

Jody Grinstead

From: Terri Hall <terri@texasturf.org>
Sent: Monday, April 6, 2020 1:18 PM
To: Rob Kelly
Cc: Don Harris
Subject: Questions for the court

Jody and your tech support are still trying to figure out why I'm suddenly not getting agendas or the public comment links properly (and on time), but please accept this as my public comment for your next meeting. On #3, please feel free to respond outside the meeting ASAP.

1) Will the county go back to the drawing board and re-draft a new budget taking into account the drastic reduction in people's income as well as the cratering of sales taxes (and other tax revenues like oil & gas) due to the coronavirus pandemic? Adjustments MUST be made to the budget now that tax revenue and the economy are both suffering due to forcing people NOT to work to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Also, what is the state of the scheduled budget workshops given that no public meetings can take place?

2) We need our local government to drastically cut spending and lower the tax burden to be commiserate with the economic suffering that's been imposed by the government due to the COVID-10 crisis. Every resident should have their property taxes cut and prorated. Just as workers have been forced to NOT produce their normal income, government also needs to make commiserate adjustments to their salaries and budgets to account for the ability (or more like the inability) of taxpayers to actually pay their tax bill.

3) We need the county to help advocate on behalf of our local residents to help them navigate the log jam in signing up for unemployment. One of our daughter's, who lives on her own and has to pay rent and all her own expenses, worked at Belk's, and as you know, the mall was shuttered and workers sent home without pay due to coronavirus. They were promised unemployment in the (\$2.2 trillion stimulus bill) plus \$600 additional per week for up to 6 months due to being forced out of work (through no fault of their own). But despite calling and trying to sign up online, she and hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of other workers has been unable to sign-up online (due to the system being overwhelmed) or get anyone on the phone despite repeated attempts throughout the day, every day.

Of course, she can't go down to the Texas Workforce Commission office because their office is closed and they're transacting business solely through their web site and by phone (which no one can reach). She's reached out to both Rep. Murr and Sen. Buckingham's offices as well, but their offices are closed as well and their phones jammed due to the crisis. Can you please speak to how these residents are supposed to survive without income for an extended period of time? These front line, hourly workers are supposed to be the very ones the stimulus bill was designed to help, yet they can't get access to help. She's getting desperate, and we're not in the position to take on her expenses. We need our public officials to help cut through the red tape and get a lifeline to these workers who now face dire situations if they don't get help fast.

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