

The budget process for FY2013 starts very soon and I felt I owed you an explanation of my thoughts and the direction I believe we must go. Budgeting is never an easy process, but at some point, the Board must recognize the need to address specific issues effecting both the County infrastructure and needs of the tax base.

Briefly, the past process required all departments to submit their budget request based on potential revenue. Then the budget department took the forecasted revenue and compared it to the sum of the budgets requested. Budget cuts occurred if the requests outran the revenue. The BOS provided little or no priority of direction or failed to agree on any specific direction.

This year I propose a different approach. This approach requires BOS priority setting prior to beginning the budget work and addressing the County needs based on today's requirements, not those of the past. While normal in most budgeting processes, it is a new concept for Hinds County.

In my viewpoint, the first step in this process requires the individual Board members to list their priorities for the upcoming year for both the County and their respective Districts. I believe a majority of the Supervisors will list similar goals, giving us the first set of priorities to work.

Next, we appoint two Board members to serve as a "ways and means" committee to determine funding possibilities and recommend the way ahead in executing those priorities. Starting with these two steps establishes measuring points of success while showing the taxpayer visible progress with their tax dollar.

My County - wide priorities include.

1. Establishing a surplus and add to it over the next four years to reach 10% of the projected revenue. With \$250,000 already set aside and requiring a super majority to spend, I propose an additional \$1,000,000 in FY 13 and grow by \$1,000,000 each year of this term.
2. A return of the .58 mil (\$585,000) taken from the Public Works Department in the 2008 budget and designate it for paving in the unincorporated County.
3. Increase the amount allotted to the Economic Development Department by .5 mils, creating a Capitol Funds Budget.
4. Review of the County's buildings and budget a responsible amount for maintenance.
5. Establish a rebate to municipalities, based on population as listed in the chart below - total \$695,000. All rebates paid directly to the Mayor of the City on April 1 of each year with the use of the funds determined by the governing body of that City. This allows incorporated communities to recapture some of their County tax dollars for use within their City limits.

City	Pop 2010 Census	Amount
Jackson	172,891	\$500,000
Clinton	25,216	\$100,000
Raymond	1,933	\$10,000

Terry	1,063	\$10,000
Edwards	1,034	\$10,000
Bolton	567	\$5,000
Utica	820	5,000
Learned	94	\$5,000
Byram	11,489	50,000
Total		695,000

Population greater than 100,001 receive \$500,000
Population less than 100,000 but greater than \$50,001 receive \$250,000
Population less than 50,000 but greater than 25,001 receive \$100,000
Population less than 25,000 but greater than 10,001 receive \$50,000
Population less than 10,000 but greater than 1,0001 receive \$10,000
Population less than 1,000 receives \$5,000

6. Review of the County’s technology and provide recourses to upgrade/improve.
7. Add \$10,000 to the Hind County Livestock Association budget – one of the few County organizations helping kids grow into productive adults.
8. Continue working on the construction of the Norrell-Byram Parkway.
9. Work to provide Kiosks, located throughout the County, for the purchase of car tag stickers and payment of taxes – eliminating the need to go to the Tax Collectors Office in Jackson or Raymond.
10. Work with all those in Hinds County to improve the quality of life and improve Hinds County’s appearance/image.

My District priorities include:

1. Paving of unincorporated District 4 roads based on a worst to best scale as determined by the Public Works Department from the \$585,000 mentioned earlier.
2. In conjunction with Raymond, develop a walking trail around Mid Point Park leading to Raymond.
3. Provide money for a parks and recreation study for the City of Byram.
4. Assist the City of Clinton in the establishment and continuation of bicycle/walking trails.
5. Work with homeowner associations to produce a positive neighborhood image and boost pride.

I agree that these priorities represent an ambitious vision. However, I also believe the other four Supervisors have equally ambitious visions. I encourage other Supervisors to publically state their budget goals and for all five of us to work together to accomplish as much as possible. Our imagination is our only limit.

Contact Supervisor Phil Fisher by cell 601-826-4006 or e-mail pfisher@co.hinds.ms.us