

All-Day Budget Meetings

October 17, 2022

10:28 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Grose, County Manager Erik Martin, Lee Napier, Becky Butler, Meja Handlen, Nic Scott, Josh Metcalf, Tina Hemphill

Citizens Budget Committee members: Usha Sahadeva-Brooks, Tim Wood, Paul Crouner, Jerry Villarreal, Rey Rodriguez (11:13 a.m.)

Guest(s): N/A

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

Road Fund

Director present: Josh Metcalf

Staff present: Tina Hemphill

Josh reviewed the Roads Division of Public Works, including its 2022 accomplishments and its 2023 projects. He noted:

- The Roads Division owns and maintains 1,000 miles of road and 220 bridges across the county, which measures 2,500 square miles.
- Property tax and motor vehicle fuel tax are the primary revenue sources for the Roads Division, and the state and the federal government provide additional funding.

Josh reviewed 2022 accomplishments

- Centralia Alpha Road Culvert
- Crumb Road Culvert
- Salzer Valley Road Slide Repair
- Guerrier Road Paving
- Garrard Creek Road Scour
- Countywide Safety Program
- Maintenance
- 112 miles of chip seal, including Pe Ell & Vader
- Striping – regular maintenance and chip seal roads
- Bridge inspections

Josh previewed 2023 projects

- Maintenance (roughly \$3.5 million)
 - Road maintenance
 - Crack seal, pavement repair, chip seal
 - Cement Treated Base (CTB)
 - Striping
 - Ditch and culvert maintenance
 - Snow plowing
 - Shoulder maintenance
 - Mowing and spraying
- Capital projects (roughly \$17.5 million)
 - Bridge and road stabilization
 - Fish barrier (culvert replacements)
 - FEMA repair projects
 - Bridge repair and preventative maintenance
 - Countywide safety and guardrail
 - Reynolds road railroad switch upgrade
 - Jackson Highway turn lane
 - Centralia Alpha Road improvements
 - Reynolds Road and Harrison Avenue (design) improvements
 - Railroad track extension (design)

Josh reviewed the Annual Construction Program for 2023.

Josh noted that Public Works relies on timber revenue and Secure Rural Schools funding. He discussed the unreliability of those funding sources as well as the unstable motor vehicle tax. Josh noted that roughly half of Public Works' staff is housed in the Roads Division.

At 11:05 a.m., the commissioners announced they were taking a 2-minute break.

The meeting resumed at 11:12 a.m.

Assessor's Office

Elected present: Dianne Dorey

Staff present: Lynn Richard

Dianne noted she works seven days a week, up to 14 hours a day, performing many of her office's duties. She said she is requesting funding to hire staff to cover duties she currently does, including running reports and providing administrative support.

\$90,528 for an IT Developer II / Data Base Administrator

Dianne said she is requesting \$90,528 to create an IT Developer II position to run the reports she runs.

\$96,170 for a new Appraiser III position

Dianne said she is requesting \$96,170 for an Appraiser III position to provide the administrative support she currently provides regarding appeals that go before the local Board of Equalization (BOE) and the state Board of Tax Appeals (BTA).

Dianne noted she has not filled the office manager position to that was approved the previous year for 2022.

Dianne noted that the new software will not help streamline efforts and that the incoming assessor would not be able to perform the work.

Dianne said Matt Jaeger was supportive of the proposed IT developer position.

Dianne said the unfilled office manager position will be downgraded to an administrative assistant and will create training manuals, perform cross-training and serve as backup for positions.

Dianne said current staff doesn't have the database talent / training that would be needed to learn how to do the required reporting.

Dianne said the county picked up roughly \$250 million new construction in 2022. She said property values increased 20 percent to 30 percent in some areas from 2021 to 2022.

Dianne said HR did not respond with any concerns regarding having two unions represented in the Assessor's Office should the Assessor's Office house an IT position.

Dianne noted that property values on the east side of the county have increased more quickly than those on the west side of the county.

Commissioner Swope made a motion to recess until 1:30 p.m. Commissioner Grose seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The meeting resumed at 1:33 p.m.

Parks & Recreation and Fair

Acting director present: Steve Wohld

Staff present: Janelle Lindsey, BJ Kuykendall

\$385,000 to create five new Parks positions

Steve said he is requesting \$385,000 to create five new Parks positions: four Maintenance Technician I positions and one Maintenance Technician Senior position.

Steve noted that the county has set aside \$1 million in ARPA funding to address water line issues at the fairgrounds and that the county is looking at REET 2 funds for other improvements.

Steve said the county is installing new play structures and fitness structures at the county's parks. He said the county also has repainted and improved many buildings at the fairgrounds.

Steve said funding could come from the General Fund, a parks tax or user fees – or any combination of those.

He reviewed a camping model that he said could bring in thousands in revenue by 2028:

- 2021: \$10,000 actual
- 2023: \$25,000 actual
- 2023: \$50,000 with a goal of 32 sites 1 night a week
- 2024: \$75,000 with a goal of 50 sites 1 night a week
- 2025: \$150,000 with a goal of 100 sites 1 night a week
- 2026: \$300,000 with a goal of 100 sites 2 nights a week
- 2027: \$375,000 with a goal of 100 sites 2.5 nights a week
- 2028: \$450,000 with a goal of 100 sites 3 nights a week

Eight FTEs to manage the grounds, camping, parks system and buildings. He said this would be in addition to current staffing.

Steve presented an org chart outlining the new positions he is requesting.

Steve said the positions would be cost neutral as of 2028, but he clarified the positions would be needed regardless of whether the county expanded its parks efforts.

Steve said the positions would have work year-round. BJ Kuykendall noted that it wasn't uncommon for employees to put in 70-hour work weeks during the month of August.

Steve said there would be no additional costs for vehicles and uniforms.

Steve said lodging taxes from the fairgrounds would go to the city of Centralia.

Steve noted that funding for the parks started waning in 2008 due to the great recession.

Becky said the parks budget was \$194,000 in 2001.

At 2:35 p.m., the commissioners announced they were taking a three-minute break.

The meeting resumed at 2:43 p.m.

WSU Extension

Acting director present: Gary Fredricks

Gary Fredricks said the proposed contract for Lewis County is \$257,194. He reviewed the services WSU Extension provides for Lewis County and the number of volunteer hours the WSU Extension volunteers provide during classes, workshops, presentations, etc.

At 2:54 p.m., the commissioners recessed the meeting until 3:15 p.m.

Treasurer's Office

Treasurer's Office elected and staff present: Treasurer Arny Davis and Shelly Stewart

\$3,500 to reclassify a position

Arny Davis said he would like to reclassify a position from a 116 to a 118. He said he has been paying the employee out of class for work performed. Arny said he would like to make it a permanent move. He said the cost would be \$3,500.

Arny said the position would work on the county's investment pool.

Arny said he and Shelly will review the office's one-hour lunchtime closure.

Meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m.