

**FISCAL 2002-2003 BUDGET HEARING MINUTES
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2002
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CHAMBERS, ROOM 112
FIRST FLOOR, COUNTY-CITY BUILDING
5:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Bob Workman, Chair
Kathy Campbell
Larry Hudkins
Ray Stevens

Commissioners Absent: Bernie Heier, Vice Chair

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer
Bruce Medcalf, County Clerk
Trish Owen, Chief Deputy County Clerk
Gwen Thorpe, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Dave Kroeker, Budget & Fiscal Officer

The Board of Commissioners public hearing on the Fiscal 2002-2003 budget was convened at 5:03 p.m.

1) PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE FISCAL 2002-2003 BUDGET

Commissioner Workman opened the 2002-2003 Fiscal Budget Hearings and gave a brief opening statement referring to information distributed in the **Lancaster County Budget Highlights 2002-2003 Proposed Budget** document. Commissioner Workman invited those who wished to testify to come forward.

Carol Connor, Director of Lincoln City Libraries came forward and gave a brief overview of the Public library services in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Connor stated that their budget request this year was for \$586,372 which provided for library services including the bookmobile.

Dennis Keefe, Lancaster County Public Defender appeared and reiterated his need for an additional attorney for the felony division of the Public Defender's office. Keefe reminded the Board that his office workload is case driven and the services they provide are mandated. Keefe stated that since 2000 they have seen a 35% increase in felony cases filed. Keefe stated that if an additional attorney is not funded he will be forced to shift an attorney from the juvenile division to the felony division to handle the increasing caseload and to stop accepting juvenile abuse and neglect cases.

Commissioner Stevens asked Keefe if there are any other alternatives to shifting an attorney. Keefe replied that another option would be to have the court appoint an attorney to represent the felony clients at a higher cost. In response to a question from Commissioner Workman regarding the cost of an additional attorney. Keefe responded that it should cost approximately \$55,000 including benefits to hire an additional attorney for the felony division.

Rod Confer, representing the Indigent Defense Committee appeared in support of the Public Defenders request for an additional attorney.

Dan Alberts, representing the Lincoln Independent Business Association (LIBA), appeared and stated that LIBA had some concerns regarding this years budget. Alberts stated that LIBA feels that Lancaster County's budget should reflect an increase that does not exceed the rate of growth plus inflation. Alberts said LIBA feels it would be more accurate to reflect total dollars spent rather than the levy rate in the budget documents distributed to the public. Alberts expressed concern about built-in personnel costs and stated that LIBA feels these increases cannot continue indefinitely. Alberts stated that LIBA is concerned about their ability to be actively involved in the budget process, as it appears that decisions have already been made prior to the budget hearings. Commissioner Campbell expressed the Board's willingness to include a LIBA representative on the County's Budget Monitoring Committee in addition to the current process of County Commissioner representatives serving on LIBA's Budget Monitoring committee.

Robin Hendricksen appeared and stated his concerns about the amount of travel for training and conferences and the lack of a per diem reimbursement process for travel expenditures. Commissioner Campbell relayed to Hendricksen that the Board had addressed that issue in the Spring of 2002 and that they would be happy to provide him a copy of the policy for his review.

With no other testimony from those in attendance, Commissioner Workman closed the public hearing and the meeting was adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

Bruce Medcalf
County Clerk