the recommendation of the Cameron County Salary Grievance Committee, concerning the \$5,400.00 auto allowance for the Justices of the Peace, be approved.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Benavides.

Commissioner Cascos clarified that the auto allowances for the Justices of the Peace were to be equal.

Upon motion duly made by Judge Hinojosa, seconded by Commissioner Benavides and carried unanimously, the recommendation of Cameron County Salary Grievance Committee concerning the \$5,400.00 auto allowance for the two (2) Justices of the Peace, that being Judge Sally Gonzalez, and Judge David Wise, were approved.

The Grievance Committees votes are as follow:

(7) **ADOPTION OF THE BUDGETS FOR THE CAMERON COUNTY GENERAL FUND, CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDS, INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS, COURTHOUSE SECURITY FUND, THE SPECIAL ROAD AND BRIDGE FUND, THE LATERAL ROADS, THE LAW LIBRARY FUND, THE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FUNDS, THE CHILD SUPPORT FUNDS, THE FIFTH JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION FUNDS, THE PARKS SYSTEM FUNDS, THE AIRPORT FUNDS, AND THE DRUG FORFEITURE FUNDS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2001-2002**

Mr. Xavier Villarreal, Budget Officer - AJudge and Commissioners, I have handed a package to you which outlines basically where we are at right now, including the revenues, the transfers that are available presently, plus all the recommended budgets and transfers out. My proposal, my recommendation, is that we go to the Roll Back Rate, which would generate another 1.2 million dollars, approximately, which would give an excess \$209,384.00, which would be available for appropriations to other projects or increases. There have been, also I guess recommendations out there, in reference to increasing the toll rates which would have an effect on this, which are listed there on the bottom. A reserve of lapse salaries of \$300,000.00 and the additional back-up is the positions that are requested, the increases that were requested by the various Departments and then, the summary sheets for the various funds.®

Judge Hinojosa - AOkay, I would like to make a motion, at this time.®

Commissioner Valencia - AJudge, I am going to keep insisting again, Judge, that I am very concerned with the Road and Bridge employees, and I know that they work real hard. I know that we depend on them a lot, especially in this type of weather. In this time of the year, with this weather we are having right now. I know that we had thought about giving them about \$900.00 pay increase. Look I am going to suggest that we, in fact, I will recommend that we increase them to \$1,500.00. Now I hope I can get a second on this Judge.®

Commissioner Benavides - AI like that and I have always fought for that.®

Judge Hinojosa - ALet me make a motion and then you can ask me to amend my motion, if you like. I would like to make the following motion as part of this budget. In addition to what the Budget Officer is proposing that we adopt, I would like to make the following recommendations as a motion.®

Commissioner Cascos - AJudge, excuse me.®

Judge Hinojosa - ALet me make my motion and then.®

Commissioner Cascos - ANo, but is this what we are? In the front page, is this it?®

Judge Hinojosa - AWhatever he is.®

Commissioner Cascos - ABut what is it that you are proposing, though?@

Mr. Villarreal - AThe proposing of the budgets as far as...@

Commissioner Cascos - AWell, the Judge is going to make a motion on what you are proposing. What I want to know is what is it that you are proposing? Because, if I look at this back-up there are three (3) options. I think you called them options A, B, and C.@

Mr. Villarreal - ARight, basically it is just going to the roll-back rate. The other Items approach still have to be decided, which is...@

Commissioner Cascos - ASo you are not even proposing a budget. The only thing that you are proposing is that we go to the roll-back rate?@

Mr. Villarreal - ANo, within the roll back rate, the budget that is the recommended, is the Departmental Budget.@

Commissioner Cascos - AThis front page?@

Mr. Villarreal - ANo, its above this which is attached. Plus, a couple of weeks ago I handed out a binder. Those were the budgets.@

Judge Hinojosa - AThat's his recommendation.@

Mr. Villarreal - AThat is what makes up the General Fund Departmental Budgets.@

Commissioner Cascos - AAlright, Okay, I'm sorry, go ahead Judge, I will ask you later.@

Judge Hinojosa - ASo here I would like to, in addition to what the Budget Officer is requesting and that the following items be incorporated into the Budget: that there be a \$900.00 increase per employee across the board; that all Detention and Child Care Workers, which are the Juvenile Department equivalent of a Detention Office; their salaries be set at the salary of \$22,500.00, and that as part of that. Let me just go back, the effect of \$900.00 per employee increase is \$945,841.00, and that incorporates the suggested increases that I am going to recommend for other employees where the \$900.00 per employee is incorporated in there. The \$22,500.00 per Detention and Child Care Workers also incorporates a step increase as recommended by the Chief Juvenile Officer and that cost, I believe is \$155,500.00 for all the Detention Officers from the Sheriff's Department, and \$18,011.00 for all the Child Care workers. And I want to point out that, and this is not part of my motion, but the reason that it is so low, for the Child Care Workers, is because they are getting a stipend from the State of about, what was it? \$1,500.00?@

Mr. Villarreal - AI believe they were getting, I think it was, \$1,000.00.@

Judge Hinojosa - A\$1,000.00. So in order to get us to the \$22,500.00 we did not have to come up with as much money for them. That also the Justices of the Peace staff's salaries be increased to Court Administrator at \$22,500.00, Court Assistant II at \$19,500.00 and Court Assistant I at \$16,500.00 for a total cost of \$24,000.00. This as per the

request of all the Justices of the Peace that was made in the Budget. That the County Courts at Law staff's salary be increased to the current level, not the new budget level, but the current level before the Budget of the District Court staff. Essentially because they do the same thing as the District Court staff. The County Court Administrators get a salary of \$32,313.00. The Court Coordinators get a salary of \$2..... I should have handed this thing to you, so you all could follow a little bit more.@"

Commissioner Valencia - AThanks a lot.@"

Commissioner Garza - AYes.@"

Judge Hinojosa - ASorry, I have not gone that far, Okay. Court Coordinator of \$26,197.00 and Court interpreter \$27,445.00 at a total cost above the recommended budget of \$11,100.00, and I think the reason that quote is not as high is because the budgeted amount we are recommending for the attorneys is from \$60,000.00 to \$55,000.00 that saves \$15,000.00. I talked to the County Court at Law Judges, they are fine with that number. But the total cost of County Court increases \$11,100.00. Also, as part of my motion I would recommend that the salaries for the carpentry staff and the maintenance staff, as recommended by Roger, be increased to the Carpentry Supervisor - \$37,440.00; Carpenter III - \$24,960.00; Carpenter III, other position he recommended - \$24,440.00; Office Assistant - \$18,200.00; Maintenance Technician - \$18,720.00; Carpenter I - \$17,680.00; Maintenance Technician - \$17,680.00.... recommend as part of my motion, that the half time Contract Custodian at the La Feria building be increased to a full time at \$23,917.00. However, this is a little bit lower, I think, because it would be effective on the day of the opening of the building. Which I am not sure what date that is. But, what is it?@"

Mr. Villarreal - AIt was scheduled to be open next month, I believe, but I am not sure.@"

Judge Hinojosa - AWhat is the effective date of the opening?@"

Mr. Juan Bernal, County Engineer-Public Works Director - AIt will not be until late October.@"

Judge Hinojosa - ASo it is just a little bit below the \$23,917.00. But the salary would be whatever the minimum salary we have, plus fringe benefits. Whatever the custodians earn, plus the fringe benefits and it came out to the \$23,917.00. That the County Clerk get two (2) clerks at \$15,600.00 at a total cost of \$45,721.00. Which is what you had requested, Joe. That the Justice of the Peace Precinct No. 3-1 get a half time secretary as requested, at a total cost of \$11,041.00. The Justice of the Peace Precinct No. 3-1 is Oscar de la Fuentes. We earlier approved a half time secretary for Judge Garza, so to make it consistent, the only two (2) Justices of the Peace, except for Judge Wise and Judge Saldaña, which are real small jurisdictions, the only two (2) Justices of the Peace in any significant size jurisdiction that do not have half time secretary are Judge De la Fuentes and Judge Salas, and I would recommend that they both get a half time secretary, at the cost of \$11,041.00. And, that also, we would recommend, but not as part of this Budget, I would

recommend that the Constable Precinct No. 3 and No. 6 each get a full time Deputy, along with Constable Precinct No. 5 a half time secretary. And Constable Precinct No. 6 a half time secretary, all to be funded out of the Law Enforcement Grant that would become effective, I believe, November 1. You don't have to make that part of this budget, but those four (4) positions I would recommend that rather than funding them out of this Budget, we would fund them out of the Law Enforcement. What is it called Remi?@

Mr. Remi Garza, Administrative Assistant - @The Local Law Enforcement Block Grant.@

Judge Hinojosa - @Okay, and we take the funding out of those effective then. Because a significant increase in our cost this year came out of the increase in Health Insurance funds. I think we will be able to pick-up all, I know we will be able to pick-up all those slots effective October 1, which is with the way we have always done on all the slots that have been funded through grants. I would recommend that we go ahead and fund all those slots under this program and not include them under the Budget. That we get all employees at the living wage of \$7.50 to a total amount of \$4,300.00. The \$900.00 increase plus any other increase that we have out there will get us almost everybody at the \$7.50 living wage that was passed by the School District, and I think the City of Brownsville, which would cost us \$4,300.00. Again that is part of my motion. That there are six (6) deputy clerks that sit in each of the six (6) District Courts which have a very despaired salary to the Court Coordinators in those same exact offices, and in order to get them to a more equitable wage that would be consistent with the duties and responsibilities that they share in those offices, I would recommend that those deputy clerks be put at a salary of \$24,000.00 a year. The Tax Assessor Collector that we add an additional clerk at \$17,500.00. The total cost would be \$1,312,485.00, which would place us needing an additional \$2,344,601.00 from the effective tax rate, with the additional \$1,282,000.00 of the roll-back rate, plus lapse salaries, that Mark would book at \$300,000.00, which I think are part of this Budget. Plus a five (5) cent increase and a fifteen (15) cent auto increase would balance out the Budget on the recommended amounts. As part of my motion, I would also propose that we, in order to deal with the concerns about the half cent or the penny that was taken away from the Road and Bridge program last year, that we transfer \$300,000.00 from the Tobacco Funds to the Road and Bridge Program. That can be used, just be transferred and then it can be booked as reserves or they can use it for whatever they want. That is my motion. Do I have a second to that motion?@

Commissioner Valencia – @I'll second it, Judge. But I want to make the amendment that we need to take care of our Road and Bridge crew working people.@

Judge Hinojosa - @Okay, and how do you want to propose on that?@

Commissioner Valencia - @I am going to propose that from the \$900.00 that was suggested, that it be increased to \$1,500.00.@

Judge Hinojosa - ANow your talking about just the road crew folks?@

Commissioner Valencia - AThat is correct.@

Judge Hinojosa - AI will accept your amendment.@

Commissioner Benavides - AAnd I will second that with that amendment.@

Commissioner Valencia - APete, thank you very much, Pete. I think it is very important that we do recognize those people.@

Commissioner Benavides - ASo it will go from \$900.00 to \$1,500.00 on the Road and Bridge?@

Commissioner Valencia - A\$1,500.00. I think they will appreciate you also Commissioner.@

Commissioner Cascos - AI guess we can discuss that.@

Judge Hinojosa - AYes. All right there is a motion and a second, yes Ma-am.@

Ms. Aurora De la Garza, District Clerk - AWe came requesting increasing of fees and I was told that if I would do that I would be considered given a position.@

Judge Hinojosa - AI believe that what is going to happen on your thing Aurora, is part of the recommendations of...@

Mr. Villarreal - AMark would have to certify some revenues.@

Commissioner Cascos - AThose revenues. Just bring it back.@

Mr. Mark Yates, County Auditor - Inaudible

Judge Hinojosa - AOnce he certifies those revenues, we will add the slot. Then see how the revenues collections come in and if it comes out the way you project, then we will add the other slot. So the proposal which is not in the Budget yet, will eventually get you two (2) slots, assuming that the revenues come in from those fees.@

Ms. De la Garza - ASo, does that mean...?@

Commissioner Cascos - AOnce he certifies it, then you come back and have that position.@

Mr. Yates - AWe just need more time to look at it.@

Commissioner Valencia - AJudge and Commissioners, again, I want to emphasize the importance of the Harlingen Building. You all know that it is pretty important out there. We were depending on those offices and the staffs. I think, Judge Wise is here, and I know he can testify that the building is in very poor condition, and that we do need to improve this building. I think there is beginning to be a health problem over there and I do not want it to become a serious problem, any bigger than what it is now. I know that there has been the possibility of there being mold out there, Judge. And if that is the case, we are going to have a very serious health problem on our hands. I do not want to have to come up later on, Judge, and declare this building a disaster, due to mold or any other kind of health reason. If I

have to, in the future, Judge I am going to have to get all the County elected officials to be here with me and support this case, also, the employees that work there. This is very important to them, Judge and Commissioners. They work there every day and we depend on them a lot. The people, the constituents of Precinct No. 4, and surrounding areas are also depending on these people to serve them. So, with this, Judge, again I strongly ask that this matter be considered. If we do not have the monies right now, and I believe that we had already had those monies set aside last year. This is what the commitment was from last year's budget, that we would do this building, within this year. But now it seems that all that is going up in smoke again, and I do not want this to become another year that is going to go around again, and have this matter on our hands again. Judge, can you help me out with this?@

Judge Wise - AWell this is all new to me. I am not, I still had the perception and what I am gathering by listening to this into the discussion. Is this proposal in any way related to the funds that have been dedicated to the Harlingen Annex?@

Judge Hinojosa - AWell, let's talk about that. Because I think that what Commissioner Valencia is concerned about is the use of the tobacco money, and whether or not we had discussed and kind of informally committed that we would take the tobacco money that was left and use it towards the renovation of Harlingen Annex. The problem that we have got is that because of the concerns that Mark has about the future revenues of the Bridge System, given the relativity of the situation with the closing of the bridges, not the closing, but the delays in the bridges and some of the drop in revenues. That in order for Mark to book, to allow us to book a right transfer, as we did last time around, and also to book the amount for the projected increases on a fifteen (15) cents and five (5) cents for vehicles and pedestrians respectively, that he has to reserve out a significant portion out of the tobacco money to be kept in reserve, to insure that if it does not come through as recommended, as is booked, that he can draw from the Tobacco Funds to pay into the General Fund to make-up for any losses. That is what Mark has agreed to do in order for us to be able to balance the Budget. So even though the money in the Tobacco Fund is not going to be spent right off the bat, we cannot touch that until he allows us to touch it. So that he can go ahead and allow us to use that amount of a transfer projection that is being recommended in this Budget. So that means that at least, and then on top of all of that the Commissioners, I know Commissioner Garza and Commissioner Valencia were very concerned about the fact that we had taken a penny away from the tax rate in the Road and Bridge Program last time around, in order to balance the Budget, so that we could be able to pay for the debt services on the new jail, plus some other unexpected increase. And, so when we started looking at whether or not we could transfer either A penny or a half penny from the current tax rate over to the Road and Bridge, we realized that we were not going to be able to do it without busting the Budget and not being able to give the increases in pay that we needed to give. And, so rather than sending the half penny over, what I am recommending as part of my

motion, is to send the equivalent of half a penny, or almost the equivalent of half a penny in Tobacco Funds over, which is the \$300,000.00, that I am recommending as part of my motion. Which would be the equivalent. It washes out. It works out the same way as transferring a half a penny, because the money then goes into the Road and Bridge Program, to be used however they want. And now part of that would be used as part of this motion, if it passes, to pay for the road crew increase of \$1,500.00 that Commissioner Valencia and Commissioner Benavides, which I accepted as part of an amendment to my motion, have suggested. So that basically wipes out the availability of the tobacco money for the renovation. What I would suggest is this, with the drop in interest rates that we are experiencing, today, I believe that there is a distinct possibility in the drop in rates on the bonds that we would have to pay. In other words, we can get a better rate on our bonds, which would cause, which I believe is something we have done at least twice since I have been a County Judge, is go back to the bond market and renegotiate our bonds and get a lower rate. Which would save us significant amounts of money when we do that.®

Commissioner Valencia - ABut Judge, how much longer do we have to wait on this, Judge?®

Judge Hinojosa - ALet me suggest on how, what we should do. When we would do that, then we renegotiate the bonds then we add some of this projects that are in dire need for construction, one being the Harlingen Annex, the other one is the San Benito Building that we currently house the Health Department on. And obviously somewhere to construct the Health Department, as an alternative site as well as the Engineering Building. Those sites would be added on to the renewal of the renegotiating of current bonds, and we can just do a one bond issue on everything and pick them up. And what I am going to propose is to instruct the Engineering Department to give us cost estimates now on all this mandatory facilities where we have to build them immediately, because of these needs we are facing today. And then meet with Noe Hinojosa and start working on a financing plan that would incorporate the bond refinancing and find the optimum period of time, which could be soon, to do all of this at one time. And start, hopefully, as soon as the end of the year. We still have not finished the details in this. We have only gotten designs on the building. We have not gotten the specifications. That is going to take another month or so to do. So by the time we get all that together and we get the cost estimates from the Engineering Department. Before we are even ready to do the refinancing or expanding the refinancing, your talking about some time in November or December. And so that is what you're kind of looking at. I would like to get this done hopefully by the end of the year and deal with your concerns. so that we can start construction as soon as possible.®

Commissioner Valencia - AJudge, you know I hope that this time we do not disregard the people that are working out there, Judge. I hope that this time we would be able to follow-up and finally do something with this building. I will guarantee you, Judge, if this does not happen Judge, I will make sure that all these people and elected officials and

County employees that work there, I am going to bring them over here and have you face each one of them. Because, I think it is important, and if you all do not think it is important Judge, you better think again.®

Judge Hinojosa - ANo, I believe it is extremely important, Commissioner. And I really do. And I am committed to getting this proposal together and working towards trying to get something started in the next couple of months.®

Judge Wise - AJudge, I just want to reemphasize, I know I have corresponded with yourself and other Commissioners here in the past of the dire need of the renovations that are needed, of course, and the expansion. I do not think that indeed, that building has been in existence in that shape that it is for over thirty (30) years. And I think if we can get a commitment that it would be addressed, you know, in the very near future, then I do not think there is a problem waiting another, you know, three (3) or four (4) months. But I do feel that it is a problem that needs to be addressed almost immediately.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAnd you have my commitment that we are going to start putting that together.®

Commissioner Valencia - AThank you, Judge.®

Judge Hinojosa - AI will be working closely with your office on that, Judge.®

Judge Wise - AThank you.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAlright, discussion, yes.®

Mr. Rudy Juarez, Computer Center Supervisor - AI listened carefully to what the Court was saying. But no where did I hear and I might of missed it, after reviewing the Agenda. I never heard anybody mention about the concerns of the Computer Center. Yet, the Internet was down as of last week. I am assuming...®

Commissioner Cascos - ARudy, as part of this discussion I am going to say something about the Computer Department. There are some other areas that I share some concerns with the Judge and Commissioners Benavides and Valencia and Garza. So we will take it in just a minute.®

Mr. Juarez - AOh, okay.®

Commissioner Cascos - AIn the proposal it looks fairly reasonable. You know, I just do not believe in targeting groups and giving them raises and not giving other groups raises. They should all be treated the same. I support the \$1,500.00 per employee. But, I believe it should be across the board to every employee in Cameron County, not just Road and Bridge. I think it applies to everybody. Number two (2) I do not see any positions here allocated to the Health Department, which means that they are either going to have to let people go, or they are going to have to curve their services at what was presented at that time. We are going to a new jail facility. We have nothing here for, that I can see, unless I missed it, for additional dispatchers. I have got some concerns regarding that. The shell game of transferring \$300,000.00 back over to Road and Bridge, you know, I think we ought to do the half cent back. It is not the same, okay.

Because next year it will be affected again and you will not be able to do that same transfer again. So, I think that we need to be doing that. If we cannot afford to do the \$1,500.00, which I think we can, by being able, the Judge used the magic word >being creative=. I do not see anywhere the reserve for the Bridge Revenue shortfall; unless it is going to be somewhere in there that it is a million less \$300,000.00. Is that what you want, Mark? The reserve or the whole amount?@

Mr. Yates - AWell what the Judge has stipulated, there is a million dollars of funds allocated to the Tobacco Funds that have been committed to the Capitol Project. This plan uses \$300,000.00 and moves it to Road and Bridge. We need \$700,000.00 as a reserve.@

Commissioner Cascos - ABut that reserve can be spent by the majority of the Court at any...?@

Judge Hinojosa - AHe is not going to allow you to spend it.@

Commissioner Cascos - AWell, but you know, when we got together and worked on this budget, the amount that you wanted to reserve for the shortfall was \$300,000.00.@

Mr. Yates - AI was okay with that, I agree.@

Commissioner Cascos - AOkay.@

Mr. Yates - AThe Tobacco Funds are for you all-s discretion to use.@

Commissioner Cascos - ARight and that is what my concern is, but back to this. In front of you I did a comparison of your options A, B, or C. I was not aware of this latest one and I really have not had the time to look at it real, real closely. However, on your budget proposal option B. And then I did a couple, using the fifteen (15) cents or twenty (20) cents toll rate, a ten (10) cents, fifteen (15) cents, just to see where we are with it. Judge, I think that we can fund \$1,500.00 for every employee in the County. I think that we can do that. It may require some adjustments in some of the things that you are proposing. But I have a very difficult time proposing, just targeting a selected group and giving them \$1,500.00, okay. I mean everybody that is at \$7.00 or \$7.50, you know, we need to take them up a little bit more. \$1,500.00 basically puts another seventy-five (75) cents or seventy-three (73) points something cents in their pocket, you know, per hour and not the \$7.50. You know, I am concerned with that. If the issue is that there is not support to raise the toll fees by more than the fifteen (15) cents and now a nickel to the pedestrians, we can still do about \$1,200.00 in increases for every employee in Cameron County. The proposal that you have in front and I will just read them to you real quick, you know, what I came up with. But, a part time clerk for the Bail Bond Board; one (1) position, Rudy it is only, you know, for the Computer Department; one (1) position for County Clerk; one (1) position for the District Clerk; one (1) position for the District Attorney-s Office; two (2) positions for the Tax Assessor Collector, two (2) positions for the M & O Courthouse; a deputy for Constable Precinct No. 1; a deputy and a half time secretary for Constable Precinct

No. 2; a full time deputy for Constable Precinct No. 3; a half time secretary for Constable Precinct No. 4; one (1) deputy and a part time secretary for Constable Precinct No. 5; one (1) deputy and a half time secretary for Constable Precinct No. 6; two (2) new dispatchers for the Sheriff's Department; and an allocation of \$170,000.00 for the Health Department to fill the positions that they need. If you look at my Option II, doing all that, of course, it does call for an increase in the toll rates of more than fifteen (15) cents; it calls for an extra nickel, and I think our employees are worth an extra nickel. And, then it also increases the pedestrians from a nickel to a dime. If you do that give the \$1,500.00 to all employees, we have a little deficit of \$3,049.00 that we can probably squeeze out somewhere. If the Court's position that we are locked into the toll rates. We may have to do some adjustments regarding the raises to all employees, instead of \$1,500.00 we may have to bump it down to \$1,250.00. I think to try and equalize some salaries, which is commendable; but we are waiting for the salary matrix, hopefully, by the end of February or March. That would be the time to look at the positions. Look at what the duties are for everybody and then try to equalize, at that point in time. But to do it this way I think we are going to get ourselves into a jam when the salary matrix comes out. My proposal to just increase every County employee by \$1,500.00, I think we can do it, Judge. It is going to take some sacrifices. My proposal also shows getting the half cent back into the Road and Bridge. It gives the half cent back to the Road and Bridge, it give the half cent back. Doing the \$300,000.00, I mean that is okay, but what about next year? We may not have those funds available to transfer back. I think if it is the same thing as you indicated, that it makes no difference, let's do the half cent, you know, back to Road and Bridge, so.®

Judge Hinojosa - Any other discussions.®

Commissioner Valencia - In your proposal, Commissioner, did I hear right that you want to lower the \$1,500.00 to \$1,250.00?®

Commissioner Cascos - No, in my proposal. I have never talked about targeting a group and giving them a raise without everybody else. So my position.®

Commissioner Valencia - My recommendation just a second ago was that I would like to see...®

Commissioner Cascos - Right, just the Road and Bridge.®

Commissioner Valencia - Right.®

Commissioner Cascos - I am taking it to another level. I am taking it to another level and doing \$1,500.00 across the board. If the Court wants to do \$1,500.00 to Road and Bridge and something different. If that is what you all think we can afford, you know, then that is another issue. But I just think to take a group and give an amount of money without looking at all our other County employees as well, it is just not fair.®

Judge Hinojosa - ALet me just suggest something, that it would be impossible for us to balance the Budget under your proposal. There is absolutely no way that we can do both things together. We cannot transfer a half a penny over to the Road and Bridge Program and allow Mark to book the revenues that are coming from the bridge without reserving out a significant portion of the Tobacco Funds and give a \$1,500.00 increase per employee, and balance the Budget. There is no way you can balance the Budget.®

Commissioner Cascos - AThat is not true, Judge.®

Judge Hinojosa - AOh, look at...®

Commissioner Cascos - ALook at column two (2), Judge.®

Judge Hinojosa - ABecause in all your proposals. All your proposals, you take the whole amount, you only reserve out \$300,000.00.®

Commissioner Cascos - AThat is correct, because that is the number that Mark conveyed to me that he would be comfortable in reserving for the bridge shortfalls. Is that not true?®

Mr. Yates - AYou conveyed \$300,000.00. You also trusted, in your revenues that you showed me, there is a ninety percent (90%) of the bridge increase.®

Commissioner Cascos - AWell there was \$300,000.00 or ten percent (10%) plus \$200,000.00 and I read it at \$300,000.00.®

Mr. Yates - AWhat we have.®

Judge Hinojosa - APlus, it does not include the half a penny transfer.®

Commissioner Cascos - AYes, it does.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWhere is it?®

Commissioner Cascos - AThe \$987,000.00 up above includes the reimbursement of the nickel back to Road and Bridge, as oppose to \$1,282,000.00 that you are proposing. So it is in there, Judge. Yes it does, Judge, it balances.®

Judge Hinojosa - AThis does not. This is a hocus pocus budgeting, man, it does not work.®

Commissioner Cascos - AJudge you are hilarious, but...®

Judge Hinojosa - AThis is the ultimate as what he calls >fiscally conservative=®

Commissioner Cascos - AWell you know Judge, had you been >fiscally conservative= we would be looking at another \$200,000.00 in interest income had you locked into that fixed rate, but we are not going to go there. But it does work, Judge. I am qualifying it, by saying that if we increase the tolls by twenty (20) cents instead of fifteen (15) cents, another nickel for our employees, instead of a nickel in pedestrians you do it a dime.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWe have never increased tolls by twenty (20) cents.®

Commissioner Cascos - ANo sir.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAnd we have not done it because it would be irresponsible for us to use up all available revenues that might be available for us in the future, in case we have another budget shortfall. The only place that we can go when we have a budget shortfall, like we have now, is the Toll Bridge System. And when we use it all up at one time we do not give ourselves many options down the road. That is the reason I believe it is a bad idea.®

Commissioner Cascos - ALet me ask of the Toll Bridge System, how much is in our surplus in toll bridge? Five million? Five point six million, four nine, tell me, give me a number?®

Mr. Yates - AIt looks like we have just over three (3) and a half to three (3) million dollars in cash.®

Commissioner Cascos - AOkay, that is not my question. What is our retained earnings number? I think it is about five (5).®

Mr. Yates - AThe retained earning is not necessarily spendable fund balance.®

Commissioner Cascos - ABut if you go back and look at the September 30, 2000, notes it is 1.4 million in cash and about another 2.4 million in investments.®

Mr. Yates - AThat is correct.®

Commissioner Cascos - AOkay. So what if we dipped into it? Nothing. So we would still have at least that amount available. Let me ask you another question, what is our fund balance in the General Fund?®

Mr. Yates - AAs of August 31ST, it was five (5) million dollars.®

Commissioner Cascos - AOkay, so Judge, we can.®

Judge Hinojosa - AA lot of that money is reserved up because of our bonds.®

Commissioner Cascos - ANo sir.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAnd we have a situation right now where we have all sorts of uncertainties out there. Why would we dip into the reserves at a time that would be the most precarious time to do it?®

Commissioner Cascos - AI am not talking about. We are talking about dipping \$300,000.00 in our reserves, Judge. But let me ask you, I have five (5) million dollars, how much of that fund is unreserved?®

Mr. Yates - AYou are asking me to speak impromptu.®

Commissioner Cascos - AI think all of it. I think all of it. At least in the Toll Bridge System we have money set aside already for bond reserves.®

Mr. Yates - AAs of September 30, 2000, we have three point ninety-nine (3.99) almost four (4) million dollars in fund balance in the General Fund. Now, typically we like to keep two (2) months of supply of funding. Now four (4)

million dollars is not. The two (2) months is usually equal to sixteen percent (16%) of our annual Budget. That is where the sixteen percent (16%) comes from. Four (4) million dollars is approximately forty (40) days.®

Commissioner Cascos - According to the audit report September 30, 2000, we had a year and a quarter of reserves in the Toll Bridge System. A year.®

Mr. Yates - A1.5, right.®

Commissioner Cascos - AA year 1.5, right a year .25 not sixty (60).®

Mr. Yates - AThat does not include, that is working capital to operate the Toll Bridge. Does not include...®

Commissioner Cascos - ARight if things were shut down we would still have, at the worst case scenario, we would still have.®

Mr. Yates - AThat is the Toll Bridge.®

Commissioner Cascos - AAll I am saying is that if the majority of the Court has the will to pay all our County employees and give them a fifteen (15) dollar raise, we can do it.®

Judge Hinojosa - AThat is absolutely, it is absolutely irresponsible to use \$700,000.00 of one time money for a pay increase that you are going to have to fund.®

Commissioner Cascos - AJudge, you are transferring \$300,000.00 of one time money to Road and Bridge. To satisfy.®

Judge Hinojosa - ARight, but it is not being used for pay increases. It is a half penny that needed to go over there. If anything is going to be used for salary increases, it is going to be the \$48,000.00 difference between the \$900.00 and the \$1,500.00 that is being proposed by Commissioner Valencia and Commissioner Benavides. It is quite a difference to have to make-up next budget cycle \$48,000.00, than to have to make-up \$700,000.00 on one time money, either that or you are going to cut the \$700,000.00 from the employees at one time.®

Commissioner Cascos - ATry making up the \$400,000.00 in lost interest income that we will anticipate this year, Judge.®

Judge Hinojosa - AOh, come on that is hocus pocus.®

Commissioner Cascos - ANo, no really, that is hocus pocus?®

Judge Hinojosa - AThe proposal, that whole discussion has already been completed. The Commissioners voted for one. To give it to the lowest bidder on the proposal.®

Commissioner Cascos - AJudge, I am not debating the issue of the Contract.®

Judge Hinojosa - ALet's talk about this Budget. You are proposing \$700,000.00 of one time money to be used to give pay increases. That means, that guarantees that next year we have to find the \$700,000.00, because that

\$700,000.00 will no longer be there. And, and you are putting Mark in the position of only having to reserve out \$300,000.00, at a time when we do not know what is going to happen in the bridge system. That is the ultimate in irresponsibility.®

Commissioner Cascos - AJudge, then your whole Budget proposal is irresponsible too, if there is that level of uncertainty. If we do not know what is going to happen then why are you proposing all of this? I think.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWell I think we have made amends to make sure that the County is absolutely fiscally protected in every sense of the word and our Budget allows us to do this. The Budget I am proposing allows us to do this.®

Commissioner Cascos - ASo then you are suggesting that we cannot even go to the \$1,250.00 to all employees? Is that what I am hearing?®

Judge Hinojosa - AI am suggesting that if you use one time money for a salary increase that is a very incorrect way of budgeting. You do not take one time money that you are not going to have anymore. Once we give out those \$700,000.00 and we add it to the salary of employees, next time around when we start putting together our budget, we have to go back and not only find \$700,000.00 to put into those salaries that we did not have in terms of additional revenues in this next fiscal year coming in. Plus whatever increases we are going to give next time around. How do you do that? How do you balance the Budget? That means, let's say that if we go back and we give a four percent (4%) increase next time or the equivalent we have to find 900 and, well it is actually going to be a lot larger than \$945,000.00 with the increase, because you have to incorporate \$900,000.00 increase, plus the other raise into that number and then you add the \$700,000.00. So, we are going to have to find in addition to the four percent (4%), or the total amount just to keep up with the four percent (4%) increase almost 1.8 million dollars, 1.7 million, 1.8 million dollars next year just to get the four percent (4%) of what we have. Where are we going to get that?®

Commissioner Cascos - AAs you said, we have always found a way to do it. We have construction cost, that are construction booming. There are other ways to do it, Judge.®

Judge Hinojosa - AThat is not the way you budget. That is not the way you budget.®

Commissioner Cascos - AThat is the way you have been budgeting for the last seven (7) years, Judge.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWell, we have never budgeted that way. Not since I have been around here.®

Commissioner Cascos - AEspecially, since you have been around here.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAlright.®

Commissioner Garza - ACan I say something?®

Commissioner Cascos - AYou are on.®

Judge Hinojosa - AYes.®

Commissioner Garza - AI find it really interesting that we get all the recommendations and proposals the day we have to approve this thing, you know. I mean, you would have imagined that I would have been able to sit at home at least one evening and if I had a question, been able to pick up the phone and called you with your recommendation. The same way with the other recommendations, you know. I mean here we are, we are recommending new positions, we are recommending change of salary structures. Everything in a one shot, ten (10), twenty (20) minutes agenda item, you know. What I got from the agenda that was posted was a one page or actually nothing, I just got an agenda item saying that we were going to talk about this stuff, but no recommendation, you know. In your Budget, Judge, you take under consideration the Tobacco Funds. That is what you are saying, right?®

Judge Hinojosa - AThe only thing we do, in my Budget, it was not used up at all. Now, Commissioner Valencia recommended for the Public Works crew people to go up to the \$1,500.00 so that. They can take whatever amount they have in their Budget and use that to pay for the additional \$600.00 above the \$900.00. But in my Budget, the way I initially recommended, none of the one (1) million tobacco money is used for current budgeting purposes.®

Commissioner Garza - AOkay.®

Commissioner Cascos - AExcept for the \$300,000.00.®

Judge Hinojosa - ANo, well the \$300,000.00 is transferred to the Road and Bridge to deal with the half a penny that was lost last time around. To make it up.®

Commissioner Garza - AAnd why can we not give them the half penny?®

Judge Hinojosa - ABecause you cannot balance the budget, if you do that. At the roll-back rate it does not work.®

Commissioner Garza - AIt will not work, Xavier?®

Mr. Villarreal - AWell, you could utilize the \$300,000.00 within the General Fund and shift the half penny. It comes out to pretty much the same thing.®

Commissioner Garza - AYes, but it would be a commitment from this Court to maintain that Road and Bridge Fund at the level where it used, not even where it used to be at.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWhat is he saying? Because if you are worried about the \$300,000.00.®

Commissioner Garza - AI am worried about the penny.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWell the half penny. We talked about the half penny. If you are worried about the half penny, what the half penny would have accumulated was about \$325,000.00.®

Mr. Villarreal - A\$388, So you could have utilized...®

Commissioner Cascos - A388,000.00.®

Judge Hinojosa - AOkay about \$388,000.00. So that would have accumulated over a year period, okay?@

Commissioner Garza - ARight, okay. That we lost this last year?@

Judge Hinojosa - ARight, that we lost. So we are going to add it back in there. Just as if the tax rate. Because we set it at that.@

Commissioner Garza - AYes, but why can we not add the half penny there?@

Judge Hinojosa - AWell, because then we would be using one time money in balancing this Budget which is the \$300,000.00. I would rather just send it over there. They have already got their Budget put together. It stays in there and it accumulates as part of their reserves. Now some of it is going to have to be dipped into to pay for the \$600.00 that Commissioner Valencia is asking for. The additional \$600.00 to pay for what Commissioner Valencia is asking for the Road and Bridge road crew members, but that is the extent of it. There is no other money being used for this Budget for day to day. It is just set aside over there, and if they need to dip into that reserve during the year they are going to come to us and ask us why it is so important to dip into it. But the tobacco money still stays out. And now it is being reserved, part of it is being reserved into the Road and Bridge Program.@

Commissioner Garza - ARight, but that budget is still a substantial deficit budget through this coming year, even if you add the \$300,000.00 you still have a substantial deficit budget.@

Judge Hinojosa - AWell, but I mean there is still going to be 1.2 million dollars left in the reserve. Even after you do everything this year, and so if you add the \$300,000.00 you are up to the 1.5, am I right?@

Commissioner Benavides - AJudge let me ask you, if we have to go back to ask for money for the buildings do we not have to have some kind of reserve cash so we can qualify for a better interest rate?@

Judge Hinojosa - ARight. And what they look at, from when we were up there, and Mark will tell you, when we were up there for the bond issue for the jail, they took all our reserves. They took all our reserves and they put them together and they told us we were doing good on our reserves and so, but because they counted the Tobacco money that we have reserved out.@

Commissioner Cascos - AHow much of that tobacco money back then were we showing as reserved, Mark?@

Mr. Yates - AAbout 2.3, at that time.@

Commissioner Cascos - AAt that time. So now we are going to be down about \$700,000.00?@

Mr. Yates - AThe difference between those two (2) plans you all are talking about is about \$400,000.00, and the toll bridge rate. That is the difference between the plans, your two (2) plans, and then where do you allocate your funds? That is essentially the difference between those two (2) plans, \$400,000.00 of Tobacco Funds, one time funds, should be worked out among the Road and Bridge or into General Fund.@

Commissioner Garza - AI have a real difficult time discriminating against employees or one (1) department and I support totally what you are saying about the \$1,500.00. But I think we ought to find a way to fund everybody \$1,500.00, and if it is utilizing. Commissioner Valencia I support the building in Harlingen 100%. The majority of the precinct that I have is probably in Harlingen. I know the need of that building. But you know that a building, I think we should fund through some lump sum, such as the Judge mentioned. I am committed to funding it that way. The mold is in San Benito, right now. We have San Benito, two (2) campuses that are full of mold and the Health Department.®

Commissioner Valencia - AHow come you did not.. (inaudible).®

Commissioner Garza - ANo, well no, it has been in the news, and I am talking about the school campuses. The Health Department probably has more molds in it.®

Commissioner Valencia - ABut not a County building that you know?®

Commissioner Garza - AWhat is that?®

Commissioner Valencia - ABut not a County building that you know?®

Commissioner Garza - AThe County building.®

Commissioner Valencia - AYou are talking about the County building?®

Commissioner Garza - AYes, if you go upstairs, you know, there are substantial problems up there with moisture, with birds. I have mentioned that to this Court before, you know. Really, I am ashamed that they have to work in that environment. Because the schools that are empty right now are clean, because they are being taken care of and cleaned out, disinfected because of the mold issue, compared to our Health Department, you know. Nothing against the Health Department people that are here. It is the condition that they have that they are working out of. The Harlingen building is Taj Mahal compared to that building in the condition. So you have total support, you know that we need to do something about those buildings. But again though, I still say that we still need. The people there are very cramped. There is no parking for them. It is just a very difficult situation, you know and they work very hard just like our Public Works people work very hard. Just like your staff works very hard. Just like everybody that works for this County works very hard, you know. And it would be very difficult for me to tell someone in your office, my office, or any one else's office that because they are not Public Works they are worth less to this County.®

Commissioner Valencia - AI do not think we are emphasizing that Commissioner.®

Commissioner Garza - AWell no, I am just saying that is what people will perceive.®

Judge Hinojosa - ABut, I do not think that we are going to do one without the other Commissioner. In other words I would not propose fixing up the Harlingen Annex without also fixing the Aguirre Building. I would suggest that we do them both at the same time. When we go for bond money we request proposals...®

Commissioner Valencia - AThat is fine with me, Judge. But like I said my concern is the Harlingen building and if there are other buildings that need to be renovated it is just something that we need to do and I will not object to it. Right now the biggest concern is the Harlingen building, because we have been waiting on this renovation for almost two (2) years, almost three (3) years. And, again the people that are working there are very concerned, and I am concerned with their health.®

Commissioner Garza - AAnd, I do not think the funds that are available through the Tobacco Funds are going to be used for that.®

Commissioner Valencia - AWell, maybe not Commissioner. But if there are other means that we will be able to fund this at this coming fiscal year, and that is what I want.®

Commissioner Garza - AI support that 100%.®

Commissioner Benavides - AAnd I will support any building that causes a health problem. Because we do have a problem in our Precinct Warehouse, also, you know that, right? So, I mean we have known this for a long time. Just so you can. What I want you to understand is that I am supporting any building that is dilapidated.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWe have a lot of buildings that are really important. We have fleas in the Port Isabel Building.®

Commissioner Benavides - AWe have asbestos in Precinct No 1, so.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWe have mice in the building in San Benito. We have fleas in the Port Isabel building.®

Commissioner Garza - ABirds.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWe have mold in the Harlingen Building.®

Audience - (inaudible)

Judge Hinojosa - AScorpions where? Okay.®

Commissioner Garza - ABut I still say that, you know, we should, if we can, somehow find monies to fund every employee \$1,500.00 increase, minimally \$1,250.00 across the board, minimally for everyone. I would support that, you know.®

Commissioner Valencia - AYou know Commissioners and Judge, I think that at the Road and Bridge people, the workers out there, they are the lowest paid out there in the whole County. And I know that every job in the County is important. I know that everybody needs to put food on their table for their families. But, again if we do not do this effort right now to increase the Road and Bridge personnel, when are we going to do it?®

Commissioner Garza - AI will support that.®

Commissioner Valencia - Alf we keep going, keep going until the next year and because we are just not consistent in being able to increase the people=s salary. Again, I am striving because I know there is a need for that.@

Commissioner Benavides - Al know this is the first time, Commissioner.... There have been times Commissioner, I know there have been good four percent (4%) and so forth. This is the first time that we draw attention to the >little guy=, you know. If that is all we can get now, maybe next year we can target another group, another...@

Judge Hinojosa - AWell that is the way we have always done it. We have always targeted a department because we cannot get everybody at the same time. We did it with the Deputy Sheriffs.@

Commissioner Cascos - ABut we can Judge. Judge.@

Judge Hinojosa - ANo we cannot do it responsibly.@

Commissioner Cascos - AJudge, we can. You know, how many Departments in Cameron County have >little guys=? How many Departments in Cameron County have people making \$7 an hour, or \$7 and now forty-three (43) cents an hour. It is not just Road and Bridge and I support them, that \$1,500.00, not a problem. But how many toll collectors that I saw on the salary schedules are making \$14,560.00? How many people in the Health Department have that kind of salary? Every single department in Cameron County, major departments, have people making \$14,560.00, plus now the gracious \$900.00. All I am proposing is that we treat everybody the same. That is it. That is all I am proposing.@

Commissioner Garza - AYou know, the other thing, I think I heard you mention Judge, the bridge going up five (5) cents.@

Judge Hinojosa - AOn the pedestrian and fifteen (15) cents on the toll.@

Commissioner Garza - AEven compared to the other bridges up and down the river, we are the lowest right now. Right? According to the schedule that we were given by.@

Judge Hinojosa - AB and M Bridge is at \$1.35.@

Mr. Villarreal - AAccording to the schedule.@

Commissioner Garza - AYes, but the rest of the Bridges that are owned by different people, up and down, all the way up to Eagle Pass.@

Judge Hinojosa - Alf you increase the toll too much, you impact the use of a bridge. I mean that has been the history in the past, and then you divert traffic over to a bridge that has a lower toll, and then that further decreases your revenues. You know, this is not a time to be increasing your tolls as big. Because you run out of room. You know you run out of room to be able to obtain more revenues when you have a budget shortfall because you have used up your entire ability to increase a toll. Once we get up to the \$1.60 rate then what is next, \$1.65, \$1.70, you know. We are not

going to be able to generate the revenues when we have these unexpected shortfalls, like we had in-house, Commissioners, and so forth. Alright.®

Commissioner Garza - ASo you're saying twenty (20) cents is too much to raise the toll to?®

Judge Hinojosa - AI believe, I believe that you will start running out of room at that point.®

Commissioner Garza - AWhich would bring it up, would be \$1.60 at twenty (20) cents?®

Commissioner Cascos - AThat is correct, well \$1.55.®

Judge Hinojosa - ANo, \$1.55?®

Commissioner Cascos - AHow much is it right now \$1.40, \$1.35?®

Judge Hinojosa - A\$1.40.®

Commissioner Cascos - A\$1.60.®

Commissioner Benavides - A\$1.65, fifteen (15) cents.®

Commissioner Garza - AI.60, \$1.60 would be, because we are paying \$2.00 coming back, right? And that is pretty much everywhere all across the border.®

Commissioner Cascos - ASo we are going from a \$1.40 to a \$1.55 versus going to \$1.60, and so the message that we are setting out a nickel is going to materially impact the crossings.®

Judge Hinojosa - ASo, are you saying? Let me ask you this.®

Commissioner Cascos - ANo Judge.®

Judge Hinojosa - ACommissioner will you vote for this Budget that I am proposing if we agree to take another nickel and add it to the toll bridge for vehicles, and add that additional amount to the employees across the board, yes or no?®

Commissioner Cascos - ANot yet Judge.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWell, no, no, no, because if you are willing to do that, I will agree to add the other. If you are willing to vote for this Budget, I will agree to add the other.®

Commissioner Cascos - AI still have some concerns regarding, we are not putting any folks, unless there is some secret out there that I am not aware of.®

Judge Hinojosa - AI will agree to the nickel increase on the toll if you agree to vote for the Budget.®

Commissioner Cascos - AHold on Judge. Well, this is not a tid for tad. But let me.®

Commissioner Garza - AA greed of two, Judge, and I will support you.®

Commissioner Cascos - AIn legal terms, qui pro quo, I think.®

Commissioner Garza - AAgreed of two here, No?®

Commissioner Cascos - ANo, wait a minute.®

Judge Hinojosa - AI have my Budget proposal that I have got on the table, okay.®

Commissioner Cascos - AWait a minute. What are we going to do, okay, with the Department like the Sheriff-s Office who are not getting any dispatchers, that they came and asked for three (3) for their new facility? We are not giving them any here. What are we going to do with the health department, that their request was something like \$94,000.00 and we are giving them zipo, nothing. How are we going to keep these services at the existing level?®

Judge Hinojosa - AHow do you pay for it? I mean, you cannot pay for it.®

Commissioner Cascos - AJudge, I am asking the question, that.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAlright, I will call the...®

Commissioner Cascos - ACan we just arbitrarily pick these things out, you know? I have a proposal here that kind of addresses most of your concerns. It really does. I mean there might be a few exceptions, but they are minor. But they are minor, Judge. Again, what do we tell these folks?®

Judge Hinojosa - AWe tell them that we proposed adding a nickel, but you did not want to. I will call the question.®

Commissioner Garza - ANo.®

Commissioner Cascos - AThat is not what I said, Judge. No, it is not what I said, Judge.®

Judge Hinojosa - AYou want this time, because of some reason, that everybody out there knows about, you all of a sudden decide to start approving pay raises. I have been here seven (7) years, you have only voted for a pay increase in the last six (6) years on a Budget one time, which was last year. Before that you abstained on every single Budget where there was a pay increase. All of a sudden this year you have made a decision.®

Commissioner Cascos - ABecause you are being unfair. You are still being unfair.®

Judge Hinojosa - ANo, no, no, every single year you have voted against a pay or you have not voted for a pay increase. And all of a sudden you're adding...®

Commissioner Cascos - AThat is not true.®

Judge Hinojosa - AYou are proposing adding Constables left and right. Every single time when we have brought up Deputy Constables to be given to the Constable-s Offices, what has he voted, no=. Every single time. All of a sudden they are listed out here. Every time he is asked for positions for every department here in the County, when we have asked for them he has voted no=. All of a sudden he is adding all these positions, you know, this is just a bunch of.®

Commissioner Cascos - AThat is not true, Judge. That is not true, Judge.®

Judge Hinojosa - AOkay, I will ask the question.®

Commissioner Garza - AWell, I have a concern with the half penny not going, Judge. You know, that is my concern with that, besides the \$1,500.00 per each employee.®

Judge Hinojosa - AYou want, if I add the nickel to this will we take care of this thing?®

Commissioner Garza - AWell, if you add the nickel, you know but there is a lot of positions that you are not funding.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWhat I am saying is, we cannot fund everything.®

Commissioner Garza - AYou are making some adjustments in salaries and they are not big amounts and I do not think, I am not saying that they are not deserving that they are not part or should not be part of that. But, you know, we have got a salary schedule being worked on. We have got, Grace has been working on this for six (6) months that I know of. We are looking at a matrix, you know. I mean, why can we not wait a month or two (2) until we get whatever recommendation that she is going to make and make those adjustments in those areas. Just to make sure that they are in line with what she is going to put together for us, in that regards.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWhich adjustments would you propose to exclude, Commissioner?®

Commissioner Garza - AWell, any adjustments you know, aside. In other words.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAre you proposing to exclude the increase of the Jailors to \$22,500.00?®

Commissioner Garza - ANo, sir.®

Judge Hinojosa - ASo you want that in there?®

Commissioner Garza - AYes.®

Commissioner Cascos - ABut they get taken care of with the \$1,500.00 raise though, Judge.®

Commissioner Garza - AYes, just the other, the minor changes that you have, Judge, okay.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWhich ones are those?®

Commissioner Garza - AThe Justices of the Peace-s staff though.®

Judge Hinojosa - ASo you propose to take out the increases?®

Commissioner Garza - AI did not say not to do them. I said wait until the salary schedule is done. See what the increase in pay that we give them now is.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWe have to do this Budget, now.®

Commissioner Garza - AI know, we have to do a budget now. But I would also like to see some more of the people that requested positions be given positions, you know. I mean especially the Health Department. Some more of the Constables, you know.®

Commissioner Cascos - ADo not forget Rudy. Where is Rudy?®

Commissioner Garza - AThe Computer Department. I mean the Tax Assessor Collector, we just went through an overtime situation with him or not overtime. What was it?@

Commissioner Cascos - AIt was overtime.@

Commissioner Garza - AWage an hour type situation, you know. It is evident that the need is there and we need to deal with it, you know.@

Judge Hinojosa - AIt does not generate enough money to do what you want to do. If you knock out.@

Commissioner Garza - AIt is small. I am not saying.@

Judge Hinojosa - AYes, if you knock out the increases for the Justices of the Peace=staff and the County Court at Law staff, which is really the only two adjustments that are not included, other than your detention center or the maintenance people. If you knock out really the two that you have talked about. Your talking about \$36,000.00 that does not fund one slot.@

Commissioner Garza - AYes, but we can use some of those Tobacco Funds. Especially if we have commitments to go out for the COs or GOs, what ever they are called, to fund.@

Judge Hinojosa - ABut you do not use COs or GOs to fund.@

Commissioner Garza - AFor the building process.@

Judge Hinojosa - ABut that has nothing to do with funding on going operations with one time money. So is it your proposal to take the one time money and use that to pick up all this other slots?@

Commissioner Garza - AYes.@

Judge Hinojosa - Inaudible

Commissioner Cascos - AYour being fiscally irresponsible, also.@

Judge Hinojosa - AHow can you respond?@

Commissioner Benavides - ALet me ask, Judge. If you go up one nickel on the proposed \$1.55/\$1.60, will that? My concern is what Commissioner Garza is saying, that we can give across the board \$1,500.00 I would like that.@

Judge Hinojosa - AIt would not go up to the \$1,500.00. But it would increase it.@

Commissioner Garza - AOr \$1,250.00?@

Judge Hinojosa - AIt would increase it to whatever it comes out to. You take, and I am willing to consider that, you take the \$945,000.00 and you add to that the equivalent of what the half a penny would generate. And then we give that across the board increase to all the employees. I will go with that. We can budget the nickel increase to go up to.@

Mr. Villarreal - AIn the auto, in the auto or in the pedestrians?@

Judge Hinojosa - AIn the auto. Go to the nickel increase in the auto and add it to the \$945,841.00 which would raise up the flat amount per employee to whatever.®

Commissioner Cascos - AHow much is it?®

Commissioner Garza - AAbout \$1,250.00.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAnd, I will accept that as a friendly amendment. If you want to.®

Commissioner Benavides - AYes, you know.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAlright.®

Commissioner Valencia - AI was here just a second ago while you were going to make an amendment on the?®

Judge Hinojosa - AOn my proposal. What Pete suggests is that we go up on the toll rate from \$1.55 to \$1.60. It goes from \$1.40 to \$1.60, and then you add that entire increase to employee salaries.®

Commissioner Benavides - AAcross the board.®

Commissioner Cascos - AI do not think it is going to get you the \$1,250.00 that you want.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWell, it gets you what it gets you.®

Commissioner Cascos - AWell, but you said \$1,250.00.®

Judge Hinojosa - AI did not say \$1,250.00.®

Commissioner Garza - ANo, I said maybe \$1,250.00.®

Commissioner Cascos - AWell, it is not going to get you the \$1,250.00.®

Commissioner Garza - AI want to. You are saying that we should not use the Tobacco Funds to fund Health Department employees.®

Judge Hinojosa - AI am saying that you should not use the Tobacco Funds to fund on going operations because Tobacco Funds are one time money. We are never going to get another allocation of Tobacco money. That is it.®

Commissioner Garza - AWell, no, I think that there is some more coming, is there not, Mark?®

Judge Hinojosa - ABut that is budgeted already.®

Commissioner Garza - AWhat is coming is budgeted already?®

Judge Hinojosa - AWhat they have sent us is a reimbursement amount?®

Mr. Yates - AYour answer is both yes=and no=. Yes we get Tobacco Funds, but the allocation annually is about anywhere between \$250,000.00 to \$270,000.00 a year. Now the 4.6 million allocation, which we use in our capitol project, was a one time allocation. Now the annual amount of Tobacco Funds reimbursement is in your revenues budget, already.®

Judge Hinojosa - Alt is already budgeted.®

Mr. Yates - ABut, the one time Tobacco Fund, we were talking about reserving them a week ago and using them for the Harlingen building. So there was not a plan for a reserve a week or so ago. But, increasing the toll rate to a certain amount does require some reserve. Now the two (2) plan difference between only talked about a \$400,000.00 difference. Now keep in mind our toll bridge rates, our Toll Bridge Funds have reserves for debt service, also, in addition. So our system has reserves for debt service the toll bridge. Now what comes into mind is, what we do next year?@

Judge Hinojosa - ABecause, because why?@

Mr. Yates - AWell there is two (2) different issues and both of you all have good points. But the problem is that you're building Road and Bridge Funds and making one time allocations and yet, next year there will be another problem.@ (Inaudible)

Judge Hinojosa - AThat is why I was hesitant to go the extra nickel on this thing. Because of the fact we use up all available revenues to be able to fund any shortfall next time around and I mean I do not know if that is a good idea. Even if you go to \$1.60 you take away the amount that you have available to be able to make up for shortfalls next time around. Even if you go up to \$1.60 you are cutting into a lot of our ability to have options available to us next time around. I do not know, we have to consider whether we want to go to the \$1.60, anyway.@

Commissioner Garza - AWhat does the Auditor? I want to ask a question. If we were to approve the budget and use up the Tobacco Funds, \$400,000.000 is what you keep coming up, right?@

Mr. Yates - AI said a difference between the two (2) plans. Right, well, if one plan uses them one plan does not or one plan uses some of it and one plan uses all of it.@

Judge Hinojosa - ANo, mine only transfers \$300,000.00 to the Road and Bridge Program.@

Commissioner Garza - ARight, which is some of it.@

Judge Hinojosa - AAnd the other one uses all of it.@

Commissioner Garza - AAll of it, Okay.@

Commissioner Cascos - ABut it reserves out \$300,000.00, of the plan that I have got. It shows \$1 million Tobacco Funds. It reserves out \$300,000.00, it also shifts out the half a penny to the Road and Bridge.@

Commissioner Garza - AOkay, would that put us in a bind next year if circumstances stayed the same as they are now?@

Commissioner Cascos - ASure.@

Mr. Yates - ABoth plans have a bond problem, Commissioner.@

Commissioner Garza - AIt is just a bigger bond or a smaller bond.@

Mr. Yates - ABoth plans have some inherited problems on both sides.®

Commissioner Cascos - AThat is a diplomatic way of putting it.®

Mr. Yates - AWell, yes it is. The Road and Bridge has some inherited problems in itself.®

Judge Hinojosa - AThat is if we go to the \$1.60.®

Mr. Yates - AWell, an anticipated year end fund balance is \$2.6 million. At year end next year, if everything occurs according to your Budget proposal, it would be at \$1.2 million. Now, increasing the tax rate at the Road and Bridge, creates an additional.... spin that would be there year, after year, after year. Taking a one time transfer, with one time funds have seen some problems. But, in addition you know using the one time funds also creates budget problems in the following year at the Road and Bridge Funds. I think both sides recognize that.®

Judge Hinojosa - AYes. I do not want to go the extra nickel. I think we need to be just prudent.®

Commissioner Benavides - AI want to know. My next question was how much does Hidalgo charge on the path?
I just want to compare that is all.®

Mr. Villarreal - AOn what?®

Commissioner Benavides - AHidalgo Bridges, how much are they charging?®

Mr. Pete Sepulveda - AFor automobiles it is \$1.50 and pedestrians twenty-five (25) cents.®

Commissioner Garza - AI do not think anybody is going to drive from here to Hidalgo to save ten (10) cents though. I mean.®

Commissioner Benavides - AYou would be surprised.®

Commissioner Cascos - APete would.®

Commissioner Garza - AYou would, Pete?®

Commissioner Benavides - ANo.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAlright anything else?®

Commissioner Valencia - AJudge I think we...®

Mr. Juarez - AMay I just briefly remind the Court that we do have a commitment to the 911 Interlocal Agreement on the Contract we entered into. To provide some human resources to keep up our end of the deal. If it is not the direction of the Court to provide it through General Fund services would you please provide me with some sort of commitment or direction as to how we should be able to look at that for the next fiscal year. And, also we have a commitment with the Criminal Justice Board for the electronic support disposition that we are also bound to provide some programming networks for them on the commitment that we would have had additional resources to make the programming efforts. We are almost there. You guys seem to let us have the hardware. We are getting the software. It

is just the human element that we are missing. So, I understand what your predicament is. It is not easy. I do feel that it is my obligation to remind the Court, at this time. Since it seems like it is the final time.®

Judge Hinojosa - AOkay. Thank you, Rudy. Anything else? Yes, constable.®

Captain Robert Lopez, Sheriff's Department - AI just wanted to remind you, if possible, we could use the Local Law Enforcement Grant to be able to hire one (1) dispatcher, at least. As you know our dispatching department.®

Judge Hinojosa - AI will propose that we add a dispatcher to the Local Law Enforcement Grant.®

Captain Lopez - AI do not have any debt there and the overtime just keeps piling up.®

Judge Hinojosa - AWe have got room for one more slot in that.®

Captain Lopez - AOkay, appreciate it.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAlright, anything else? Alright.®

Commissioner Garza - AHow about the Computer Department, Judge?®

Judge Hinojosa - AWhat he is saying, when their equipment comes into play and everything, we will need to fund that slot.®

Mr. Juarez - AThe equipment is being ordered.®

Judge Hinojosa - AYes, when that comes in. When all that, we will talk about it.®

Mr. Juarez - AThe cars are in the garage as we speak.®

Judge Hinojosa - AOkay.®

Commissioner Cascos - ASo, we are going to have to go at some point to surplus or to the Tobacco Fund to get to this position. Yes, Remi.®

Mr. Remi Garza, Administrative Assistant - AI am sorry, Judge one of the things we have been discussing is offering some of the rural services for some of the smaller communities. And that is a way that we have been discussing with Rudy to better generate some revenues and how to fund the slots.®

Judge Hinojosa - ATo fund it. I forgot about that.®

Mr. Garza - AAdditional funds to be utilized for those things. Just that he and I have not been able to sit down to finalize the number and once we do, we will approach; I think the City of Bayview and City of Combes have asked us to provide that service. If we can find an equitable way of providing it and bringing Interlocal Agreements to the Court.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAnything else? Alright. The proposal is at the \$1.55 automobile rate, which is the fifteen (15) cent increase. I am not going to accept the five (5) cents at this point, because I just don't think we can. I want to know what is going to happen this year and then once we can figure that out we can figure out what to do next year. Alright, all those in favor.®

Commissioner Garza - AWhat is the motion?@

Judge Hinojosa - AThe motion is to approve the proposal that I dictated into the record in past, I read.@

Commissioner Cascos - AWhich is, well it speaks for itself.@

Commissioner Garza - AOkay, and transferring the \$300,000.00?@

Judge Hinojosa - AAnd transferring the \$300,000.00.@

Commissioner Garza - ABut not committing the half penny?@

Judge Hinojosa - ABut not committing the half penny. Transferring the \$300,000.00, but not committing the half penny.@

Commissioner Cascos - AIt is not the right thing to do, guys.@

Commissioner Valencia - AJudge that is including the \$1,500.00 for the Road and Bridge employees?@

Judge Hinojosa - AYes, I accepted that amendment.@

Commissioner Garza - AAnd how about the rest of the employees. Will you accept my amendment for \$1,500.00, Judge?@

Judge Hinojosa - AI cannot balance that Budget right now.@

Commissioner Cascos - AWill you be able to do it tomorrow?@

Judge Hinojosa - AAlright.@

Commissioner Cascos - AWhat does right now mean? At this moment in time can we look at it?@

Judge Hinojosa - AYou cannot balance it in this Budget. Is what I am saying.@

Commissioner Benavides - AJudge, but the rest of the employees will get at least the \$900.00?@

Judge Hinojosa - ARight. Well a lot, some, like the jailors will go up to \$22,500.00.@

Commissioner Cascos - AYes, the jailors are getting \$1,800.00 and some odd dollars. I mean we are picking folks out. Road and Bridge \$1,500.00 everybody else \$900.00. That is the essence of this Budget. We are not transferring the nickel, we are not reimbursing the, I keep saying nickel, the half cent back to Road and Bridge. We are using one time monies to make this transfer to the Road and Bridge system. We are going to have the same dilemma next year, if that is the concern. And, we are also not funding anything in the Sheriff-s Office, Health Department, and the other departments that are in here. I cannot support this Budget, Judge.@

Judge Hinojosa - AWhat is new? Anything else? Alright all those in favor.@

Commissioner Valencia - AI just want to make sure, Judge, again I keep insisting again that the County building is our first priority.@

Judge Hinojosa - AYou have my commitment on that.@

Commissioner Valencia - AOkay.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAll those in favor signify by stating aye.®

Commissioners Benavides and Valencia - AAye.®

Commissioners Cascos and Garza - ANay.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAlright motion carries.®

Commissioner Garza - ABased only on the fact that every employee is not treated equally. That is it.®

Mr. Doug Wright, Commissioners= Court Legal Counsel - AYou need to have a recorded vote on this.®

Commissioner Valencia - ASo you are voting against the Road and Bridge?®

Commissioner Garza - ANo, I am voting against the Budget as presented. Not the Road and Bridge. But I wanted every employee to be treated equally, in the County. I support.®

Commissioner Valencia - ANo, when you are not supporting the Budget. That means you are not approving the Road and Bridge increase.®

Commissioner Garza - AUnfortunately, I do not have Line Item Veto. I have to vote on it together, you know.®

Commissioner Valencia - AWell, but it still includes the Road and Bridge.®

Commissioner Garza - AI support Road and Bridge at \$1,500.00, but I support everyone else at \$1,500.00.®

Commissioner Cascos - AIs there anything inappropriate in voting for the Road and Bridge the way it is. I know because.®

Commissioner Garza - ANo it is. Yes.®

Commissioner Cascos - AI still think that the half a cent needs to be put back and not this \$300,000.00, so.®

Commissioner Garza - AI did not abstain.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAlright, the Aye votes were Commissioner Valencia and myself, and Commissioner Benavides. The nay votes are Commissioner Garza and Commissioner Cascos, alright.®

Commissioner Garza - AWith that stipulation in the Minutes, please.®

Judge Hinojosa - AAlright, my motion carries.®

The Budget Reports are as follow:

(6) POSSIBLE ACTION SETTING OF THE TOLL RATES FOR CAMERON COUNTY INTERNATIONAL TOLL BRIDGE SYSTEM FOR THE 2001-2002 FISCAL YEAR, COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2001

Upon motion by Commissioner Valencia, seconded by Commissioner Garza and carried unanimously, the toll rates for the Cameron County International Toll Bridge System for the 2001-2002 Fiscal Year were increased by fifteen (15) cent for automobiles to the amount of \$1.55, and the pedestrians rate by five (5) cents, commencing October 1, 2001.

(8) ACTION SETTING THE TAX RATE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2001-2002 AT \$0.340536 PER EVERY \$100.00 VALUATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ATTACHED ORDER FOR TAX RATE

Upon motion by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Valencia and carried unanimously, the tax rate for the Fiscal Year 2001-2002 was set at \$0.340536 per every \$100.00 valuation, in accordance with the attached Order for tax rate, as recommended by the County Budget Officer.

The Order is as follows:

[REDACTED]

(11) **ADOPTION OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENT POLICY
FOR THE INSTALLATION OF STREET LIGHTS
ON ROADS IN CAMERON COUNTY**

At this time, Mr. Juan Bernal, County Engineer-Public Works Director, recommended that the payment of the installation of street lights. He stated that seventy-five percent (75%) would be paid by the residents and twenty-five percent (25%) by the County, and suggested that it should be paid directly to Central Power and Light, to avoid assuming responsibility of payments.

Judge Hinojosa stated that the residents of Cameron Park would be responsible for \$1.20 per month in terms of assessment for the construction and an additional \$2.00 per month for five (5) years, for a total of \$15.00 per year according to the special assessment, adding that the electricity consumption would be an additional cost.

Father Albert, Cameron Park Representative, stated that Cameron Park was the biggest colonia in Cameron County and that the total cost for the installation of street lights would be approximately \$60,000.00. He expressed his concern regarding the modification of the policy and questioned whether it would prevent the possibility of obtaining other fund resources.

Judge Hinojosa clarified that it would not preclude from obtaining assistance through other funding sources and that the cost per month could be lower according to the total cost of installation.

Commissioner Garza questioned whether the policy would pertain to all existing subdivisions and colonias regardless of the size.

Mr. Bernal responded that the policy would apply to existing subdivisions, noting that new subdivisions had street lights.

Commissioner Garza moved that the Special Assessment Policy for the installation of street lights on roads in Cameron County, be adopted.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cascos and carried unanimously.

The Policy is as follows:

(14) AUTHORIZATION TO SELECT A SURVEYOR FOR SURVEYING SERVICES RELATIVE TO CALIFORNIA ROAD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

Commissioner Garza moved that Castillo and Associates be selected for Surveying Services relative to California Road Bridge replacement, at an estimated cost of \$900.00, upon recommendation of the County Engineer.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Benavides and carried unanimously.

(15) AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT PARCELS NO. 9, NO. 10, AND NO. 12, OLD ALICE ROAD

Commissioner Benavides moved that the Parcels No. 9, No. 10, and No. 12, Old Alice Road, be accepted into the County Road System.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Valencia and carried unanimously.

(16) AUTHORIZATION TO ADJUST EQUIPMENT OPERATOR SALARIES IN SEVEN (7) SLOTS IN THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Commissioner Benavides moved that the adjustment of the equipment operator-s salaries in seven (7) slots in the Public Works Department, be approved.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Valencia.

Mr. Xavier Villarreal, Budget Officer, questioned whether the request was in addition to the \$1,500.00 pay increase.

Mr. Juan Bernal, County Engineer-Public Works Director, responded in the affirmative and added that the matter pertained to seven (7) slots that had been overlooked.

Upon motion duly made by Commissioner Benavides, seconded by Commissioner Valencia and carried unanimously, the adjustments of the equipment operator-s salaries in seven (7) slots in the Public Works Department were approved.

The Adjustments are as follow:

**(17) AUTHORIZATION TO APPROVE CHANGE
ORDER FOR THE ADULT PROBATION OFFICE**

Mr. Juan Bernal, County Engineer-Public Works Director, reported that the modification consisted of converting a computer room to an interview room.

Commissioner Valencia moved that the Change Order for the Adult Probation Office, be approved.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Garza and carried unanimously.

The Change Order is as follows:

(19) AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH BARREDA APPRAISAL SERVICE FOR APPRAISAL OF CERTAIN PROPERTY, PURSUANT TO THE LAGUNA HEIGHTS DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Commissioner Garza moved that the Contract with Barreda Appraisal Service, Brownsville, for appraisal of certain property, pursuant to the Laguna Heights Drainage Improvement Project, be approved.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Benavides and carried unanimously.

The Contract is as follows:

(20) APPROVAL OF ADDENDUM TO OWNER AND ARCHITECT AGREEMENT BETWEEN CAMERON COUNTY AND GOMEZ, MENDEZ, SAENZ INC., DATED OCTOBER 3, 2000, FOR DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SHERIFF'S SUBSTATION IN THE CAMERON PARK SUBDIVISION

Commissioner Valencia moved that the Addendum to Owner and Architect Agreement between Cameron County and Gomez, Mendez, Saenz Inc., dated October 3, 2000, for design and development of a Sheriff's Substation in the Cameron Park Subdivision, be approved.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Garza and carried unanimously.

The Agreement is as follows:

(21) APPROVAL TO SUBMIT A GRANT ACCEPTANCE NOTICE FOR \$73,000.00 IN SUPPORT OF UNIDOS PODEMOS DATA, GRANT AND EVALUATION CENTER

Commissioner Garza moved that the Grant Acceptance Notice, in the amount of \$73,000.00, in support of Unidos Podemos Data, Grant and Evaluation Center, be submitted.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cascos and carried unanimously.

The Notice is as follows:

(22) AUTHORIZATION FOR A ROAD NUMBER SYSTEM FOR THE RURAL ADDRESSING PROGRAM

Mr. Juan Bernal, County Engineer-Public Works Director, recommended that the County use three (3) digit numbers, and reported that Mr. Rigo Davila, CIS Coordinator, had suggested using four (4) digits instead, but that four digits would be confusing and hard to memorize.

Commissioner Cascos explained that it was his understanding that the intent of the first number, of the four (4) digits, was to identify the corresponding precinct.

Mr. Davila stated that the four (4) digits would assist said process and that a data base had been developed.

Captain Robert Lopez, Sheriff's Department, stated that the matter of identifying the precinct could assist the dispatchers.

Commissioner Valencia moved that the three (3) digits Road Number System for the Rural Addressing Program be approved, as recommended by the County Engineer.

The motion was seconded by Judge Hinojosa and carried as follows:

AYE: Commissioners Benavides, Valencia and Judge Hinojosa,

NAY: Commissioners Cascos and Garza.

(23) AUTHORIZATION FOR MR. ARNIE OLIVAREZ REPRESENTING INSURANCE ASSOCIATES, TO COUNTY EMPLOYEES

Mr. Manny Villarreal, Personnel Director, explained that the open enrollment had been approved by the Court and that the item pertained to the approval of their products to be sold.

Commissioner Garza stated that the products were already being sold.

Commissioner Valencia moved that Mr. Arnie Olivarez, representing Insurance Associates, be approved to sell the products to the County Employees.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cascos and carried unanimously.

(24) AUTHORIZATION TO IMPOSE AS \$5.00 RESTORATION FEE FOR FILING PUBLIC DOCUMENTS IN THE COUNTY CLERK-S OFFICE, AS PER HOUSE BILL NO. 370, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2001

Upon motion by Commissioner Cascos, seconded by Commissioner Benavides and carried unanimously, the County Clerk was authorized to impose a \$5.00 Restoration Fee for filing public documents in the County Clerk-s Office, as per House Bill No. 370, effective October 1, 2001.

The Order is as follows:

CONSENT ITEMS

ALL ITEMS UNDER THE CONSENT AGENDA ARE HEARD COLLECTIVELY UNLESS OPPOSITION IS PRESENTED, IN WHICH CASE THE CONTESTED ITEM WILL BE CONSIDERED, DISCUSSED, AND APPROPRIATE ACTION TAKEN SEPARATELY.

Upon motion by Commissioner Valencia, seconded by Commissioner Garza and carried unanimously, the following AConsent@ Agenda Items were approved:

- (25) APPROVAL OF COUNTY CLAIMS;
- (26) RESOLUTION CONDEMNING VIGILANTES AND ACTS OF HATE CRIMES;
The Resolution follows:
- (27) ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO OMNISTAR DGPS NORTH AMERICA DATA FOR GPS RECEIVER S/N NO. 395952 AND ADD S/N NO. 415910;
- (28) FINAL APPROVAL:
 - a) Precinct No. 3 - Lazy Palms Subdivision Phase I - Being a 27.236 Acre Tract of land, more or less, being 26.431 Acres out of Block No. 1 and 0.805 Acres out of Block No. 2, F.Z. Bishop Subdivision on L.W. and W.T. Campbell Lands.
- (29) OPEN THE FOLLOWING BIDS/PROPOSALS:
 - a) Defibrillators - RFP No. 010801;
 - b) Office Furniture - Annual Bid No. 0420;
 - c) Food: Pan Dulce - Annual Bid No. 2200;
 - d) Food: Milk - Annual Bid No. 2180;
 - e) Food: Eggs - Annual Bid No. 2160; and
 - f) Physician Services - Sexually Transmitted Diseases - Annual RFQ No. 010902 and approval of evaluation Committee.The Bid Tabulations follow:
- (30) AWARD THE FOLLOWING BIDS/PROPOSALS:
 - a) Paper: Recycled Print Shop and Copier and Envelope - Annual Bid No. 2460.
GULF COAST PAPER, Brownsville, Texas.
Total - Category:
A - Recycled Bond Paper -\$28,425.60
XPEDX, San Antonio, Texas.
Total - Category:
B - \$1,250.00
C - \$5,911.50
D - \$2,806.45
E - \$7,845.25

- (31) **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) FOR THE JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM BETWEEN CAMERON COUNTY AND THE TEN (10) INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT IN CAMERON COUNTY.**
The Memorandum follows:

TRAVEL ITEMS

- (32) **AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL/OR APPROVAL OF TRAVEL EXPENSE FOR THE FOLLOWING (PLEASE NOTE: TRAVEL REQUESTS ARE SUBJECT TO ALL APPLICABLE COUNTY POLICIES):**
- a) Juvenile employee to attend the AFirst Hispanic/Latino Action Network and Leadership Development Summit to Address Underage Tobacco Use@, in Washington, D. C., September 26, October 1, 2001;
 - b) Six (6) Juvenile employees to attend the ARegion One Legal Conference@, in Washington, D. C., October 6-9, 2001;
 - c) Two (2) Juvenile employees to attend the ARegion One Legal Conference@, in Edinburg, Texas, October 9-10, 2001;
 - d) Four (4) Juvenile employees to attend the AExcelling as a First Time Manager Supervisor@, in McAllen, Texas, September 28, 2001;
 - e) Two (2) Juvenile employees to attend the ATitle IV-E Basic Training@, in Austin, Texas, September 28, 2001;
 - f) Two (2) Tax Automobile Crimes Enforcement employees to attend the ATexas Department of Public Safety Motor Vehicle Theft Service Specialized Auto Theft School@, in Austin, Texas, October 1-5, 2001;
 - g) District Clerk and Four (4) employees to attend the ACounty and District Clerk=s Region 8 Conference@, in Laredo, Texas, October 3-5, 2001;
 - h) County Court at Law No. 2 Coordinator to attend the A25th Annual Education Conference@, in San Antonio, Texas, October 23-26, 2001; and
 - i) Unit Tactical Intelligent Agent to attend the AFederal Law Enforcement Analysis Training@, in Quantico, Virginia, October 11-15, 2001.

- (26) **RESOLUTION CONDEMNING VIGILANTES AND ACTS OF HATE CRIMES.**
The Resolution is as follows:

(29) OPEN THE FOLLOWING BIDS/PROPOSALS:

- a) Defibrillators: RFP No. 010801;**
- b) Office Furniture - Annual Bid No. 0420;**
- c) Food: Pan Dulce - Annual Bid No. 2200;**
- d) Food: Milk - Annual Bid No. 2180;**
- e) Food: Eggs - Annual Bid No. 2160; and**
- f) Physician Services - Sexually Transmitted Diseases - Annual RFQ No. 010902 and approval of evaluation Committee.**

The Bid Tabulations are as follow:

- (31) **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) FOR THE JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM BETWEEN CAMERON COUNTY AND THE TEN (10) INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN CAMERON COUNTY.**
The Memorandum is as follows:

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(33) EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Upon motion by Commissioner Valencia, seconded by Commissioner Benavides and carried unanimously, the Court met in Executive Session at 8:02 P.M. to discuss the following matters:

- a) Confer with Commissioners= Court Legal Counsel concerning the case styled Jorge Vallejo versus Cameron County, No. 2000-11-004512-B, in the 138th District Court-Brownsville, for discussion and settlement authorization; pursuant to Vernon Texas Code Annotated (V.T.C.A.), Government Code, Section 551.07 (1) (A) and (B); and
- b) Confer with Commissioners= Court Legal Counsel concerning the case styled Edward Alcala versus Alex Perez, et. al., Civil Action No. B-96-203, in the United States District Court-Brownsville, for discussion and authorization of settlement; pursuant to Vernon Texas Code Annotated (V.T.C.A.), Government Code, Section 551.071 (1) (A) and (B).

Upon motion by Commissioner Garza, seconded by Commissioner Valencia and carried unanimously, the Court reconvened in Regular Session at 8:14 P.M.

(34) ACTION RELATIVE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- a) **Confer with Commissioners= Court Legal Counsel concerning the case styled Jorge Vallejo versus Cameron County, No. 2000-11-004512-B, in the 138th District Court-Brownsville, for discussion and settlement authorization.**
- b) **Confer with Commissioners= Court Legal Counsel concerning the case styled Edward Alcala versus Alex Perez, et. al., Civil Action No. B-96-203, in the United States District Court-Brownsville, for discussion and authorization of settlement.**

Commissioner Garza moved that the recommendations by Commissioners= Court Legal Counsel be approved concerning the cases styled Jorge Vallejo versus Cameron County, No. 2000-11-004512-B, in the 138th District Court and Edward Alcala versus Alex Perez, et. al., Civil Action No. B-96-203, in the United State District Court.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Valencia and carried unanimously.

(7) **ADOPTION OF THE BUDGETS FOR THE CAMERON COUNTY GENERAL FUND, CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDS, INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS, COURTHOUSE SECURITY FUND, THE SPECIAL ROAD AND BRIDGE FUND, THE LATERAL ROADS, THE LAW LIBRARY FUND, THE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FUNDS, THE CHILD SUPPORT FUNDS, THE FIFTH JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION FUNDS, THE PARKS SYSTEM FUNDS, THE AIRPORT FUNDS, AND THE DRUG FORFEITURE FUNDS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2001-2002**

At this time, Mr. Doug Wright, Commissioners- Court Legal Counsel, stated that there needed to be a clear record of the total amount, verbally or in writing, of the total approved budget.

Mr. Xavier Villarreal, Budget Officer, stated the total amount was \$41,203,700.00.

Judge Hinojosa stated that amount included the proposed Budget by the Budget Officer and the Items he had submitted for the record, plus the \$7,623,931.00 for the Road and Bridge Funds.

Commissioner Cascos stated that the total for all departments had to be included.

Judge Hinojosa clarified that all totals were included in the documents presented for the record.

Mr. Wright stated that the amendment was to the document he presented and that the Judge-s amendment included the \$7,623,931.00.

The Budget is as follows:

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There being no further business to come before the Court, upon motion by Commissioner Garza seconded by Commissioner Valencia and carried unanimously, the meeting was **ADJOURNED** at 8:18 P. M.

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APPROVED this 13th day of November, 2001.

████████████████████

GILBERTO HINOJOSA
COUNTY JUDGE

ATTEST:

JOE G. RIVERA
COUNTY CLERK AND EX-OFFICIO CLERK
OF THE COMMISSIONERS' COURT OF
CAMERON COUNTY, TEXAS.