

Budget Update

November 8, 2023

10:03 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Terry Jouper, Lynn Richard, Ross Nielson, Lee Napier

Guest(s): Tim Wood, Mitchell Roland

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

Becky Butler presented three options for tax levies for the General Fund and Roads

- **Option 1:** 0% increase
- **Option 2:** 1% increase
- **Option 3:** 1% increase and banked capacity

The commissioners reviewed the pros and cons of the three options.

Ross Nielson, Terry Jouper and Lynn Richard left at 10:39 a.m.

Becky said she and County Manager Ryan Barrett are recommending the following:

- **Requests:** Address mandatory costs, hold other requests and encourage offices and departments to absorb costs or use budget amendments if needed.
- **Revenue options:** Use ARPA funds and LATCF funds as allowable. Reinvest to increase investment revenue. Use opioid settlement funds to offset Coroner costs.

Becky said the county also could consider a levy shift.

Ryan outlined cost-saving measures already being taken, including the elimination of the following positions for 2024:

- Chief of Internal Services
- Chief of Internal Services admin
- Housing and Infrastructure Specialist
- Public Information Specialist
- HR Records Manager
- County Manager admin

Becky noted that the reduced positions included layoffs, resignations and unfilled vacant positions.

>> Treasurer

\$5,000: Professional services and communications.

Board direction: Deny. Instruct office to absorb if possible and then request budget amendment in third quarter if necessary.

>> Air Pollution

\$3,900: Increased dues.

Board direction: Postpone decision. Review for requirements.

>> Assessor's Office

\$68,500: Professional services, including software maintenance fees, CoStar and Granicus; smartphones and data use for appraisers in the field; travel and training for continuing education; repairs and maintenance for Ricoh contract; and supplies, including boot allowance.

Board direction: Postpone decision. Ask for clarification regarding cost breakdown.

>> Auditor's Office

\$100,000: Increased costs related to upcoming presidential preference primary. Secretary of State's Office will reimburse the county for its costs.

Board direction: Approve.

\$32,500: \$30,000 to cover extra-help senior financial analyst, to assist with financial reporting and with the Budget Office for Broadband accounting and grant management; and \$2,500 to allow one employee from the financial services department to attend the Tyler Technologies Connect training conference in Indianapolis.

Board direction: Approve \$30,000 request (and review any potential grant funding to offset costs). Deny \$2,500 request and instruct Auditor's Office to absorb if possible and then request budget amendment in third quarter if necessary.

>> BOCC

\$46,500: \$40,000 for lobbyist services and \$6,500 for travel and training.

Board direction: Deny. Absorb if possible.

>> **Boundary Review Board**

\$1,200: Cover training at the WSABRB conference in 2024 for three new members.

Board direction: Approve.

>> **Chehalis Flood Control**

\$9,000: Services associated with the activities of the Lewis County Flood Control District and the flood warning system. Flood Warning System Annual O&M costs and members shares are estimated for preliminary budget. Update final budget based on approval of costs by Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority.

Board direction: Ask PA's Office to review whether the costs can be covered by Distressed Counties funding.

>> **Clerk's Office**

\$18,488: \$14,400 is for the pre-paid Legal Atoms contract (not an actual expenditure). The remaining \$4,088 is a request to maintain the currently budgeted amount for supplies, travel and miscellaneous expenses.

Board direction: Approve funding for Legal Atoms. Instruct Clerk's Office to absorb if possible and then request budget amendment in third quarter if necessary.

>> **County Administration**

\$8,200: Cover supplies and travel/training.

Board direction: Deny. Direct department to absorb the costs.

>> **District Court**

\$47,254: Salary for judge protem, court commissioner's wages; training and travel; and jury duty payroll.

Board direction: Deny. Direct department to absorb the costs if possible and then request budget amendment in third quarter if necessary.

\$160,562: Increased costs for indigent defense.

Board direction: Deny. Direct District Court to request a budget amendment in third quarter if necessary.

At 11:33 a.m., Commissioner Swope announced the board would take a three-minute break, resuming at 11:36 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 11:39 a.m.

>> Jail

Questions:

- Can food or medical services be put out to bid
- What is the level of training needed for “med pass” position
- Could medical services be reduced to 16-hour coverage instead of 24-hour coverage
- Can jail switched to centralized, packaged food rather than prepping meals on site
- What is the per-meal cost, and how does that compare to school and senior center meals

>> Packwood Airport

\$16,281: Operating costs and required grant-matching requirements of FAA agreements necessary for capital-related projects.

Board direction: Approve due to prior obligation.

>> Public Works - DEM

Follow-ups needed: Review proposed increases with Public Works to identify cost-saving measures.

At 12:13 p.m., Commissioner Swope recessed the meeting until 2 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 2:05 p.m. with Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Pollock, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Chief Chris Sweet, Undersheriff Wes Rethwill, Ross McDowell, Becky Butler and Tim Wood in attendance.

>> South County Airport

\$14,988: To cover operating costs as well as grant matching requirements of FAA agreements necessary for capital-related project costs.

Board direction: Approve.

>> Superior Court

\$50,000: To cover attorney fees.

Board direction: Approve using Mental Health tax.

\$155,000: To cover Drug Court House.

Board direction: Approve using Mental Health tax.

\$27,480: Court security contract with PPC Solutions for security in the Law and Justice building resulted in an increased cost as outlined in contract and resolution attached for armed security (as opposed to non-armed).

Board direction: Look into whether the contract could include one armed and one unarmed guard.

Commissioner Brummer joined at 2:10 p.m.

>> Jail continued

\$522,150: Increased costs to maintain food services and medical services.

Chief Chris Sweet said per-meal costs have increased for 2023. He said the current rate is \$3.33 per meal and that costs will increase 4 percent for 2024.

Chief Sweet provided the following follow-up information:

- **Could jail switch to centralized, packaged food rather than prepping meals on site:** Yes, but other entities that have made a similar switch have indicated it wasn't beneficial.
- **What is the per-meal cost, and how does that compare to school and senior center meals:** \$3.33 per meal, which is far less than senior center meals.
- **Could medical services be reduced to 16-hour coverage instead of 24-hour coverage:** It may be possible but it likely would put the county at financial risk. Would need to work with the PA's Office to determine whether it would be allowed.
- **Can food or medical services be put out to bid:** The food services provider was selected through conversations and recommendations from other similar organizations. Naphcare had signed a seven-year contract with the county. The contract will be up for renewal in 2024.
- **What is the level of training needed for "med pass" position:** The Jail is staffed with LPNs. RNs would be the preference.

Commissioner Brummer left at 2:47 p.m.

\$522,150: Increased costs to maintain food services and medical services.

Commissioner Swope proposed reducing the request by \$87,000, putting the total at \$435,150, to reflect the actual cost increases for meals, which had been estimated to require a 9 percent increase but will require a 4 percent increase. Chief Sweet agreed.

Commissioner Pollock suggested switching to a CNA instead of an LPN or RN for the med pass position.

Board direction: Postpone decision.

\$166,250: Increased cost to maintain mental health services.

Board direction: Approve using Mental Health Tax funds.

Commissioner Brummer returned at 3:03 p.m.

>> **Sheriff's Office**

\$576,205: To cover the following:

- Two additional Patrol Deputies to increase coverage.
- Increase in Spillman systems annual fees.
- Needed Sector Printer, Scanners, Radars, Cradlepoint and antennas to equip six patrol vehicles for 2024.
- Increase in cost of needed supplies.
- Renewal of Cradlepoint Netcloud Licensing service for 2024.
- Crossmatch Fingerprint machines yearly maintenance services.
- Replace four Unmanned Ariel System (drone) batteries.
- Annual Satellite service costs for 2024.
- Annual Leads Online System subscription fee for 2024.

Undersheriff Rethwill said the Sheriff's Office currently has three vacancies, with one position to be filled soon by a lateral and two others with potential hires.

Undersheriff Rethwill said two or three sergeants will be leaving in June.

Board decision: Deny request for additional deputies. Instruct office to absorb operating cost increases if possible and then request budget amendment in third quarter if necessary.

>> **Public Works - DEM**

\$168,888: To cover the following:

- Payment for charges for services based on a preliminary per capita rate of \$5.73 and population of 65,675 as of April 1, 2023.
- Additional resources required due to City of Centralia withdrawing, effective fiscal year 2023, as a contract city paying for county emergency management services.
- Grant matching requirements for EMPG and Hazard Mitigation Plan update.
- Impact of transferring Safety Program back to HR. Estimated increase in expenditure by approximately \$55,000.
- Increase in interfund rate charges.

The group discussed costs associated with covering the costs Centralia paid before dropping out.

Commissioner Brummer left at 3:31 p.m.

Board direction: Identify per-capita costs and true up budget figures then resume deliberations Nov. 13.

Commissioner Brummer returned at 3:34 p.m.

>> **Coroner**

Board decision: Approve increase that captures true costs related to pathologists, toxicology tests and indigent cremation. Use LATCF and/or ARPA funds for start-up costs related to buying vehicle, etc., to transfer decedents.

Commissioner Brummer left at 3:43 p.m.

>> **WSU Extension**

\$50,568: To cover increases for County Director, 4-H Agent, Master Gardener Coordinator and Administrative Assistant.

Board direction: Review on Nov. 13.

Meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.