

MINUTES
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DEPARTMENT BUDGET MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 29, 2018
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING – BILL LUXFORD STUDIO (ROOM 113)
9:30 A.M. OR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Advance public notice of the Board of Commissioners meeting was posted on the County-City Building bulletin board and the Lancaster County, Nebraska, web site and emailed to the media on May 25, 2018.

Commissioners present: Roma Amundson, Acting Chair; Deb Schorr; and Bill Avery

Commissioners absent: Todd Wiltgen, Chair; Jennifer Brinkman, Vice Chair

Others present: Dennis Meyer, Budget & Fiscal Officer; Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer; Ann Ames, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer; and Ann Taylor, County Clerk's Office

Commissioner Amundson noted the location of the Open Meetings Act and opened the meeting at 9:52 a.m.

1) DISTRICT COURT (624)

Appearing was Jared Gavin, District Court Administrator.

Dennis Meyer, Budget & Fiscal Officer, noted the District Court's total budget is increasing 4.9% and the operating and capital outlay is increasing 6.2%. Jared Gavin, District Court Administrator, attributed the increase primarily to legal costs, noting there was an increase in bills of exceptions. Those require court reporters to prepare full transcripts for the Supreme Court or Court of Appeals when cases are appealed. He was not sure if the number of appeals had increased but said there were significant costs related to preparing bills of exception for several major cases. Gavin said he could get more detailed information from the Clerk of the District Court's Office, as that office handles payments.

Schorr inquired about the 7.1% increase in the Regular Salary line item. Gavin attributed it to the reclassification of two law clerk positions to staff attorneys and said they tried to absorb as much of the initial impact as they could in this year's budget. The number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) remains the same.

Gavin said the District Court is beginning to use Justice Works, a case management software, on a trial basis but he did not include it in the budget because there were still some programming issues. He anticipated that all attorneys will be submitting bills electronically beginning July 1, 2018, and estimated there will be 1,000 cases at a \$3.00 charge per case. Gavin said the new case management software will help with data collection, including whether the case was assigned due to a conflict or case overload. Schorr asked Gavin to provide an update at mid-year.

Gavin requested an additional appropriation of \$94,500 for legal services, although, the actual figure may be closer to \$50,000 depending on when bills are received.

Meyer inquired about court competency evaluations. Gavin said the costs for some of the evaluations have shifted to the County Court due to legislative change.

Gavin also discussed revenues, explaining the majority come from the Child Support Referee (Welfare IV D reimbursement). Meyer estimated that those payments are two quarters behind.

Meyer inquired about technology needs. Gavin said he has been working to get the District Court's forms into SharePoint, which is cloud based and integrates with Microsoft Office, and would like everyone in District Court to have a Microsoft Office 365 license. He also discussed video conferencing issues, including cabling, equipment failures in the courtrooms, and operation of the mobile units at the Lancaster County Adult Detention Facility (LCADF). Gavin suggested it may be beneficial to have a dedicated information technology (IT) position for the justice system. Schorr suggested the County contract for someone to determine the courts needs and develop a plan. She also suggested an upgrade of the cabling for the video conferencing system be funded through a sinking fund. Gavin said the Nebraska Judicial Branch provided some funding initially for the video conferencing equipment and said he would be willing to contact Corey Steel, Nebraska State Court Administrator, to see if they would be willing to provide further assistance. Schorr said she will make a couple of calls on that issue and may have someone contact Gavin.

2) RISK MANAGEMENT (12, 13)

Appearing was Sue Eckley, County Risk Manager.

Workers' Compensation Loss Fund (12)

Sue Eckley, County Risk Manager, said there were some costly workers' compensation claims last year and the Corrections Department's institution of modified duty helped with those significantly. She wished the County could create a "pool" of employees, who are injured and can't return to their jobs, to assist other departments but said it would have to be negotiated with the unions.

Eckley said an actuary looked at a ten-year history of claims and expenses and made a recommendation on how to fund future reserves. Those numbers were built into the budget. She discussed how County departments fund workers' compensation (see Page 9) noting Corrections' funding increased significantly due to several costly injuries. Schorr asked whether Corrections could provide corrective training for staff. Eckley attributed a lot of the injuries to the work environment and said additional training on how to "take down" inmates is being provided.

Meyer inquired about technology needs. Eckley said she is requesting two computers.

Other Self Insurance Loss Fund (13)

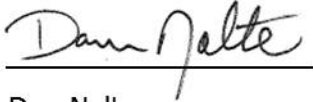
Eckley said the primary "expense driver" is having to contract for outside legal counsel related to a couple of general liability claims. She added that there haven't been any severe claims for several years.

Meyer noted they have been trying to build up the cash balances of the different business units.

Amundson inquired about the cost of a County Attorney professional liability policy. Eckley said she would check but it could be costly since it is a specialty market.

3) ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Schorr moved and Avery seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:51 a.m. Schorr, Avery and Amundson voted yes. Wiltgen and Brinkman were absent. Motion carried 3-0.



Dan Nolte
Lancaster County Clerk

