

## All-Day Budget Meetings

October 16, 2023

9 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, County Manager Ryan Barrett, various representatives from the offices and departments reviewing their preliminary budgets, Linda Mastin

Citizens Budget Committee members in attendance: Tim Wood and Paul Crowner

Guest(s):

Recorder: Rieva Lester

**Public comment:** None

**Superior Court** (9 a.m. start time)

**Elected present:** Judge James Lawler

**Superior Office employees present:** Stacey Werner, Susie Palmateer

**Request:** \$50,000 for indigent defense.

Stacey Werner and Susie Palmateer said Superior Court is requesting \$50,000 to cover the mandatory but unpredictable costs associated with non-criminal indigent defense.

In response to a question from Tim Wood, Judge James Lawler reviewed the mandatory metrics used to qualify for indigent defense.

Commissioner Swope asked whether the county has looked into automatic transcription. Judge Lawler said human court reporters provide better services than auto transcription. He noted that the court has two court reporters and uses recording services for the third courtroom when needed. Judge Lawler said the county used to have three court reporters.

Stacey and Susie said bailiffs and court security are listed as “extra help casual.”

Stacey said she will review whether the third court reporter position is still listed.

**Request:** \$141,820 for court security.

**Community Development** (9:29 a.m. start time)

**Representative present:** Long-Range Planner Mindy Brooks

**Community Development employees present:** Sarah Hensley, Brad Clark

**Request:** \$400,000

Seven frozen positions.

Mindy said Community Development's revenue comes from fee schedule, which helps cover staff time for permits; fund balance, which comes from large projects such as the wind farm; and the general fund, which pays for staffing for the comp plan, etc.

Sarah and Mindy said Community Development is seeking a fee increase to cover increased expenses.

Mindy said staff is proposing a 25 percent increase to the standardized building valuation, which would create a 15 percent increase in permit fees.

Mindy said Lewis County's fees rank lowest compared to those of Cowlitz, Yakima, Skamania, Thurston and Pacific Counties. She said that even with the 25 percent increase to the standardized building valuation, which would create a 15 percent increase in permit fees, Lewis County would still have the second-to-lowest fees.

The commissioners discussed the possibility of building in an automatic annual fee increase.

The commissioners directed Community Development to proceed with its proposed fee increase for 2024.

At 10:01 a.m., Commissioner Swope announced the board would be in recess until 10:30 a.m.

Meeting resumed at 10:30 a.m.

### **Clerk's Office**

**Elected present:** Clerk Scott Tinney

**Clerk's Office employees present:** Sara Heinricher

**Request:** \$18,488

Scott Tinney discussed the decrease in Legal Financial Obligations, noting that indigent criminals can petition to have LFOs excused. He noted that LFOs have decreased from \$30,000 annually a few years ago to \$1,400 now in response to actions taken by the state Legislature.

Scott said he is requesting \$14,400 for the three-year contract for Legal Atoms, which already has been paid. He said he is requesting \$4,088 to cover supplies, equipment and training / conferences.

### **Capital Facilities Budget**

**Representatives:** Doug Carey

**Capital staff present:** Steve Wohld, Linda Mastin

Doug reviewed expenditures and projections for the funds covered in the capital funds.

Doug said two bonds expiring in 2024 will eliminate roughly \$500,000 in debt service from the general fund. He said the original jail bond will expire in 2027.

**Request:** None.

At 11:21 a.m., Commissioner Swope announced a five-minute break, with the meeting set to resume at 11:26 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 11:29 a.m.

### **Board of County Commissioners, Budget, County Administration, Distressed Counties and Lodging Tax** (11:29 a.m. start time)

**Office employees present:** Tammy Martin, Eric Eisenberg

### **BOCC**

**Request:** \$46,500

Becky reviewed increases to the BOCC budget. She said the request reflects \$40,000 for lobbyist work and \$6,500 for travel and training.

### **County Administration**

**Request:** \$5,200 for travel / training and \$3,000 for supplies

### **.09 Distressed Counties**

Becky said Tammy Martin has worked hard to track expenditures from awardees to help with projections.

At 11:58 a.m., Commissioner Swope recessed the meeting until 1:30 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 1:30 p.m.

### **Coroner's Office** (1:30 p.m. start time)

**Elected present:** Warren McLeod

**Coroner's Office employees present:** Stephen Wilson

**Request:** \$144,000 to provide decedent removals, bariatric gurneys, radios, regular gurneys and two vans \$68,800, \$75,000 annually. Warren said mortuaries charge \$500 per removal. He discussed his recent increase request.

Withdrawing request for PTE.

**Request:** \$3,735 increase to cover up to eight indigent cremations.

**Request:** \$240,000 for professional services, which covers pathologists for autopsies and external exams; removals, X-rays, labs, TLP database for next-of-kin notifications, toxicology lab, training and accreditation.

The commissioners said they'd like to schedule a follow-up meeting with the Coroner's Office after Becky is able to review the proposal with Warren.

Becky Butler said the county could consider using ARPA funding to cover the costs for transport vans. She said she also will work with Warren to review whether opioid settlement funds could be used to offset costs associated with overdoses.

**Public Health and Social Services** (Animal Shelter, COVID, Social Services, Veterans 2:05 p.m. start time)

**Director present:** Meja Handlen

**Public Health and Social Services employees present:** John Abplanalp and Kendra Garrison

**Social Services:** Grant-funded and supported by local document recording fees. Budget neutral.

**Veterans:** Budget neutral

**Staffing request:** Will be seeking to reinstate Social Services supervisor position.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.