

MINUTES
DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET HEARINGS
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING, ROOM 113
WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2016
AFTERNOON SESSION - 1:15 P.M.

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 20, 2016

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

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

The Chair reconvened the meeting at 1:17 p.m. (A copy of the Nebraska Open Meeting Act was posted at the rear of the conference room.)

NOTE: *A copy of the Lancaster County departmental budget requests for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-2017 is on file in the County Clerk's Office.*

RISK MANAGEMENT (12, 13)

Appearing was Sue Eckley, County Risk Manager.

Eckley said there could be a 5% increase on renewals for excess insurance coverage.

Under Worker's Compensation, Eckley said the County will be responsible for an employee's total knee replacement which a physician said was related to a work injury. She added there could be complications which would cause the surgery to be atypical, thus, she has asked the doctor provide a cost estimate for the procedure. Another employee recently contacted the Risk Management office regarding the need for a total knee replacement, although, there are a few issues that need to be clarified on that particular case.

Eckley stated that most departments have been utilizing temporary modified duty which keeps Worker's Compensation costs down.

Meyer said there were \$1.4 million in Worker's Compensation expenditures last year; this year's total is about \$732,000. Eckley provided an overview of some of the larger claims. Meyer estimated the fund balance to be \$475,000 which will allow him to reduce the amount transferred from the General Fund by \$400,000.

OTHER SELF INSURANCE

Eckley discussed the categories under self insurance. Meyer said last year \$1.3 million was transferred into the fund but this year only \$50,000 will be transferred in order to cover Inland Marine.

COUNTY COURT (622)

Appearing were Becky Bruckner, County Court Administrator; Judge Thomas Fox and Judge Holly Parsley.

Meyer stated that \$42,000 was recently transferred to cover the rest of the fiscal year. This was due to legal costs. Meyer noted there are no payroll expenses in this budget.

The following issues/questions were addressed:

FY 2016-2017 Budget

- Out-of-state travel

Bruckner said no out-of-state travel expenses were included.

- Capital outlay

Bruckner said the audio/recording system does not work properly. She explained that if the system goes down, court is stopped. Bruckner said the plan is to upgrade the systems in half of the courtrooms this year (and half next year) at an estimated cost of \$8,600 to \$9,400 per courtroom.

- Computer requests

Bruckner said there is the need for a new microfilm system as the current one needs repairs and parts are no longer available. She stated the Scanpro system could be rented for two years in order to digitize the records.

- Unfunded mandates

Meyer stated that there are no non-mandated functions as everything is statute driven.

- Budget preparation

Meyer inquired about the budget preparation and mentioned the County Board has discussed utilizing zero-base budgeting. Bruckner said they reviewed expenses from past years. Avery said zero-base budgeting does not rely on historical data.

In response to Avery's inquiry as to who has control over the legal services costs, Fox said it depends on how many cases are filed and who needs legal services. Meyer stated the legal services conversation is ongoing as it is difficult to determine what the costs will be. Bruckner noted the rate for outside legal services is \$50 per hour.

DISTRICT COURT (624)

Appearing were Jennifer Kulwicki, District Court Administrator; and Judge Andrew Jacobsen.

Kulwicki provided an update on video conferencing. She stated the final pieces will be installed in June after which time all the courtrooms will be equipped and operational. It was also noted that some items still need to be installed in the jail. Kulwicki said the State prison system is planning to expand video conferencing to some of their facilities which will result in a county-wide cost savings. Jacobsen added that video conferencing is easy to use and creates less congestion in the courts.

Kulwicki said the sound system needs to be updated as there have been frequent calls for maintenance. She requested that the system be compatible with video conferencing. In speaking with Don Killeen, Facilities and Property Director, Kulwicki said the Public Building Commission would likely cover a portion of the cost. She added that installation would be staged over two to three years.

With regard to Judge Burns' retirement, Kulwicki said the furniture in his chambers will need updating.

Avery inquired about the "Bill of Exception" line item. Kulwicki said that is when a court reporter prepares a transcript whereby the person requesting the document is indigent. In this case, it statutorily becomes the County's expense.

The following issues/questions were addressed:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-2016 Budget (Current Year)

- Do you need additional appropriations and why or why not?

Kulwicki said they would not need any additional appropriations.

FY 2016-2017 Budget

- Full-time equivalents (FTE's)/Unfilled positions/Retirements/Temporary employees

Kulwicki stated they do not currently have any unfilled positions and a bailiff will be retiring in August.

- Out-of-state travel

Kulwicki said there is no travel expense in the budget.

- Capital outlay

Kulwicki stated they do have a request for chairs.

Schorr inquired about the progress on the billing system which is currently being used in the Juvenile and County Courts. Kulwicki said she has been working on the project for the past year and was recently notified that a test was successfully performed in conjunction with the JUSTICE System. She hoped it would be ready to use in District Court by the end of June.

- Computer requests

Kulwicki said they are requesting five additional computers.

With regard to Title 4D reimbursements, Kulwicki said payments have been delayed due to reasons beyond her control but hoped things would improve.

- Salary Recommendations

Kulwicki requested an increase in the salary for the law clerks. She stated they often do additional work outside of a forty-hour week and it would be in their best interest to keep their status as exempt. Kulwicki said she also visited with Human Resources regarding changing the title of Bailiff I to Work Release Coordinator.

- Budget preparation

Kulwicki said it is very difficult to pinpoint the cost of legal services but she reviews historical data and trends for the majority of line items.

JUVENILE PROBATION (673)

Appearing were Lori Griggs, Chief Probation Officer, Juvenile Probation; and Autumn Crable, Office Manager, Juvenile Probation.

The following issues/questions were addressed:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-2016 Budget (Current Year)

- Do you need additional appropriations and why or why not?

Griggs said Juvenile Probation will not need an additional appropriation this year, noting they went over on photocopying but made it up in other areas.

- Are there any cleanup items with the State before the end of the fiscal year?

Griggs cited end-of-the-year invoices for electronic monitoring for the Juvenile Drug Court, administrative costs for the Independence Center and the contract with Cedars Youth Services for a part-time tracker.

FY 2016-2017 Budget

- Out-of-state travel

Griggs said there are no out-of-state travel costs in the budget.

- Capital outlay

Crable said the only capital outlay will be for minor office equipment.

Meyer said it appears the biggest factor "driving" the budget increase is rent. **NOTE:** Juvenile Probation will be relocating to the 605 Building. Griggs said they are planning for the same number of staff and space but there will be additional security and parking costs. She said Juvenile Probation is also retaining space on the fourth floor of the Justice and Law Enforcement Center as a satellite office.

- Computer requests

Griggs said the field (intensive supervision) officers have been sharing laptop computers. She said they are constantly entering information and looking up charges and felt they should each have their own. Schorr asked if the probation officers also have desktop computers. Griggs said they do so they are able to access certain programs. Crable added Information Services (IS) does not support only having a laptop due to memory and battery issues.

Griggs discussed funding for the Juvenile Drug Court, noting Juvenile Court Judge Toni Thorson has submitted a letter on this issue (Exhibit A).

Meyer asked how the budget was prepared. Griggs said they reviewed spending patterns and issues that might impact the budget and tried to determine what was needed for each item.

Avery exited the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT (621) AND MENTAL HEALTH BOARD (751)

Appearing was Troy Hawk, Clerk of the District Court.

The following issues/questions were addressed:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-2016 Budget (Current Year)

- Do you need additional appropriations and why or why not?

Hawk said an additional appropriation will not be needed due to vacancy savings. He said funds for a new filing system will be encumbered.

Avery returned to the meeting at 2:56 p.m.

FY 2016-2017 Budget

- Full-time equivalents (FTE's)/Unfilled positions/Retirements/Temporary employees

Hawk said his department does not have any unfilled positions. He noted there are 23.5 full-time equivalents (FTE's) in the budget and said one employee works full-time with her salary split between the Clerk of the District Court's budget and the Mental Health Board budget. There are no temporary employees at this time and no retirements are anticipated.

- Out-of-state travel

Hawk said he did not budget for out-of-state travel.

- Capital outlay

Hawk said they include three chairs, telephone headsets, and a date/time stamp machine. He added some remodeling will be necessary when the Jury Commissioner moves to his office.

- Computer requests

Hawk said he does not have a microcomputer request this year.

- Unfunded mandates

Hawk explained under terms of Legislative Bill (LB) 605, certain felonies now require post-release probation sentences at the time of sentencing and additional orders must be entered into the Judicial Users System to Improve Court Efficiency (JUSTICE) System. He said LB 605 also allows probation officers to file sanctions which his office must process. Hawk said LB 1000 changed provisions relating to grand juries and said transcripts now have to be typed and made available to the public.

Meyer inquired about preparation of the budget. Hawk said his office has done zero-base budgeting to a large extent. He noted personnel, rent, Information Services (IS) and the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) costs comprise 97% of the budget and said those costs are out of his control.

In terms of the Mental Health Board budget, Hawk said no additional appropriations are needed. He said the budget is basically the same as last year's, adding it is difficult to anticipate costs.

JUVENILE COURT (623)

Appearing were Juvenile Court Judge Roger Heideman; and Theresa Emmert, Juvenile Court Administrator.

The following issues/questions were addressed:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-2016 Budget (Current Year)

- Do you need additional appropriations and why or why not?

Emmert said an additional appropriation is not needed, explaining there were no significant changes to the budget.

FY 2016-2017 Budget

- Full-time equivalents (FTE's)/Unfilled positions/Retirements/Temporary employees

Emmert said they have no unfilled positions and are not anticipating any retirements.

- Out-of-state travel

Emmert said no out-of-state travel is requested.

- Capital outlay

Judge Heideman discussed issues with the District Court's sound system. Emmert said they are requesting replacement of sound equipment in two of the courtrooms in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-2017 and two courtrooms in FY 2017-2018. She said they would also like to complete the project to replace conference room chairs that are 20 years old this fiscal year.

Hudkins inquired about the increase in Object Account 64130 (Law Violators). Emmert said it is related to LB 894, which changed provisions relating to mandatory minimum sentencing and sentencing of habitual criminals. She said the three separate Juvenile Courts in Douglas, Lancaster and Sarpy Counties will now be required to appoint counsel for law violations and 3b (ungovernable) cases. **NOTE:** The law goes into effect on July 21, 2016.

- Computer requests

Emmert said the Juvenile Court is not requesting any computers this year.

Meyer inquired about preparation of the budget. Emmert said she looked at what was spent in prior years, numbers of case filings, and the type of cases coming before the Court.

Schorr asked how much the Juvenile Court pays appointed attorneys. Emmert said they pay \$65 per hour.

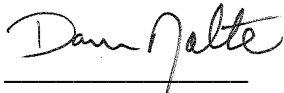
Avery asked whether all of the items they have requested are essential. Emmert said the conference chairs aren't essential. Judge Heideman added they could possibly get by with the existing sound equipment but said if one of the systems goes out and

another courtroom isn't available, a court would not be able to operate. He said that could result in access to justice issues.

Meyer inquired about the Court's billing system. Emmert said it is working well and has freed up a significant amount of staff time.

Meyer also inquired about the video conferencing system. Emmert said they have three courtrooms ready and a fourth courtroom will be ready in June. Judge Heideman said the link to the jail is exceptional but said availability remains an issue.

By direction of the Chair, the meeting was recessed at 3:35 p.m.



Dan Nolte
Lancaster County Clerk

