

MINUTES

BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Special Board Meeting – Budget Workshop

Thursday, October 22, 2020, 1:30 p.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: Linda Ivey, Finance Manager; IT Manager Robert Heard; Coroner Bill Leach; District Court Judge Terry Tanner; District Court Administrator Ela Selga; Clerk Josie Delvin; Deputy Clerk Elaine Osborne; Darryl Banks and Shela Berry, Juvenile; Superior Court Judge Joseph Burrowes; Tiffany Deaton and Marshall Pickett, Superior Court; Undersheriff John Clary; Lt. Jonathan Schwarder and Katie Gillies, Sheriff's Office.

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.

Chairman Beaver indicated his goal was to not lay off any employees and maintain services to the community.

Coroner

Bill Leach presented his budget and reviewed the following:

- 2020 - calls for service increased by 25%
- Hospice review is a new program (more detailed review for accidental deaths, etc.)
- Requesting to increase pay for part-time employees – in the past had to borrow from autopsies
- Increase for field and autopsy supplies - PPE and body bags
- Indigent burials – funeral homes have paid that, but are now requesting to pass along some of those costs to the County
- Professional services increase; his office needs accreditation
- Vehicle is small and inadequate - requesting to put out of service early and purchase a full-size van

Clerk

Clerk Josie Delvin and Elaine Osborne presented the Clerk's budget and highlighted the following:

- Supervisor Clerk – request to move 75% Current Expense/25% Collection; currently 100% Collection. Lack of revenue due in part to legislation and part to fines imposed - after biennium will probably be the end of the Collection budget. Ms. Delvin said the request was not to save the position, but they needed a supervisor for the front counter.
- Supporting 10 judicial officers is difficult – but because they are bi-county and sometimes they are all in Benton County, they have to attend every court hearing. However, they do not have staff to support 10 judicial officers
- Indigent financial screener program ends this year (pilot project) so salaries and benefits will now be available in Public Safety Tax.

District Court/Probation Assessment

District Court Judge Tanner and Administrator Ela Selga presented the District Court budget and reviewed the following:

- Courtroom safety was the number one issue and they were requesting a Bailiff position
 - Prior reorganization saved \$40,000 so it would not be a full impact

Juvenile Justice

Darryl Banks and Shela Berry, along with Judge Burrowes, presented the Juvenile Budget and discussed the following:

- Detention overtime – have struggled for numerous years – he said in 30 years it has never been adjusted and they were asking for an increase - \$98,796 for Benton County’s portion
- Increase Facilities budget – Admin building is 40 years old and Detention is 22 years old and in need of constant repair - \$57,000
- Legal process supervisor – increase from a grade 12 to grade 16 - over time it has become more sophisticated and requires more expertise – can sustain through grants and contracts
- Accounting Assistant II – union position – request to change to an Accounting Assistant III so they are interchangeable and can cross train - money is available and they are asking permission to work with HR to revise job descriptions
- Grant Reimbursement – using cash carry over to support new programs and flexibility
- COVID response - shout out to IT and Risk Management and partnership with Health District for on-site nursing

Judge Burrowes emphasized the building was a critical need and something had to be done.

The Board discussed the aging facility, the bi-county relationship and the continued effort to remodel or replace the building.

Superior Court

Tiffany Deaton, Marshall Pickett, along with Judge Burrowes, presented the Superior Court budget.

Judge Burrowes expressed appreciation for the upgrades by Facilities to Superior Court and utilizing the CARES funds to upgrade and retrofit the courtrooms. He said the budget they were requesting did not meet their needs, but they understood the financial issues the County was enduring and thought this was the most prudent approach until things changed. Additionally, he said they may need to look at alternatives for offsite jury selection, although they were not asking for that now, but it would be one to two years before they could get caught up on jury trials.

Ms. Deaton said at the last minute they did pull back a lot of requests due to the financial situation but were requesting the following:

- Supplies & services – judicial books and contract services
- Requests for salary adjustments – their Bailiffs are the only ones in the state that carry firearms, and they are commissioned and so were requesting slightly more than the salary survey recommended (they provided 3 options)

- Requesting increases for support staff – they needed more support staff but felt it was more important to assist the ones that have worked hard for them
- State AOC provides a reimbursement for interpreter costs – they just received word they were increasing the reimbursement by \$20,000 so she would provide that to the Finance Department

Mr. Pickett discussed the success of the Drug Court program and said if they could bump of the secretary position to full-time, they could easily represent 85 people in the program.

Sheriff

John Clary, Katie Gillies, and Jonathan Schwarzer presented the Sheriff's budget and discussed the following requests:

Dept. 118

- Civil Clerk – recommendation to move to a grade 10
- Admin Clerk – recommendation to move to a grade 11
- Administrative Clerk (1 FTE) they lost in the split; asking to make office whole again

Dept. 119

- Records Clerk
- Public Records Clerk – recommendation to move from a grade 8 to 10
- Criminologist – asking to move from a grade 10 to 14

Dept. 121

- Court Security – now mandated by Sheriff; previously jail staff was able to manage
 - They were currently using the gang team and asking to back fill those positions, along with equipment, tools and vehicles (3 new positions)
- Overtime budget – it has not kept up with typical salary increases
- Grant related OT
- Travel - expenses related to hiring/training requirements for new employees, travel related to felony investigations
- Contract Services – Lexipol and Power DMS

K9 Boat Patrol

- Requesting rescue boat to be fully funded

Public Safety Tax

- Asking the Board to consider the importance of the 21 positions tied to that tax and if the tax expired or was not renewed by the voters that it would be devastating.

The Board discussed the airplane used by the Sheriff's office and the recent instrumentation upgrades on the airplane and whether there was true necessity to keep the airplane.

Lt. Schwarder said they were revitalizing that program – last year it only flew 12 hours. They were utilizing drones to see if that was a better option but found they did incredibly well in conjunction with each other. He said they added pilots and a training program for the pilots and planned to use it for search and rescue, crime scenes, and with partners in narcotics investigations.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Clerk of the Board

Chairman