

## MINUTES

### BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Special Board Meeting – Budget Workshop

Wednesday, October 21, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

Benton County Justice Center

*Meeting provided by Video Live-Broadcast and Telephonically*

**Present:** Chairman James Beaver  
Commissioner Jerome Delvin (via/WebEx)  
Commissioner Shon Small (via/WebEx)  
County Administrator Jerrod MacPherson  
Clerk of the Board Cami McKenzie

**Benton County Employees Present During All or a Portion of the Meeting:** IT Manager Robert Heard; Linda Ivey, Finance Manager; Bill Spencer Assessor; Ken Spencer, Treasurer; Kirsten Yniguez, Deputy Treasurer; Brenda Chilton, Auditor; Lorene Roe, Deputy Auditor; Gwen-Alyn Hoheisel, WSU Director; PA Andy Miller.

### Revenue & Expenditures

Linda Ivey presented the updated 2021-2022 Budget and highlighted the following:

- Current Expense
  - Added \$358,405 in property tax
  - Lost work crew contract \$(-344,970)
  - Expenditures – approximately \$4.5 million shortfall
  - \$3.2 million in new requests – over 60% of that is wages and benefits and associated costs
  - Total shortfall with requests - \$7.7 million
  
- Outside Current Expense
  - 8 new position requests (2 in Road; 1 in Workers' Comp.; 1 in Insurance Management; 1 in Protective Inspection; and 3 in Public Safety Tax)

Mr. MacPherson said they would make a formal budget recommendation at the October 27, 2020 meeting and request approval to advertise for the public hearing and adoption of the budget on November 17, 2020.

## **Assessor**

Assessor Bill Spencer said his department was working on public outreach and he demonstrated their website program. Additionally, he said property values were still going up and sales were still happening. He said they were continuing to do their jobs more efficiently within the budget and commented that for new construction, per parcel, Benton County was number three (3) in the State. He said their budget was the same, with the exception of a request for new technology.

## **Treasurer**

Treasurer Ken Spencer and Deputy Treasurer Kirsten Yniguez presented the Treasurer's budget and highlighted the following:

- Collections were ahead of last year during this same time
- Move more money into the investment pool, which helped Current Expense
- Largest request is for the tax statement service and postage to send out bills
- Treasurer O & M – self-sustaining and paid for by delinquent taxes collected; a few increases in postage and recording fees due to increased costs for filing notices
- Treasurer Investment Pool – moved some salaries into this fund; requesting a few dollars for publications, contract services and travel (to train new employees on the investment team)
- REET Technology Budget – money used by the Assessor for revaluations; Treasurer can only use it for technology
- Revenues - investment service fees and use of penalty and interest both looked good

## **Auditor**

Auditor Brenda Chilton and Deputy Auditor Lorene Roe presented the budget for the Auditor's office and highlighted the following:

- Closure of the Richland Office - continue to receive revenue stream from subagency without overhead - cost savings of \$75,000 to \$100,000 per biennium; additional benefits include moving employees to other locations in need, mostly Elections Dept.
- Recipient of five grants (totaling approximately \$600,000) – as part of that they are leasing a voting center and equipping it with large pieces of equipment they can use years down the road
- Excited about new Admin Building - multi-level services in one location
- Licensing fee increase will provide additional \$800,000 in revenue per biennium
- Fair Share Election Funding – in the future the State will pay their fair share in all elections; (Benton County would have recovered \$370,000 for the State's share in this primary and general election)
- Specific Requests

- Eliminate Office Assistant IV and create a Special Programs Coordinator to assist with grants program, and newly mandated programs (voter pamphlet, prepaid postage, same day voter registration, student engagement hub)
- Lease Tracking software
- Voting Center – request to lease this space for at least the next two years – also could be considered a Benton County facility to accommodate other events
- Grant Requests
  - ACAC Grant projects - Accessible Communities Action Committee
  - HAVA 3 – security improvements at the voting center
  - HUB Grant – ongoing funding

**WSU Benton County Extension**

Gwen-Alyn Hoheisel, WSU Benton County Extension, presented their budget and talked about trying to maintain their programs. All faculty would be maintaining their jobs, although some might be furloughed (but not in this round of budget cuts). She presented an outline showing 2018-2019 Program Accomplishments. She said their only increases were in IT and salaries as she was trying to fully fund the Master Gardener Coordinator position for an increase of approximately \$3,500.00; she said she had been piecing together his salary from grants.

**Prosecuting Attorney**

Andy Miller presented his budget and said he had met a number of times with Commissioner staff on the budget. Additionally, he felt the budget presented was fair given the County’s current financial situation.

Specifically, he discussed the Child Support budget that was 100% funded by the State. With a retirement and another position resigning, they chose not to fill so they could meet the required 15% cut. Other ways they were making this budget work was having each attorney take two furlough days a month and he was turning back in his pay raise monthly to assist with this shortfall.

**Recap**

Chairman Beaver reiterated the baseline budget was \$4.5 million in expenditures over revenue, with \$3.2 million in new requests, for a potential total of \$7.7 million out of round. He said he wanted to do everything possible, so they did not have to lay off any individuals or reduce services.

Commissioner Delvin said he agreed that would be his goal and to keep the service level but tighten up the budget.

Commissioner Small reminded the Board that in 2010 there was a huge recession and neighboring counties had to do massive layoffs. He agreed with the goal of keeping individuals and service levels the same.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

---

Clerk of the Board

---

Chairman