

MINUTES
DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET HEARINGS
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING, ROOM 113
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2015
8:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Advance public notice of the Departmental Budget Hearings was posted on the County-City Building bulletin board and the Lancaster County, Nebraska, web site and emailed to the media on May 8, 2015.

Commissioners Present: Roma Amundson, Chair
Larry Hudkins, Vice Chair
Bill Avery
Deb Schorr
Todd Wiltgen

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer
Gwen Thorpe, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Dennis Meyer, Budget and Fiscal Director
Kelly Lundgren, County Clerk's Office

The Chair opened the meeting at 8:05 a.m.

NOTE: A copy of the Lancaster County departmental budget requests for fiscal year 2015-16 is on file in the County Clerk's Office.

COUNTY CLERK (602)

Appearing were Dan Nolte, County Clerk; Cori Beattie, Deputy County Clerk; and Tim Genuchi, Accounting Operations Manager.

Nolte said there were no major changes to the budget. The travel expense for Genuchi to attend a JD Edwards (JDE- County's financial system) conference was added to last year's budget but the information being presented was not felt to be beneficial so Genuchi did not attend. The travel expense is included in this year's budget in case the meeting would be of benefit. Nolte noted a change in revenue due to an increase in marriage license and certified copies fees.

Schorr entered the meeting at 8:10 a.m.

Meyer mentioned that there will be an upgrade to JDE this coming year.

Beattie discussed the request for three computers to replace older units but due to staff turnover two may be sufficient.

Meyer confirmed that there would be an adjustment to VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) numbers.

Meyer asked Genuchi to give an update on the electronic time and attendance program. Genuchi said the system is about 90% configured with the final 10% percent being difficult because the system

does not have all the features required. He noted it will be easy and inexpensive for staff with computer access. However, for those departments such as Engineering, a clock or scanner will be required and that would be a greater expense.

Schorr asked what the procedure would be if an employee was not at their desk or computer. Genuchi said the system allows for a manager or supervisor to manually enter or correct the information. He noted that Information Services will not want to maintain two separate systems so the County and City would most likely have to be on one system. Amundson inquired as to the cost and Genuchi informed the Board that about \$20,000 has been expended to date.

COUNTRY TREASURER (603)

Appearing were Andy Stebbing, County Treasurer; Bill Jarrett, Deputy County Treasurer; Michelle Raphael, Accountant; and Candace Meredith, Real Estate Manager.

Stebbing read a letter regarding the budget that indicated a slight increase over last year's budget by .86%. Currently the department has two vacant positions which saved on salaries and benefits. Stebbing noted that there are still office chairs and desks that need to be replaced. He stated the submitted budget includes a request for membership fees and conference and travel expense for professional development. Stebbing said collection of real estate tax receipts increased 4% compared to the same time period as last year and revenue projections are on target. Interest income is expected to remain comparable over the next few months. Stebbing provided a chart that illustrated Lincoln and Lancaster County banks which currently maintain County funds. (Exhibit A)

In response to Schorr's question about staffing, Stebbing said the vacant positions are located at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). He added lines and waiting times dramatically increase without the additional staff.

Meyer asked Jarrett to address their microcomputer needs. Jarrett stated they implemented a four-year process to replace computers in order to stay current with technology. He added the department's processing and balancing time has been greatly reduced.

Meyer inquired about the time and attendance system. Stebbing indicated at the three DMV locations staff has limited access to County computers so it could cause a back up of people trying to clock in and out. He stated their office does not really need the system as it's a small office and can easily account for people.

COUNTY ASSESSOR (605, 606)

Fund 605 - County Assessor

Appearing were Norm Agena, County Assessor/Register of Deeds; Rob Ogden, Chief Field Deputy; and Scott Gaines, Chief Administrative Deputy.

Agena informed the Board the County Assessor's office would be in favor of the time and attendance system. The staff has access to computers and Ogden said it would save time as opposed to doing time sheets.

Meyer asked about additional appropriations and noted a 4% increase on expenditures. It was noted, the Assessor's office has been fully staffed for approximately the last 7 months as opposed to the last 3 or 4 years in which they had vacancies. Agena said the increase in expenditures can be attributed to payroll costs and insurance premiums. Meyer confirmed that health insurance cost have increased 18-19%.

Gaines noted that deeds filings have been down but are rebounding.

In response to Avery's inquiry regarding the capital outlay increase, Ogden said that is for upgrading computer tablets. Agena noted those tablets are what appraisers use when they are out in the field. He added the tablets have cut down paper usage and are much more efficient.

Fund 606 - Register of Deeds Technology Fund

Schorr asked for clarification of the fund. Gaines said a certain amount of every deeds filing is earmarked for technology for records preservation and management. They work with the County Attorney's office to identify appropriate items.

COUNTY ENGINEER (703, 615)

Appearing was Pam Dingman, County Engineer and Angela Zocholl, Administrative Services Officer.

Meyer informed the Board they would only be discussing the general fund budget at this time. Dingman noted that they have reorganized the budget and hopefully it is more transparent without so many miscellaneous expenses. She said they are eliminating two full-time equivalents (FTE's) and plan to eliminate additional positions from other funds. She highlighted a large request for computer software and licenses due to the fact there is not current design software in the Engineer's office.

Dingman responded to Wiltgen's question regarding the post-employment health benefit informing the Board that when an employee retires after a certain age they are able to cash in a certain percentage of their sick leave. She stated they have had several retirements in the past year that had substantial payouts.

Dingman addressed the Board's concerns about increases in several areas such as janitorial expenses, photocopier, utilities and cell phone service. She noted that several items had previously been divided up between all three funds. In an attempt for more clarity in the budget, many items were moved to the general fund. Dingman stated that the department does not have cell phones, but they do have Verizon tablets and laptop computers that require data service. The district supervisors utilize the tablets to access email, take pictures and document damage as in the recent flooding. She noted tablets are also used in surveying. Field inspectors send information from construction sites to the office from laptops.

Schorr inquired about the software expense. Dingman said new software could increase efficiency and result in eliminating additional FTE's.

As far as additional appropriations, Dingman told Meyer there would be additional \$280,000 from the Region V budget. There were laborer positions that were vacant through the winter and are now filled. Dingman said with the Region V funds she should be close to projection.

In response to Meyer's question regarding microcomputers, Dingman noted many of the current computers are not compatible with software upgrades.

Dingman said the time clock software would be beneficial but she had concerns regarding the lack of internet connection at remote locations.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT (648)

Appearing was Brian Pillard, Records & Information Manager. Pillard informed the Board he has 6 FTE's that are responsible for mail and file delivery as well as scanning, microfilming and image capture from many departments. Pillard noted all titles from the DMV are scanned. The department is also responsible for the records storage for all the City and County departments.

Pillard noted he did have an employee change from single insurance coverage to 2/4 coverage which increased the insurance expense.

In response to Meyer's question regarding additional appropriations, Pillard noted it was still \$12,000 due mostly to the increase in health insurance premiums. It was noted the microcomputer request budget includes replacing two computers.

Pillard did ask that the request for travel funds to attend an electronic records management conference be considered.

Pillard said his employees have access to a computer with regard to the time and attendance system, but he had concerns if employees would need to report early to allow for computers to reboot in the mornings.

The meeting was recessed at 9:40 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 9:55 a.m.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT (066)

Appearing was Don Killeen, County Property Manager.

Meyer noted today's budget discussion will center on those buildings owned by the County. This budget includes 7.5 FTE's. One FTE was eliminated which has reduced the budget on the operating side.

Killeen stated that they are trying to avoid any large projects until necessary. Meyer noted this has helped increase the building fund.

Schorr asked about the time frame for the new crisis center. Killeen said the plans were recently approved and bids would most likely go out in early June.

Wiltgen inquired about the local telephone increase. Killeen noted that was most likely due to the VoIP change over.

In regard to the time and attendance system, Killeen responded that it would be difficult due to the fact all employees do not have a computer available and employees travel between buildings.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (693)

Appearing was Jim Davidsaver, Emergency Management Director and Mark Hosking, Emergency Management Deputy Director.

Davidsaver informed the Board that the Emergency Management Planning Grant is federal money that will reimburse the County for anything related to salary or benefits. The reimbursement is 50% and is received quarterly. There has been a decrease in the reimbursement due to staff turnover and lower salaries.

Davidsaver said they have some projects to complete but are confident the current budget will be sufficient.

Meyer noted that it is a small department and due to the nature of their work it would be difficult to implement a time and attendance system. Davidsaver agreed with that statement.

ELECTION COMMISSIONER (607, 627)

Election Commissioner (607)

Appearing were Dave Shively, Election Commissioner; Maura Kelly, Chief Deputy Election Commissioner; and Becky Hight-Moravec, Administrative Services Officer.

Shively provided a budget request report for the Election and Jury Commissioners. (Exhibit B) Shively said the new scanning machine that was purchased last year has increased efficiency by folding, opening and counting ballots. The scanner folds the ballots into thirds which is smaller and has decreased the cost of postage. Shively feels that the cost of the scanner has been returned in a year.

Shively noted that the budget fluctuates due to the number of elections during the year. The change in minimum wage has affected the budget because the poll workers are paid minimum wage.

Hudkins entered the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

In response to Meyer's question regarding additional appropriations, Shively noted some will most likely be needed due to additional costs for poll workers, paying out post-employment benefits and salary adjustments.

Shively said that not all temporary employees would have access to a computer so it could be difficult to implement the time and attendance system in their office.

Schorr asked about the computer request. Shively said he has tried to replace two or three computers per year and has requested a new laptop and projector in this budget. The laptop and projector are used for training poll workers.

Jury Commissioner (627)

Shively said there has been discussion with Troy Hawk to move the Jury Commissioner back to the Clerk of the District Court but nothing has been decided to date.

WEED CONTROL (064)

Appearing was Brent Meyer, Weed Control Superintendent.

Brent Meyer noted increases in the budget are mainly cost of living and cost of supplies which are unavoidable. He has also included travel expense for a conference in Canada.

Dennis Meyer asked about the vehicle situation. Brent Meyer noted that he had submitted the request last year but it was not approved. He said the current vehicles have a lot of miles and some are in the repair shop the majority of the time. However, he would prefer additional staff to assist with the increasing work load. It was noted that the City would be responsible for half the cost of a vehicle. Amundson noted that perhaps a search could be done for vehicles from other departments.

Brent Meyer felt the time and attendance system could be utilized in his department.

COUNTY EXTENSION (645)

Appearing were Karen Wobig, County Extension Educator; and Jenny DeBuhr, County Extension Administrative Aide.

Wobig noted the 1.7% increase is personnel driven. She added there were also building expenses such as repairing leaks and a water heater replacement. Wobig said they are budgeting for upgrades for the conference room that is used a great deal and the microcomputer budget has remained stable.

Amundson questioned the vehicle maintenance. Wobig said the biosolids fund covers the cost of repair for vehicles used for the purpose of transporting University staff to areas in Lancaster County.

In regards to the time and attendance system, Wobig noted that it would be difficult with the "in and out" nature of their office as well as the fact that many staff go directly to a site without reporting to the office.

COUNTY SHERIFF (651)

Appearing was Terry Wagner, County Sheriff and Jeff Bliemeister, Deputy County Sheriff.

Wagner said he estimated a 6.9% increase in the budget from last year with one notable increase due to employee costs associated with being fully staffed for over a year. Wagner noted they are adding a deputy in the computer forensics task force but it would be reimbursed by forfeited assets.

Wagner pointed out increases in the area of group health insurance and retirement benefit payouts as well as computer software licenses and maintenance and new computer forensics software.

Wagner credited Bliemeister for recalculating the Radio Interlocal Agreement with the City of Lincoln resulting in a substantial decrease in cost.

Wagner commented on the radio replacement program for 2017. This is for both handheld and vehicle mounted radios. Bliemeister noted once the request for proposal goes out for bid, they will have a better idea on the equipment that will be needed and the cost.

In response to Meyer's inquiry about vehicles, Wagner said the request is for two new vans and six marked units. Bliemeister explained the need for the vans as the Sheriff's Department participates with other agencies throughout the country in helping transport prisoners which saves on airline expense but does put a lot of miles on vehicles.

Meyer asked why the Sheriff fees were decreasing. Wagner explained that the civil process fees do not keep up with the cost to serve them. Also there is competition by the private sector which does not have to charge what the Sheriff's Department does so large accounts have been lost.

With regard to time and attendance system, Wagner said they currently use a program that has been customized to track the various types of overtime and individual situations of the department.

The meeting was recessed at 12:00 p.m.



Dan Nolte
Lancaster County Clerk

