

**MINUTES  
DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET HEARINGS  
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING, ROOM 113  
THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2008  
1 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Bob Workman, Chair  
Bernie Heier, Vice Chair  
Larry Hudkins  
Ray Stevens  
Deb Schorr

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer  
Gwen Thorpe, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Dennis Meyer, Budget and Fiscal Officer  
Dan Nolte, County Clerk  
Cori Beattie, Deputy County Clerk

The Chair opened the meeting at 1 p.m..

**County Court (622)**

Present were County Court Judge Susan Strong and Becky Bruckner, Judicial Administrator for County Court.

Bruckner disseminated documentation regarding a five percent cut (Exhibit A) and indicated they decreased their budget as much as possible. She stated she didn't feel an additional five percent decrease was feasible because they have no control over witness fees, guardian ad litem and legal services.

Strong stated they continue to have increases in their caseload noting that it is up 18 percent as compared to the same time last year.

In response to a question asked by Schorr regarding revenue, Bruckner stated they have implemented online payment of tickets via a credit card. She added that County Court also received a grant from the State Highway Department which pays for an individual to schedule time payment for individuals with traffic tickets. Those individuals are allowed 60 days to pay, however, if they don't pay within the allotted time they must go back to County Court for another 30-day extension.

Bruckner stated she did request a new computer for Judge Pokorny and explained that his computer is very old and uses a Windows operating system which is no longer supported.

Workman asked Bruckner if they are able to complete their work in an eight-hour day.

Bruckner responded no.

Bruckner and Strong indicated that the supervisors take work home.

### **District Court (624)**

Present was District Court Judge Karen Flowers.

Flowers gave an overview of the budget request indicating an increase of 2.64 percent.

In response to a question asked by Heier, Flowers said the 17-inch monitors could be replaced as they stop functioning.

Workman asked Flowers what she would cut if they were required to reduce their budget by five percent.

Flowers stated she felt there wasn't five percent of her budget in her control.

### **District Court Clerk (621)**

Present were Simon Rezac, Deputy Clerk of the District Court, and Sue Kirkland, Clerk of the District Court.

Disseminated was the proposed budget for the Clerk of the District Court (Exhibit B).

Kirkland gave a brief summary of the proposed budget and noted that the column reading "Adjustment Fiscal Year 2009" includes a decrease, however, it isn't the requested five percent. Kirkland did state that they are prepared to make the decrease immediately, shown in the "Adjustment FY 2009", if need be. Beyond that, she said, they feel they would be risking employees.

In response to a question asked by Schorr, Kirkland stated they are reflecting an approximate decrease of one percent.

Rezac stated a five percent decrease would be over \$78,000 and by the time you take off personnel costs, building costs and Information Services costs there would be nothing left to operate the office.

Kirkland stated with the one percent decrease they don't expect to come back to the County Board in December for further requests.

Discussion took place regarding a microcomputer request for a laptop, with Rezac explaining that they have enough money in their current operating budget to cover the purchase. He added they would like to purchase the computer now rather than having to wait until August. Also briefly discussed was a request for eight monitors (seven, 17-inch monitors and one, 19-inch monitor) and one new computer.

**MOTION:** Stevens moved and Hudkins seconded to authorize the office of the Clerk of the District Court to proceed with the purchase of a laptop computer from their budget, in the amount of \$2,113.25. Hudkins, Stevens, Heier and Workman voted aye. Schorr abstained from voting. Motion carried.

### **Mental Health Board (751)**

The proposed budget for the Mental Health Board (Exhibit C) was distributed, with Kirkland indicating they decreased legal services (Object 64120) by \$1,000 and consulting services (Object 64150) by \$2,600.

Meyer stated their proposed budget for 2009 is less than the 2008 budget.

### **County Extension (645)**

Present were Gary Bergman, County Extension Agent, and Kay Coffey, Administrative Aide.

Bergman reviewed the budget request and stated a five percent decrease wouldn't be feasible and would mean a reduction in employees.

Bergman stated he does have a request, for approximately \$5,000, for four computers and one laptop, however, he would be willing to forego the request.

## **Property Management (066)**

Present was Don Killeen, Property Manager.

Killeen gave an overview of his proposed budget, noting a 3.59 percent increase. He added he does show a deficit in revenues due to available space at Trabert Hall.

Killeen reviewed Capital Outlay stating that the installation of a new air conditioning unit to correct an overheating situation at the Motor Vehicle Facility, replacement of an emergency generator fuel tank at Mental Health and fire panel at Trabert Hall are not mandatory at the present time. He indicated repairs such as concrete sidewalks, floor covering and water heater(s) need to be done.

Killeen stated the only area which could possibly be decreased would be cleaning. He said he visited with Michelle Schindler, Youth Services Center Director, who indicated she may be able to have some of the cleaning done by in-house staff. Killeen stated the cleaning at Trabert is done through a program at the Mental Health Center and could be affected if cuts are made in that area.

## **Public Defender (625)**

Present was Dennis Keefe, Public Defender, and Monica Ross-Williams, Office Manager.

Keefe gave an overview of the budget request (Exhibit D) and stated that the University of Nebraska Policy Research Center is conducting a study regarding caseload which will impact the budget.

Also distributed and briefly discussed was documentation regarding the increase of new felony cases, new misdemeanors cases and new juvenile cases (Exhibit E). In the last, five years, Keefe stated, felony cases have increased from 1,383 cases to 1,577 cases and misdemeanors have increased from 2,749 to 4,291 cases with the largest increase relating to thefts, trespassing and disturbing the peace.

Keefe stated he is requesting a new full-time employee (FTE) to assist his office and referred to documentation distributed regarding attorney and support staff information (Exhibit F). He explained they need an individual to make up the files, type and run documentation to and from the courts and the County Attorney's office.

Keefe suggested the contract relating to reimbursement for services in cases filed by the City Law Department (Object 54840) be reviewed and possibly be increased by \$75,000 to \$100,000.

Workman asked Keefe if he had to decrease his budget by five percent where he would make the cut.

Keefe stated he would likely eliminate his juvenile division.

Hudkins asked Keefe if he would be willing to hire two part-time individuals, with no benefits, instead of one full-time employee.

Keefe responded yes.

Discussion took place regarding whether the County would have the ability to hire a Magistrate to handle cases at night for bookings into the jail, bonding and weekend and evening releases.

### **County Attorney (652)**

Present were Gary Lacey, County Attorney; Eileen LeGrande, Operations Manager, and Joe Kelly, Chief Deputy County Attorney.

Lacey reported they spend \$32,000 annually for telephone usage and \$2,800 for long distance calls and suggested using cell phones instead of Centrax.

Schorr asked what was driving the increase in medical services, consulting services and Information Services.

LeGrande stated Information Services supplies her with the figure for the budget. Medical Services, she stated, is the contract with Dr. Okoye and pointed out that there will not be sufficient funds to complete the current year which is the reason she increased the proposed amount.

Lacey stated he believes there is an interim study group that will be meeting to discuss the issue of whether the State should take over coroners services. He suggested that if the Board is supportive of the State taking over those services they should let the Judiciary Committee know.

In response to a question asked by Meyer regarding a paralegal position, Lacey stated it was not necessary to fund the position.

Discussion took place regarding a request for new computers. LeGrande stated there were four computers operating with Windows 98 which is no longer serviced by Microsoft and three operating with Windows 2000. The remaining computers are approximately five years old. Lacey stated their computers won't be able to run the case management system when it's operational and added that the company implementing the system has indicated they will need 19-inch or 20-inch monitors to be able to view everything.

### **Corrections (671)**

Present were Mike Thurber, Corrections Director, and Angie Koziol, Business Manager.

Thurber gave an overview of his budget request and presented the following documents (Exhibit G):

- \* Lancaster County Corrections Summary Analysis of Request Budget
- \* Total Days Served, Fiscal Year 1991 to Fiscal Year 2008
- \* Lancaster County Corrections Department Average Population by Month Including Off-Site Counties
- \* Lancaster County Corrections Department Monthly Status Report (Calendar Year 2008)
- \* Lancaster County Corrections Department Monthly Status (Fiscal Year 2008)

Thurber stated he would have a \$300,000 carryover in his budget and discussed his request for a new mower/tractor. Board consensus was to work with the Purchasing Department to begin the process for the purchase of a new mower/tractor.

### **Miscellaneous Budgets**

Meyer gave a brief summary regarding the following miscellaneous budgets:

- \* General Government (612)
- \* Justice System (628)
- \* Human Services (805)

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:** Heier moved and Stevens seconded adjournment of the departmental budget hearings at 4:27 p.m.. Heier, Schorr, Stevens, Hudkins and Workman voted aye. Motion carried.

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Dan Nolte  
County Clerk