



**Ray Stelly, CPA**  
Polk County Auditor

**POLK COUNTY**  
LIVINGSTON, TEXAS

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January 11, 2008

John Thompson  
County Judge  
Polk County Courthouse  
Livingston, TX 77351

Judge Thompson:

I am writing to you and, by copy, the other members of the court regarding item one on the agenda for a special session of court January 14, 2008 entitled "Consider Precinct 3 Commissioner's request for approval of buyboard purchase of three (3) motor graders, totaling \$587,470.00 and determine method of funding utilizing revenue from sale of used equipment."

As I did when this issue was addressed in the regular court session last Tuesday, January 8, 2008, I am cautioning the court that this purchase is not in the best financial interest of Polk County or its taxpayers.

Please note, to my knowledge there is nothing illegal regarding the proposed purchase nor am I accusing anyone of doing anything unlawful.

However, I will once again point out the results of the online auction January 4, 2008 in which three Polk County motor graders, two Caterpillar and one Volvo, were sold. In that auction the two Caterpillar graders, both bought in June, 2005 for \$191,400 were each sold for \$199,000. At the same time, the Volvo grader, bought in 2004 for \$184,021 was sold for \$115,000.

I see no reason to expect the Volvo graders Mr. Purvis is anticipating buying to fare any better at some point in the future when they will inevitably be sold.

As stewards of the county's resources I believe it is our duty to purchase equipment that represent a good investment of our taxpayers hard earned dollars. That is not always easy to determine but in this case the results of the auction seem to point to the proper course of action.

I understand, however, that each decision you make must take into consideration facts and circumstances of which I am not always privy to. For that reason I have chosen not to address the issue in court Monday but rather to give you my thoughts in writing instead. Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts on the subject and I have no doubt that, after due consideration, you will all make the right decision.



Ray Stelly  
Polk County Auditor

CC: Bob Willis, Commissioner Pct. One  
Ronnie Vincent, Commissioner Pct. Two  
Buddy Purvis, Commissioner Pct. Three  
Tommy Overstreet, Commissioner Pct. Four



**JAMES J. "BUDDY" PURVIS**  
*County Commissioner*  
Precinct 3  
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P.O. Box 181  
Corrigan, TX 75939

January 14, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE JOHN P. THOMPSON, POLK COUNTY JUDGE  
  
POLK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEMBERS  
  
POLK COUNTY AUDITOR, RAY STELLY

Dear Sirs:

Please allow me to respond to a letter from Mr. Stelly, Polk County Auditor dated January 11, 2008 copied to each of you referencing the January 8, 2008 Commissioner Court meeting.

First, I have never gotten a straight answer from Mr. Stelly on my equipment balance. His answer is always the same, "I will have to ask the Judge or I am working on it." If the issue here is looking for misuse of County Funds let us revisit the County wide bond issue rejected twice by the taxpayers for the court house project which has now been approved. Does that tell you anything other than we are wasting time over small change items not BIG BILLS!

I would like to ask you, have any of my constituents questioned my purchases of equipment? I will put any or all of my equipment against any other commissioners equipment performance & maintenance in Texas except Bexar County in San Antonio. Their shop is cleaner than the floor's in this courthouse. This should answer Mr. Jones questions about my equipment in Pct. #3.

Mr. Stelly, Polk County Auditor set the prices on the opening bids on the auction. The proposal received from Romco was never accepted. Further, the bids from caterpillar are a lot higher on all the mentioned machines. The one, six wheel drive does not include a front blade. The blade will add approximately thirty five to fifty thousand dollars more to the cost. Also from past experience supports the fact caterpillar warranty does not include anything but the drive train even on the extended warranty. They do not offer a bumper to bumper warranty for five years. Romco offers a bumper to bumper warranty for five years.

We should focus on the roads & allocating more money to address the issue our roads before we worry about new problems created by folks that have not done their home work. Good roads for our residents to travel from their home to jobs, schools, & for medical care have always been my top priority as the

Commissioner of Pct#3. My Crew has always done the best they can with what we/they have to work with. There just is not enough money. PERIOD.

Speaking to the issue of the new M/Series (caterpillar), please note this machine does not have a steering wheel. It is equipped with a joy stick control. It takes at least a year to retrain operators on these Caterpillar machines. The more computers they put on these machines, the more problems. That is the reason Caterpillar paid more for the 140 machines than when they were new because nobody likes the M/Series machines & prefer the old ones more than the new. They are not being welcomed to the construction work place as well as they thought.

Also, one of my crew (Lynn Clemons) has operated a blade for 30 years and he states without reservations the Volvo maintainer is the toughest that he has ever ran. The only problem we experienced was with the A/C. That has been corrected on the new 900 Series. Also, Volvo has the 2 machines of the 3 ready for immediate delivery and caterpillar will take 20 to 120 days and extended period for the all wheel drive machine.

1. 318 C A/C compressor went out. Was not cover by warranty.
2. Approximately \$2,000.00 worth of hoses have burst, not warranted.
3. Boom broke in half covered by warranty, but took 2 ½ months to repair.
4. Breaker broke 3 times not covered under warranty, \$12, 000.00 to \$15,000.00 for repairs.

Total purchase for Romco will be \$587,470 and total purchase for Caterpillar is \$742,500 which includes (\$35,000.) for purchase of a front blade. I am not questioning the worth of the Caterpillar equipment, only their warranty & service.

Thanking you for your review of my comments, I remain,

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James J. Purvis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

James J. "Buddy" Purvis, Commissioner, Pct. #3, County of Polk