

The public, who by electing the members of the Board of Lincoln County Commissioners, have entrusted us to wisely and transparently spend their money to provide them essential services.

Lincoln County has been facing difficult financial times and it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide just the basic level of service. It is incumbent upon us now, more than ever, to make sure that the taxpayers as well as employees know how they are being represented during collective bargaining negotiations, which are among the most expensive contracts negotiated by the county.

There is a provision in the Open Public Meetings Act that allows for collective bargaining negotiations to be conducted in a manner that is closed to the public. That provision does not mandate secrecy, it only provides the option. We believe that as elected officials, we should not get to decide what the public should or should not know about how their tax money is spent. The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners has agreed, by adopting Resolution 16-21, that union contract negotiations will be conducted in open public meetings. This Resolution does not preclude either side from meeting separately and privately to discuss negotiating tactics.

We are appealing to the public (Proposition #1, 3/10's of 1% Sales Tax increase for Public Safety) and asking them to open their wallets and give us more of their hard earned money because the costs of providing those essential services grow at a faster rate than the revenues, creating a structural gap. By asking the public for more money, it is imperative that this board to make every attempt to be transparent, as to maintain the highest level of trust with the people of Lincoln County.