

The Bandera PROPHEET

July 14, 2021

Briefings from Commissioners' Court

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The Bandera Prophet

During their regular meeting last Thursday, commissioners recognized the Bandera County Historical Commission for receiving the Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Historical Commission for accomplishments in 2020. No small feat, Judge Richard Evans said, the Bandera County commission was chosen from among 254 counties in the state.

“We continued to work throughout 2020 despite the pandemic,” Rebecca Norton said, listing some of the many projects they completed. “We took advantage of the time that we were all shut down to move the commission’s archival holdings to the Frontier Times Museum to make them more accessible...we continued to identify and recognize historical buildings throughout the county to preserve and save them. We’re honored that we continue to be recognized.”

In Other Business

Commissioners approved an agreement between Bandera and Medina Counties for the repair and installation of culverts at the Old Castroville Road crossing, just before Holiday Villages. The total cost of the project is \$42,630, which will be divided in half between the two counties. Bandera County Human Resource Director Sharon Dowda said the county Road and Bridge Department was having a difficult time bringing in applicants with a Class A CDL. She recommended changing two of the six open positions to Class B CDL.

“Hopefully we can get a few more applicants because they’re so short-handed right now,” Dowda said.

Road Superintendent John Andrade said the difference between the classes is weight, and a driver with a Class B CDL can operate just about any vehicle in the fleet.

Broken Boiler

Commissioners postponed action on repairing the broken boiler at the Jail and Justice Center until their next regular meeting.

At the beginning of May, an internal leak was discovered and the drain line was running almost full strength, Sheriff Dan Butts said. Alamo Boiler of San Antonio set up a temporary boiler on a trailer outside of the boiler room.

If the boiler doesn't work, the jail would have to be vacated and the inmates would have to be housed elsewhere, Evans said, a proposition that would not be cost-effective.

Butts said setting up the temporary boiler and one month's rent cost \$17,000; an additional month will cost \$4,000. He received bids to replace the original boiler from Alamo Boiler and Clark Kent Plumbing in Austin - both of which included several different options.

"It's like chasing cats to get apples to apples for the repair and replacement," Butts said.

Commissioners agreed to postpone action and ask for more information from both companies.

"We're going to ask more questions," Butts said, adding he would ask for a complete write-up and similar specs.

Cost of Living Salary Increases

Commissioners were divided on whether to approve a proposed COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) for both county employees and elected officials.

"Our crystal ball is pretty foggy right now," Evans said. "We have to remember that some people didn't have a job for a year and cannot pay their taxes or utilities. We have to be aware that the people who pay this may not have an ability to pay...I think we're very fortunate that elected

officials and employees were able to have their salaries without interruption.”

Bandera County has 215 employees with an average annual salary of \$36,000, Pct. 2 Commissioner Bobby Harris estimated. A 1-percent COLA equates to about \$20 per month, he said.

After some back and forth discussion, commissioners approved a proposed 2-percent COLA for county employees and elected officials, with Pct. 3 Commissioner Jack Moseley opposed.

“My only problem is 2 percent for elected officials,” Moseley said, making a motion to not give a proposed COLA for elected officials. His motion died for lack of a second.

Harris made a motion proposing a 1 percent COLA for elected officials, which Pct. 4 Commissioner Jordan Rutherford seconded. The motion carried with Moseley opposed.

The total proposed salary increases range from \$361 for commissioners in precincts 2, 3 and 4; \$481 for commissioner in precinct 1; \$624 for the county judge; \$631 for county clerk, district clerk and county treasurer; \$571 for county tax assessor/collector; \$954 for county attorney; \$436 for justice of the peace in precincts 1 and 4; \$376 for justice of the peace in precincts 2 and 3; \$382 for constable in precinct 1; \$366 for constable in precinct 2; \$426 for constables in precincts 3 and 4; and \$3,757 for sheriff.

Commissioners also proposed all law enforcement officials would be eligible to receive \$1,000 for each certificate level.

A public hearing will be held on Aug. 12, at 10 a.m. If approved, the new pay will be effective Oct. 1.