

Budget Update

October 28, 2025

2:01 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Becky Butler, Meja Handlen, Geoff Soderquist

Guest(s): None

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

Preliminary budget: Becky Butler provided an overview of the preliminary budget for 2026:

- **Impact:** Budget decisions made so far reflect a \$1.5 million increase.
- **Opioid allocations for 2026:** Need updated payment timeline.
- **Jail medical:** Further information needed regarding Cascade.
- **Youth Advocacy Center:** Fully fund.
- **Salary increases:** Potential salary increases for non-reps and those under collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) will be captured in a Q1 2026 budget amendment, which also could force the need to update internal service rates.
- **ER&R purchases:** Decision needed.
- **Middle Fork water/sewer system:** Because Middle Fork didn't have its own adopted rates, the county has been under-collecting since the county took the water system over in 2020. Geoff said recapturing the costs over one year could increase per-customer costs by up to roughly \$277 per month. Becky said staff will outline possible options to prevent reliance on general fund dollars to subsidize the ratepayers' balances.
- **Next steps:** Review fee schedules, update rates, provide direction regarding levies and refunds.

ER&R purchases: The commissioners directed Geoff Soderquist to move forward with the purchase of two rollers, despite rates not yet being set.

2025 Budget Amendment: Becky provided the following update:

- Adding a decreased rate for Fund 1170 to true up past costs.
- SWWF will need to use reserves totaling roughly \$100,000 but will not need a General Fund transfer.
- Will have one more budget amendment in December.

Risk Pool rates: County faces a 35 percent increase in costs for general liability.

2026 public defense contracts:

- Superior Court seeking a 10 percent increase for units

- District Court seeking increases of \$440 to \$480 per case
- Still in negotiations for Juvenile Court contracts and reviewing past increases

The commissioners agreed to the Superior Court and District Court increases and directed Becky to move forward with those contracts.

Becky provided additional updates:

- Promissory notes will be reinstated in January, and staff also will require verification regarding state assistance at that time.
- Signed a new District Court contract earlier in the day.
- Continued pressure with SC cases and attorneys unable to take on more cases.

The commissioners directed Becky to move forward with the case-weighting proposal, allowing attorneys to factor case weight by each case rather than determine weight on the front end.

Meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.