



Tommy Calvert
County Commissioner, Precinct 4

Investigation, Countywide Budget Committee to Examine Inequities
County Staff Errors Lead to at least \$17.6 Million in Project Cost Overruns Highlighted

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(SAN ANTONIO, TX). After details of inequities in the County budget and community calls for “no random caps” on budgetary oversight of the 3 billion dollar County Budget, Commissioner Tommy Calvert is calling for a citizen committee from every Commissioner Precinct to be called to examine inequities in the County Budget. The Commissioner’s office will assemble the citizen advisory committee, Wednesday, October 4, 2023.

Calvert is also highlighting at least 17.6 million dollars in staff delays and omissions that have led to taxpayers having to pay extra costs for an Advance Manufacturing Training Center at Brooks and for Rocket Lane’s extension in Converse, Texas.

The Advanced Manufacturing Training Center at Brooks trains Bexar County residents on everything from auto manufacturing to chip manufacturing. The project was funded by Commissioners but because of additions to the square footage recommended by staff, increases in construction materials and labor costs, the center is now in need of 6 million dollars to get construction started this year. An investigation has revealed that County staff did not put the 6 million needed to finish the building in the budget.

Some have been talking about the 37 million in projects that Commissioner Calvert presented as being above the random 10.4 million dollar budget cap created behind closed doors without a vote of Commissioners Court, but at least 12.1 million is because of staff errors that Commissioner Calvert caught that should be in the budget.

County staff called for the center to be funded in the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget in another years. Such a delay will cost taxpayers upwards of 40 percent in increases in materials and construction costs, making taxpayers pay for more than 6 million dollars to complete the project now.

Without the Advanced Manufacturing Training Center funded in this year’s, Bexar County will be at a competitive disadvantage to cities that have training center, cost taxpayers more, and keep San Antonio from getting a potential second vehicle manufactured by Toyota.

Staff also failed to included Countywide lighting for citizens in the budget. Over 1500 miles county maintained roadways do not have lighting and the Countywide lighting program did not get included in the budget in addition to a County commitment for Woodlake Park in the northeast side.

See details below of issues with staff errors:

Issue 1: Ester Rodriguez (52 years old) and Alyssa Lehman (5 years old) died going to Tradition Elementary after Bexar County removed a HALT low water barricade arm. The HALT barricade was removed because St. Hedwig did not agree to manually lift the arm after the HALT system flood barricade goes down and needs to be brought back up so that traffic can pass through. A new middle school is being built on the same flood-prone street the family died on. Recently, both St. Hedwig and Bexar County agreed to take up the HALT arm after flooding has subsided, so the issue of the bar's operation after a flood is no longer an issue.

On August 11, 2023, Commissioner Calvert requested the HALT arm funding in an area where the floodplain has changed because of rapid housing development and density.

David Wegmans and Public Works have not been able to confirm with the County Manager's office if the \$100,000 HALT arm is in the budget. Public Works will also need to determine the cost of the amount of the replacement HALT arm as they were looking for the specific costs of retrofitting some equipment that is already at this location. As a result, this death trap remains a hazard as its funding has not been ensured, itemized, or clarified whether there is enough budget in contingency funds.

Investment Amount: Requested estimate from Public Works August 11, 2023, and unknown if it is itemized in the FY 23-FY24 budget. Email from Dave Wegman on August 11, 2023, at 4:58 pm, "It is not currently funded. I'll see what we can do next fiscal year." Public Works still waiting on the County Managers office for clarity on inclusion in the budget.

Solution: The County Manager's Office should include the itemized HALT funding in the Public Works Budget September 11, 2023 meeting or a Commissioner can include the item for a change order. Motion made by a commissioner, seconded, and three votes in the affirmative.

Issue 2: Universal City Public Works Director Randy Luensmann and Mayor Williams of Universal City requested a HALT arm on a road in unincorporated Bexar County near the University City limits because school buses drive down a road that dips into a low water crossing with very little ability to visually see flooding ahead of the buses due to the topography of the road.

This low water crossing located at Aztec Lane and FM1518 is not in the city limits of Universal City but in unincorporated Bexar County where primary public safety falls on Bexar County.

On August 11, 2023 at 4:40 pm an email from Amy Putney, chief of staff to Commissioner Calvert, was sent to Public Works staff requesting to add this flood crossing after Commissioner Calvert toured the ravine that school buses have to travel through.

David Wegman and Public Works have not provided the amount of the replacement HALT arm or budget information and as a result this death trap remains a hazard as its funding has not been ensured, itemized or clarified whether there is enough budget in contingency funds.

Investment Amount: Same email chain for this issue as **Issue 1** above.

Requested estimate from Public Works August 11, 2023, and unknown if it is itemized. Email from Dave Wegman on August 11, 2023, at 4:58 pm, "It is not currently funded. I'll see what we can do next fiscal year."

Solution: The County Manager's Office includes the itemized HALT funding in the Public Works Budget on September 11, 2023, or the Commissioner includes the item for a change order. Motion made by a commissioner seconded, and three votes in the affirmative.

Issue 3: Rocket Lane Road Completion County staff created a two-year delay by using an irregular procurement method (amending the contract in phases when other projects do not have the contract amended for each phase) for the project's design and delay in paying permitting to the City of Converse that led to cost over-runs being born by taxpayers in this and future budgets. As a normal course of Bexar County business, design firms are hired by the County and awarded the design for the following phases:

- 1) Schematic Design
- 2) Design Development
- 3) Construction Documents

But for the design of the Precinct 4 building the Facilities department broke each of the above phases into a procurement process and renegotiated terms that are normally set in one consolidated design contract and one period of negotiation over fees.

Delay Timeline

1) Schematic Design	Awarded 8/24/18
2) Design Development	Awarded 5/21/22
3) Construction Documents	Awarded 8/24/21
4) Construction Documents Submitted for permitting	12/28/22
5) Converse Approves Permit	5/23/23
6) Permit Not Paid by Staff for a Month	6/23/23

3 Month Procurement Amendment Delay at each amendment above.

2.9 years to turn dirt and the normal private sector timelines take 1.6 years from design to turning dirt.

In Summary, the staffing process caused the project to take twice as long as normal and the cost of road materials and labor have increased; causing the need for \$6 million more from taxpayers. This should not come out of the Precinct 4 CIP budget but should have been covered in the County budget and included by facilities staff.

In addition, when the Precinct 4 satellite office was first conceived it had two drive-thru lanes and the acreage footprint for roads that lead to the cue of the drive-thru had a smaller footprint.

After the pandemic and the success of the drive-thru lanes at the Precinct 1 satellite office, the County expanded the number of drive-thru lanes to five and this caused the need to re-write the master plan.

It also causes additional road length to be built and increases the cost of the road which leads to the cue of cars in the drive-thru.

There were also other road challenges discovered with the Sheriff's satellite office on the 51 acres campus that needed to be addressed and other factors on the road that needed to be adjusted in order to protect Randolph Air Force Base from cars driving through the County's fence line along Randolph Air Force Base's runway.

Investment Amount: \$6 million to complete roads due to cost escalation, Randolph protection, assistance to allow Sheriff's vehicles not to share the road with the civilians, and due to expansion of county footprint on the 51-acre satellite campus.

Funding is needed to finish the road and other infrastructure on the development at 1604 and Rocket Lane.

Solution: The County Manager's Office & include the itemized road funding in the Facilities Budget on September 11, 2023, or the Commissioner includes the item for a change order. Motion made by a commissioner seconded, and three votes in the affirmative.

Issue 4: Woodlake County Flagship Park was approved for development in the FY 21-22 budget. An engineering study took longer for staff to negotiate with Westwood Engineers, delaying the project. The County is purchasing acres of the closed-down Woodlake Golf Course to prevent the largest voting precinct in Precinct 4, Woodlake, from deteriorating with overgrown grass and illegal criminal activity that sometimes takes place. In addition, the County has no parks for the families in this northeast area of Bexar County, even though this is the most densely populated portion of unincorporated Bexar County. The current appraisal conducted by Public Works to purchase the 186-acre property has come in at approximately 9 million dollars. The next step is to purchase the property. Once the property is purchased there will be only 1 million dollars for over 186 acres of park space.

The last conversation with the County Manager is that the people of the northeast expect a 10.5 million dollar park.

As a result of the public's expectations, I was setting aside 5.25 million in FY 23-FY 24's budget and planned to do another 5.25 million in the FY 24-FY25 budget.

On January 21, 2022, at 11:35 a.m. Amy Putney, chief of staff for Commissioner Calvert, requested of Joe Newton an update on the negotiations for the Woodlake Property.

At 12:09 p.m. January 21, 2022, Joe Newton, asset manager for Bexar County Public works replied, “We have ordered the appraisal report and are waiting for it to be delivered the end of this month or the beginning of next month. Once we know the values we can discuss with the Doctor (the property owner) how much property we can purchase, order the environmental study and the land survey, and start working on the details of a contract.”

Investment Amount: 5.25 million for park amenities. Once the land is purchased very little will be left for sewer, electrical and park amenities. As per conversations with the County Manager’s Office, the expectation of the Community is to have approximately 10 million invested for the park. As a result this sets aside 5.25 million in CIP budget for those amenities for FY23-FY24.

Solution: County Managers office and Parks Department included in budget. Commissioners Court moves funding forward.

Issue 5: There are no street lights in unincorporated Bexar County and last year the County funded 180,000 for Solar Street lights for Miller’s Point neighborhood association and this year funding for other neighborhoods countywide is being proposed for \$250,000 dollars.

CPS Energy and Bexar County never created a franchise agreement in the 1940s for lights to be on County roads. Today, nearly 500,000 county residents drive at night on 1,599.2 miles of county roads without lights.

CPS Energy has given Bexar County virtually free access to light poles for the assistance of installing solar lights at intersections where accidents occur, crime is high, and other criteria that are eligible for all four precincts for lighting in streets with no lights. The County also has the ability to install solar lighting poles where none have existed on County right of way.

The County Manager’s office has not put the requested \$250,000 for the lighting program into the Countywide budget for FY 23-FY24. Some street lights have been requested for the intersection where the family died in the low water crossing where a family died in East Central on the way to Tradition Elementary School. This street also has a new middle school being constructed on it.