

Greene County Commission Tax Vote

August 28, 2017

1 p.m.

Public Safety Center Training Room

330 West Scott Street

Commissioners present: Presiding Commissioner Bob Cirtin, Dist. 1 Commissioner Harold Bengsch, Dist. 2 Commissioner Lincoln Hough

Commissioner Cirtin opened the meeting at 1 p.m.

Discussion from all three Commissioners on the need for General Revenue Tax

Each commissioner made a statement before the vote took place.

Commissioner Cirtin expressed his position that a one-half cent general revenue sales tax was necessary based on findings in several studies and reports over the years. He stated that the sales tax is not just needed to support law enforcement services, but to cover other needs of the county, as well. He cited the following: the 2003 and 2005 Kalminoff Reports, the Citizens Oversight Committee of the Greene County Sheriff's Office, the Joint City-County Task Force, Greene County Safety and Justice Roundtable, Jail Study by Consultant Bill Garnos, Financial Advisory Task Force, and the Facility Analysis by nForm Architecture.

Commissioner Bengsch stated that the studies have shown very clearly the needs of Green County. He noted that a general revenue sales tax has not been brought before Greene County voters since 1988. He thanked law enforcement and acknowledged their needs. He noted that General Revenue office holders and employees have had to work with less staff and old equipment for many years, all while increasing the level of service provided to citizens. He expressed his appreciation to Greene County staff for this accomplishment and said that now there is a great need to move forward as a community.

Commissioner Hough noted that Greene County has one of the most open and transparent budget models he has seen. He said the Commission has a responsibility to find a proper balance of which community priorities are to be funded. He referred to the plan he proposed last week, involving a three-eighths sales tax instead of a one-half-cent sales tax. He shared data on the impact of diverting inmates to services instead of incarceration. He advised against a focus on incarceration and noted a need instead of more community-based services such as diversion and intervention.

County Administrator Chris Coulter thanked the County Commission, Sheriff Jim Arnott, Chief Paul Williams, the City of Springfield, and Chamber of Commerce President Matt Morrow for their contribution to working toward a solution. He noted that this vote is very important for Greene County and for the region, as well.

There were no public comments.

Motion by Commissioner Hough:

“Motion for a three-eighths of one cent to be placed on the ballot this year for the November election.”

Failed for a lack of second

Motion by Commissioner Cirtin:

“Motion to approve an order of the Greene County Commission to propose a one-half of one percent county-wide general sales tax on the ballot at the November 7, 2017 election and shall contain the following language: Shall the County of Greene impose a county-wide sales tax of one-half of one percent for the purpose of General Revenue?”

Commissioner Bengsch seconded the motion

Vote: Commissioner Cirtin: Yes

Commissioner Bengsch: Yes

Commissioner Hough: No

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 PM.