

## **Budget Update**

**January 27, 2026**

**2 p.m.**

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Swope, Becky Butler

Guest(s): None

Recorder: Rieva Lester

**Public comment:** None.

Becky Butler provided the following updates:

**2026 budget:** Working on the following to review by March 2:

- COLA and benefit costs by department and fund.
- Revenue options, including public safety tax and cannabis changes.
- Fund Balance projections for 2026-2028 with new wages.

**2025 year-end**

- Working with the Auditor on finalizing operating transfers - won't need the full \$1.1 million as Public Health doesn't need the transfer.
- November and December sales tax has not yet been received.
- Year-end will close the first week of March.
- Revenue is at \$45.8 million year to date
- Expenditures are at \$46.7 million year to date
- \$1.2 million rolled back in salaries and benefits.
- DNR was \$1.2 million for the year and is expected to drop dramatically in the future.
- Investment interest is at \$3.6 million year to date, a \$369,000 increase over estimates.
- District Court traffic fees and fines totaled \$341,000 over estimates (significant increase in filings: 23,000 in 2025 compared to 10,000 in 2022).

**2026 Budget Amendment:** Upcoming amendment will include the following:

- Attorney fees
- Broadband retainage
- Insurance premiums
- 911 Three Towers project that was approved by the E Board

**Risk Updates**

- Policy updates poised to be adopted Feb. 17.
- Working on finalizing confined space program for Facilities in coordination with LNI.

## **Public Defense**

- Public Defense Ordinance: Scott Gripp is working on an update of the Ordinance following the Supreme Court order eliminating experience as a factor in case weighting.
- Legal financial obligations (LFOs): Proposed legislation HB 2102 would have a negative impact on county revenue and would prevent the county from implementing Promissory Notes.
- Judges have provided positive feedback public defense program and the county's new contract attorneys. Staff interviewed a potential District Court attorney earlier in the day.

**Broadband:** All construction is complete. RBC is doing punch list cleanup (not billable) over the next month. Waiting on a few affidavits from subs.

**Staffing:** Working on recruitment for the Risk Position or a reorg opportunity.

## **Announcements**

- ARPA report completed for Q4.
- Tracking various bills, including:
  - 2442 regarding local revenue options
  - 5912 regarding a potential Indigent Defense task force
  - 2102 regarding legal financial obligations (LFOs)
  - 1592 regarding public defense funding
- Group seeking expansion of BOCC from three to five has called for information regarding BOCC costs.
- Working on rental policy for use of county rooms.
- Looking at "parametrics" insurance for natural disasters.

Meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.