

## BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** May 11, 2022

**TIME:** 9:00 am

**Members Present:** Scott W. Myers, Sam Palmer, Rob Stewart, Amy Kreger, Bob Quinton, and Jim Hamsher via telephone.

**Members Absent:** None.

**Others Present:** Budget Officer Julie Ellison, Recorder Laurie Cates, John Rowell, Louis Provencher,

**General Discussion:** Bob said public comment will be accepted, but advised people to raise their hands and wait to be called upon.

**Minutes.** The minutes of April 13<sup>th</sup> were reviewed. **MSP: Amy/Sam: to approve the minutes as presented.**

9:03 am John and Charlene Morris entered.

### GENERAL FUNDS

**Department: 101100 NON-DEPARTMENTAL  
Revenue**

**Page 1-2**

Discussion General: Bob announced the committee received an email from the Treasurer last week indicating an error had been discovered in the cash carry over. Julie reported there is only \$20,000 in contingency instead of the \$369,970 previously reported. Julie has made the recommendation to abolish the reserve accounts. Due to this, the committee needs to go through all of the accounts again. Amy said department managers should be allowed to be in attendance if cuts in their department are discussed. Amy asked if maybe the committee needs to begin by looking at cutting non-mandated departments first. She added that she will not vote to approve a budget that is irresponsible. Bob said he suggested cutting hours across the board last year. Sam agreed that maybe the idea of hours reduction should be looked at.

9:08 am Mark Webb entered. 9:15 am Watermaster Eric Julsrud entered.

Discussion General: Amy asked if the court intended to move forward with the increase in hours for commissioners given the budget problems and Sam and Scott indicated they were not, but still plan to form a compensation committee for the future. Bob further suggested looking at historic staffing in departments compared to the current levels. Scott also suggested the COLA might need to be looked at. Julie reported on the union requirements for a COLA and added the

increase to the general fund is only \$66,000. The general fund also contributes to emergency management and seniors (special funds) and the cost is around \$100,000. Reducing the hours for the Senior Programs Manager to 32 was discussed briefly. Julie suggested the committee begin with the general fund and work through it.

**Department: 101414 COUNTY SHERIFF**

**Page 6-7**

**Staff Present:** Sheriff Todd McKinley.

### **Revenue**

Discussion General: Todd has not heard from the school or the City of Prairie City regarding contracts, but has heard from the Education Service District that they may contribute \$40,000 for a truancy program. Todd attended the City of John Day Council meeting last night and they officially dissolved their police department. Amy and Bob stated the newspaper reported that John Day had approved their budget without contributing any funds to the county for policing. When asked about the COPS Grant the City of John Day returned, Todd explained the restrictions of the policing grant.

3030179 Prairie City/John Day Contract: Julie said this line may need to be reduced to remove the proposed contribution from the City of John Day. Jim said he is going to ask the Prairie City Budget Committee to allocate \$40,000 for a policing contract.

### **Expense**

Discussion General: Julie said many lines in the expense budget will need to be adjusted if the proposed new employees are removed from the budget. Julie asked Todd if he knew of anything in his budget that can be removed. Todd reported they need the extra bodies because they are running ragged. Amy challenged the County Court to look at a county wide policing levy. Sam said he started to look into this and it was too late to get it on the May ballot. Julie asked Todd if there was anything he could cut and he replied he is leaving this to the budget committee to decide. Amy asked about the reserve program. Todd reported it is difficult to have reserve deputies due to state requirements and not having the ability to fund the program. Bob said at the end of the day it comes down to if people want law enforcement or “fluffy” departments. Todd is concerned he will lose staff due to them being over worked and to other agencies paying higher wages. Jim suggested allocating the majority of the ARPA funding to law enforcement. He acknowledged it is a short-term fix, but would allow for more deputies until 2026. Amy asked how much money is available? Jim said there is around \$700,000 that has not been allocated yet. Julie estimated there is around \$800,000 available. John Rowell believes it would be difficult to recruit new officers for a year or two or employment and Todd agreed. He added going out for a police bond is necessary to continue to fund the department. Mark Webb asked Todd if there was a needs assessment to determine staffing levels. Todd reported there is already a general tool that says 2 officers per 1000 people. In order to reach this mark the department would need 14 officers. Amy

challenged Todd to try to increase jail revenue. He said it will never happen because of the state's position to not incarcerate people. Mark Webb stated when he was in office the PILT funding was around \$300,000 and they had balanced budgets and excess funding and he's astounded that with the increase to \$700,000 that the budget is the way it is. He added he isn't criticizing, just questioning what has changed.

5100003 Deputy Patrol Salary: This line may need to be reduced to remove the 3 proposed new employees.

5100004 Deputy Clerical Salary: This line may need to be reduced to remove the proposed new clerical position.

5200006 Fuel – Vehicles: Todd said this months fuel bill was \$5,000 and they have tried to reduce travel, but it is still extremely expensive.

**Department: 108100 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

**Page 32-33**

**Staff Present:** Emergency Management Coordinator Eric Bush.

**Expense**

Discussion General: Bob stated his understanding is this office is moving to the old road department building. Eric said it is and ARPA funding is paying for the remodel and maintenance costs will be offset from what is not being paid for maintenance at the current location. Phase 1 of the remodel is costing around \$100,000 and include long-term capital improvements that increase the value of the facility. Eric gave examples of some of the upgrades. Amy asked why a supplemental budget wasn't held for the received ARPA money and Julie reported it is because the money was received into the general fund and didn't reach the 10% threshold increase. Eric has applied for a federal grant to fund Phase 2 and explained the analysis he conducted when he started working here. He said there is currently no emergency operations center that would support the community needs in the event of a disaster and the old road building became the most obvious and cost-efficient solution. Phase 2 will include moving Search and Rescue equipment to the facility and out of the Road Department shed. Property maintenance will then move to the Road Department from the L-Building. There is no match requirement for the grant Eric has applied for to fund Phase 2. Bob asked about the salary match from the state. Julie said it is a 50-50 match, but the state will only pay up to \$65,000. Bob asked if the grants weren't received what would happen to this department. Eric said it would not affect operation of his department, just improvements. If the money is received the improvements won't happen. Mark Webb said when he was in office emergency management fell to the County Court and they did a poor job of it.

**Department: 101100 NON-DEPARTMENTAL**

**Page 1-2**

**Revenue**

Discussion General: Bob asked if Julie was confident in the revenue figures she has in the budget and she indicated she is.

## **Expense**

5200027 Public Health Support: Bob asked to discuss this because of the deficit needing to be addressed. Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) has requested \$45,000 from the general fund. Mark Webb said when he was in office they didn't contribute to public health, but most other counties did. He said the services have increased over the years and the decision needs to be made about the importance of these services. Scott added the County Court is the Local Public Health Authority, but contracts with CCS and if the county doesn't support them he feels the court would be turning it's back on itself. He believes the county owes support to CCS.

10:26 am The committee took a 10 minute break.

10:41 am The committee returned to session.

## **Department: 101458 ECONOMIC STABILIZATION**

**Page 24-25**

**Staff Present:** Economic Development Director Tory Stinnett.

### **Revenue**

Discussion General: Tory provided a handout to the committee regarding current fiscal year projects and spending. Amy asked where to find how project money has been spent and Tory showed the committee where to find this. She also provided a handout showing the housing analysis proposed for the upcoming fiscal year. Bob asked Julie how long it had been since John Day had contributed to this budget. Julie replied they have not since she has been in office. Title III funding is going to be reduced from \$70,000 to \$25,000. Jim believes with changes to Title III that should be upcoming there may be money to increase the funding again. Bob asked what project development includes. Tory explained this is used for things like copy fees, the copier lease, and attorney fees to review proposed contracts. Tory said the cost to the county to run this department for the upcoming year should be around \$30,000. Bob said without the grant funding included, the revenue to the county would only be approximately \$36,000 and the deficit would be well over \$100,000. Tory reported the deficit would be more like \$87,000. Bob listed off several different entities in the county that provide similar services. Tory disagreed and explained differences she sees with the services offered. Mark Webb believes this department is important and doesn't know how a dollar amount can be placed on it. Bob advised this is strictly about looking at cutting money and the benefit to the citizens of the county. Tory expressed her opinion that this is an important department working towards the future of the county and cautioned against cutting it. Charlene Morris feels like economic development focuses on the cities and not outside of them. She finds the constant talk of strategizing offensive and isn't sure the people need all of the help the government thinks they need.

10:58 am Frances Preston entered.

Mark Webb believes the department is more focused on community development as a whole instead of strictly economic development. John Morris asked if the

committee was looking at non-mandated departments as mentioned in a previous meeting. Bob replied this is what the committee is doing. Sam asked if some of the expenses in the budget could be cut back. Tory believes she could find some areas to cut. Mark Webb asked if the county had thought about generating revenue from grants by charging administrative fees and said he doesn't need an answer today, but wanted the court to think about it. Several suggestions for additional funding was discussed, but Bob reiterated the committee must work with concrete numbers at this point.

**Department: 101411 JUSTICE COURT**

**Page 3**

**Staff Present:** None.

**Revenue**

Discussion General: Bob appreciated the email the Judge Stinnett provided to the committee, but is still concerned with the uncollected fines. Amy also doesn't understand why a part-time person is needed if things are sent to collections. Sam asked how former Justices of the Peace ran the department with one staff member. Julie said the revenue projections have been higher than what has been received in the past and then the general fund has to back fill.

**Expense**

5100003 Clerical 50%: Bob recommended eliminating the half-time clerical position. **MSP: Rob/Amy: to eliminate this position.** Sam asked what the cost savings would be for this. Julie reported the salary, insurance and costs for taxes is around \$30,000.

**Department: 101412 PERSONNEL**

**Page 4**

**Staff Present:** HR Manager Laurie Cates

**Department: 101413 COUNTY CLERK**

**Page 5**

**Staff Present:** None.

Amy asked for an overall estimate of what the shortage actually is that the committee needs to address. Julie estimates at least one million dollars and there should be around \$800,000 in ARPA funding available.

**Department: 101415 COUNTY TREASURER**

**Page 8**

**Staff Present:** Treasurer Julie Ellison.

**Department: 101416 COUNTY COURT**

**Page 9**

**Staff Present:** Judge Scott Myers, Commissioner Palmer and Commissioner Hamsher via telephone. Bob suggested keeping this fund as is because the compensation board will not be in place within the next 45 days. Sam believes it needs to remain the same due to funding. Mark Webb asked how much the Road Fund pays for this fund. The Road pays over \$300,000 in administrative costs per year which basically funds this department.

**Department: 101417 COUNTY ASSESSOR**  
**Staff Present:** None.

**Page 10**

**Department: 101418 COURTHOUSE & CO BLDGS**  
**Revenue**

**Page 11**

3030118 Courthouse Rentals: Bob asked if this amount will actually be received (\$26,500). Julie said if a new office could be found for Economic Development that building could be rented for probably \$2,000 per month. Sam said office space seems to be difficult to find. Julie added there is a lot of space in the basement.

**Expense**

5100001 Janitor: Julie said if this position were moved to 19 hours instead of 25 hours per week it would save around \$11,000 per year. Bob is frustrated that every time a cut is proposed nothing happens. Amy again suggested cutting hours across the board. Amy said the committee could recommend a percentage of cut and it would be up to the court to decide how those hours work. Mark Webb believes moving forward it is important to discuss what positions are more necessary than others.

5100002 Bldg Maintenance/Grounds: Bob asked how much money could be saved if this position were reduced to half-time. Julie estimated \$35,000 or more. Scott said this position is currently busy all the time.

**Department: 101419 COUNTY CORONER**

**Page 12**

**Department: 101420 DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
**Staff Present:** None.

**Page 13**

**Expense**

Discussion General: The committee would like to have the DA return to meet with the committee.

5100003 Deputy DA: Rob said several years ago the committee provided the DA with a Deputy DA after he agreed to be county counsel and then pulled that funding back after the DA decided not to perform those functions. Rob believes this should be a state problem and not a county problem and that the state should fund the Deputy DA. Rob suggested eliminating this line item.

**Department: 101422 COUNTY SURVEYOR**  
**Staff Present:** None.

**Page 14**

**Department: 101425 WATERMASTER**  
**Staff Present:** Watermaster Eric Julsrud.

**Page 15**

**Department: 101426 COUNTY LIBRARY**  
**Staff Present:** None.

**Page 16**

**Expense**

Discussion General: Bob asked what happens if a new Library is built in John Day? Sam said the court has not been approached about this issue. Scott reported the County owns the current Library and all the contents. Discussion about the history of the new Library plans followed. Jim expressed concern about the costs to the County for maintenance and upkeep of a larger facility.

**Department: 101430 ELECTIONS**

**Page 17**

**Staff Present:** None.

**Department: 101439 JUVENILE DEPT**

**Page 18**

**Staff Present:** None.

**Expense**

Discussion General: Bob asked what the move of this department is costing the county? Julie said the cost right now is around \$4,000.

**Department: 101451 RELIEF HELP**

**Page 19**

**Revenue**

Discussion General:

3030193 COVID 19 Fiscal Recovery: Amy asked how much has been spent year to date and what the balance will be. Julie estimated \$185,000 will be carried over to Fiscal Year 22-23. Frances expressed concern that the county is not bringing in additional funding after 2024 for law enforcement and what will happen in the future when this revenue is gone.

12:00 pm The committee took a lunch break.

1:04 pm The committee returned to session.

Julie advised the committee that Jim Carpenter can be here around 2 pm. Jim Hamsher suggested asking all the departments to look at their budgets again and try to cut costs. Amy said from what she has seen the departments were all very responsible and cutting a thousand here and there isn't going to fix the large shortfall.

**Department: 101414 COUNTY SHERIFF**

**Page 6-7**

**Staff Present:** None.

**Revenue**

Discussion General: Bob discussed the revenue versus expenditures in this budget and believes there is actually a shortfall of approximately 2.4 million dollars. There is virtually no cash carry over from the general fund, but if ARPA money of around \$850,000, and \$520,000 in eliminated reserve accounts is used that still leaves around a 1.1 million shortfall by Bob's estimate.

3030188 School Resource Officer: There is no contract in place for this right now.

## **Expense**

Discussion General: There is over a million-dollar shortfall and Bob questioned how to come up with this money. Jim reported there is legislation that should provide for an additional estimated \$900,000 in revenue that could be used to help with this. He is hoping to have more information by the next meeting and said it is a US House and Senate bill. Bob asked if Jim knew if there were any strings attached to the spending if this money arrived and Jim believes it will be similar to the ARPA requirements.

5100003 Deputy Patrol Salary: Bob asked what the savings would be if the 3 requested positions were removed and Julie said around \$300,000 plus the savings for equipment and training. Bob suggested eliminating the positions for now with a caveat that if the additional funding arrived that Jim mentioned it could be looked at again. Charlene Morris believes there is not much choice and the county needs to look at a levy. Amy said if a levy were passed the money still wouldn't begin to come in until 2024. Sam expressed concern with officer and citizen safety and there are a lot of jobs out there that pay a lot more than what our current officers make. It is a real balance to retain the current officers we have and provide them with the resources they need. Sam said he has made it very clear that public safety is the last thing he would cut. Jim agreed with Sam. Mark Webb pointed out the Sheriff's deputies and City of John Day police used to provide back-up for each other. John Morris asked about liability to the County if a deputy was hurt without back-up.

5100006 SAR – Forest Patrol: Bob asked about this position and the current status of funding. Julie said as of right now there is only around \$600 for the remainder of the year. Julie was advised by the Sheriff that the ATV grant would help offset costs for the upcoming fiscal year.

5100013 Corrections Officers (10): Rob stated there are 12 corrections officers currently monitoring 6 adults in custody and questioned if this was necessary. John Rowell pointed out no matter how many prisoners are in custody certain staffing levels must be maintained. Rob asked if two Sergeants were really needed and suggested this could be reduced. Julie pointed out these two employees are exempt and don't accrue overtime which saves money. Bob mentioned looking into turning this over to a private entity. Amy asked what the cost saving was if hours were reduced for employees. Julie calculated the estimated general fund cost savings, without elected officials and without the Sheriff's Department, would be around \$165,000 per year if cut to 32 hours per week. Bob pointed out there would be a huge morale issue if regular employees hours were cut and elected officials were not. Scott agreed any reduction in hours should include elected officials. Rob suggested not funding the additional requested patrol/clerical positions and cutting some of the capital outlay requests.

5200036 Mental Health Serv: This line is used to pay for required psychological examinations for new hires and for mental health services for adults in custody. It was suggested that the amount in this line item be decreased because to date only \$4,000 has been spent.

5400001 Capital Outlay-Equip/Furn: Julie said there is \$43,000 budgeted for body cameras in this line and questioned if they could purchase less expensive cameras.

Amy asked Julie about when we might know if additional funding will be received and the timeline to complete the budget process. Julie said the budget has to be adopted by June 30<sup>th</sup> and she has to have the process completed by Memorial Day in order to publish notice in the newspaper and have the final budget hearing.

1:38 pm District Attorney Jim Carpenter entered.

**Department: 101420 DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

**Page 13**

**Staff Present:** DA Jim Carpenter

**Revenue**

3030134 Child Support-incentive: Carpenter reported this has historically been done by a legal assistant in his office. When the previous legal assistant left and a new one was hired, the expectation was that the legal assistant would be allowed to get their feet under them and then the state would come in and train them. The time spent on child support enforcement is two-thirds reimbursed by the state. Julie stated historically this has amounted to around \$20,000 per year. Carpenter advised the committee that he believes the new legal assistant will be working on child support enforcement when the new fiscal year begins.

**Expense**

5100003 Deputy DA: Rob said several years ago the committee provided the DA with funding for a Deputy DA and asked why this funding is back? Carpenter said this was funded by grant dollars and then they didn't get the grant. Bob asked what would happen if this position wasn't funded and Carpenter had a conflict. Carpenter said the state would not send anyone to help and he would have to reach out to neighboring prosecutors for assistance and he would then need to return the favor in kind which wouldn't cost the county anything. Carpenter said he could work twenty-four seven and not get caught up. The part-time deputy currently works 600 hours per year and provides a lot of research assistance. The state will only send attorney general assistance if it is a serious felony matter. Carpenter said they have asked for Deputy DA funding in the next grant cycle, but the struggle will be to get someone to come here and we can't compete with the wages paid in other counties. John Rowell stated it almost seems ludicrous to even arrest people when prosecutions can't be completed.

**Department: 101452 VETERAN'S SERVICE**

**Page 20**

**Staff Present:** None.

**Expense**

5400002 Capital Outlay – Vehicles: There is \$30,000 in this line item to purchase a four-wheel drive vehicle for the VSO. The VSO will trade the current vehicle in.

**Department: 101453 PLANNING DEPT**

**Page 21**

**Staff Present:** Planning Director Shannon Springer.

**Expense**

5100001 Planning Director: This position used to be a three-quarter time position, but is now full time.

5200010 Contract Services: The committee discussed the \$10,000 in this line to assist with mapping in the county.

**Department: 101456 4-H & EXTENSION**

**Page 22**

**Staff Present:** None.

**SPECIAL FUNDS**

**Department: 102100 ROAD**

**Page 26-28**

**Staff Present:** None.

**Expense**

5100005 Equipment Operator (11): Rob asked why there is a position being advertised in this department when there are cuts being discussed in other departments?

**General discussion:** Bob suggested the three citizen budget committee members now need to defer to the court members to make some decisions about potential cuts. Sam said he needed to have monetary figures to make those decisions. Julie reported the budget currently only has \$20,000 in contingency and that could be wiped out if just one department didn't bring in projected revenue.

**Department: 108100 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

**Page 32**

**Staff Present:** None.

**Expense**

Discussion General: The committee discussed what would happen if emergency management were not funded and Scott said it would fall back on the county court. Jim outlined the grants that the emergency managers have received and administered. Frances Preston believes the emergency manager is now an employee of the Sheriff's Department and the county should only be contributing \$30,000 towards this as was done in the past. Sam clarified the emergency manager does work under the Sheriff, but has a separate budget and does not perform patrol functions.

Mark Webb asked what the dollar deficit is. Amy and Bob said it is close to 1 million dollars. Webb asked what it was last year. Julie reported it was around \$400,000 last year. Bob asked what Harney County did with their deficit. Scott believes they cut hours and froze wages. Amy asked the court members to put the budget discussion on the next county court agenda and to bring ideas to the budget committee at the next meeting. Julie asked the court members to each come and meet with her before the next court date to go over figures. Preston urged the court members to take a hard look at departments and cuts and prioritize what is most important. Amy challenged the court to begin working to get a policing district on the November ballot. Julie asked what departments the budget committee would like to see at the next meeting. Rob would like the Sheriff to return. Discussion followed about making additional cuts to the Sheriff's budget and there were suggestions about how to do this. Rob asked about the possibility of requesting additional state troopers be stationed in John Day. Bob requested each budget committee member bring recommendations for cuts to the next meeting. He added discussed cuts are not personal; it is strictly about numbers.

Meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m. the next meeting will be on May 18, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Stewart  
Secretary