

## BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** May 12, 2021

**TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

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

**Members Absent:** Amy Kreger.

**Others Present:** Budget Officer Julie Ellison, Laurie Cates, Frances Preston, Charlene Morris, and Reporter Steven Mitchell.

**Minutes.** The minutes of April 28<sup>th</sup> were reviewed. **MSP: Myers/Stewart: to approve the April 28<sup>th</sup> minutes as presented.**

1:02 pm – Mary Ellen Brooks entered. 1:10 pm – Kathy Stinnett entered.

**General Discussion:** Bob summarized the discussion regarding potential furloughs from the last meeting and asked if the County Court had held a Department Head meeting. Sam advised a meeting was held, but he was unable to attend. Jim said he and Scott attended the Department Head meeting yesterday and explained some funding that is supposed to be received including around \$900,000 in PILT funding and possible funding for lost timber revenues. Jim is hopeful that this funding will assist with the shortfalls for this upcoming fiscal year. Bob asked if the Court members had done calculations for the American Rescue Act (ARA) funding to determine how much can actually be used. Bob said the calculations are complex and are supposed to be projected over the next 5 years. Jim said legal counsel would be consulted before money was spent. Jim said the total amount to be received over the next 2 years from the ARA is about 1.39 million. Julie stated her understanding is that the county can allocate \$25,000 per person for essential workers that have worked during the pandemic. Sam pointed out that the ARA references keeping government running. Sam suggested looking at lost jail revenues as a possible reimbursable expense. Bob read a portion of the treasury instructions for calculating lost revenue which gives an indication of the complexity of the calculations. Bob wants to ensure the county is protected and the process is done correctly. Frances Preston asked for clarification on the \$700,000 and what fiscal year it is actually going to be received in. Bob said the money will be received this year and carried over into the upcoming fiscal year. Rob pointed out that Julie pulled money out of reserve funds to balance this budget and suggested the incoming money be put back into those reserve accounts. Julie said increased personnel costs have been the main drain on the budget and have just added up over the years. Mary Ellen Brooks expressed concern that the county is spending money it doesn't have. Frances said her recollection is when former Treasurer Kathy

Smith was here she attended County Court whenever there was a budget item on the agenda and advised the court when there wasn't funding available. Julie pointed out that although she doesn't attend court for these she does speak to all of the court members prior to decisions being made and gives them her opinion. Scott said the structure is a bit different now than it was in the past. Steven Mitchell asked what Scott meant by a different structure. Scott gave an example of in the past departments had to request court approval for capital outlay purchases over \$100 and the court changed this amount to \$500. Bob asked what opinions department heads expressed at the meeting yesterday. Scott advised no one wanted to see furloughs happen. Bob replied that is understandable, but something needs to be done. Jim would prefer to wait and see what funding arrives before deciding on cuts.

1:27 pm The committee took a break. 2:12 pm The committee returned to session.

**General Discussion:** Bob said his understanding is we are anticipating receiving \$700,000 in recovery act funding and this money will be going in to the general fund. The county will then research how the money can be allocated and spent. Bob reported the committee needs to start going through the budgets and tentatively approving those that it can. Bob asked if there are any funds that the committee knows are fine and will not need any further discussion.

## **GENERAL FUNDS**

### **Department: 101100 NON-DEPARTMENTAL Revenue**

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Discussion General: Julie went through some changes to the general fund.

3010101 Cash on Hand: Julie advised she will have this figure calculated by the next meeting.

3030135 Electric Gross Co-op: Bob asked why this figure is lower than it has been. Julie had talked with the Co-Op Administrator and said it is because there was an overpayment in a previous year that had to be corrected.

3030198 Close Acct Transfer: Increased to \$519,805.

### **Expense**

5200001 Office/Computer Supplies: Increased to \$25,000 due to necessary computer software updates for security reasons.

5200021 Court Appointed Attorney: Increased to \$8,000 due to COVID restrictions being lifted and more court cases being scheduled.

5200027 Public Health Support: Bob asked if the committee had decided not to provide CCS with any funding this year. Sam pointed out that the recovery act funding can be used for public health services related to COVID. Julie asked the committee to make a decision on whether or not to provide funding now because she needs to have it in the budget. Bob expressed concern that CCS doesn't

provide the committee with the full picture of their budget. His opinion is if CCS were losing a lot of money they wouldn't be operating. Julie pointed out the money received from selling the building to CCS was put into the reserve fund and is now gone. Sam does not want to lose the health department and said many people will go for services there that won't go to the hospital. The committee decided to put \$50,000 in this line for now.

5200080 Grant Match: Julie said this needs to be looked at and a decision made on whether or not to keep \$10,000 in this line.

5200099 Cash Loan Special Funds

2:30 pm Sheriff Todd McKinley entered.

**Department: 101414 COUNTY SHERIFF**

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**Staff Present:** Todd McKinley.

**Revenue**

Discussion General: Rob said although it wasn't Todd's creation, promises were made in the past regarding revenue that was supposed to be incoming and that didn't materialize. Todd expressed his opinion that the revenue projections will not be as high as what was reported and he doesn't see this changing. Todd said they just signed a new contract with the Department of Corrections (DOC), but the DOC doesn't want people in jail. The trend statewide is getting away from sending people to prison/jail.

3030144 Inmate Boarding Fees: This line is set at \$160,000 and it is Todd's hope that this revenue will come in, but it is a guess at this time. The average rate paid to house prisoners from other entities is around \$65 per day. Todd is working with CCS for mental holds who have been violent to staff and the rate for this would be around \$500 per day, but would be very short term until they can be moved to another facility. Todd doesn't see jail bed rentals increasing. Rob asked what the minimum staffing level for the jail is. Todd reported they must have two officers on each shift and a supervisor during day shifts. It takes 5 staff members to get through a 24-hour period. Todd said they have 11 staff members in the jail right now, but some are part time and they are actually short staffed. Bob asked what would happen if the jail were to be closed like what has happened in other counties. Todd said he would still be required to have 24-hour transport staff available along with paying boarding costs to another facility. Sam thinks with the closing of prisons the Sheriff's Department is just going to get busier and Todd advised it is already happening. Frances pointed out that if the City of John Day opts out of having a police department it will fall on the Sheriff's Department. Todd reported if the City decides to not fund their department and fails to pay the county for services then all that will be provided is services for emergencies and nothing else. Todd added if the county ends up with the policing for John Day there will need to be 3 additional officers, a secretary, more vehicles and dispatch costs will most likely double. Frances asked what Todd needs for his department and he responded that he needs to be able to keep his staff and be funded without worrying about losing people.

3030149 Jail Med-Out of Co.

3030179 Prairie City Contract: Julie has to change this from \$48,000 to \$42,000. Jim said now that the recovery act funding is coming in the City of Prairie might be able to go back to \$48,000.

### **Expense**

Discussion General: Bob asked if the proposed Project Turnkey will cost the county. Todd replied that he has not committed any funding to the project. CCS will be the fiduciary for the project.

**Department: 123100 SHERIFF PATROLS**

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**Staff Present:** Todd McKinley.

### **Revenue**

Discussion General: Julie said she will need to move \$40,000 into this fund prior to the end of the fiscal year because it is in the red. Todd said he inherited this fund and it is going to take money to bring it solvent. Julie said best case scenario (including the national forest and BLM reimbursement) is going to equal \$53,387 for revenue. Rob suggested eliminating this fund and including it with the regular Sheriff's Department budget. Julie expressed concern that would take the accountability away from the fund. Bob agreed. Todd would like to see some county funding for this.

3032305 Malheur National Forest: Bob suggested requesting more funding from the Forest Service for forest patrol. Todd reported the employee in this position is a great liaison for the county and the national forest is very happy with the services being provided. Todd said he isn't sure that the billing for this was being done and he has been working to ensure this doesn't happen in the future.

3032380 Forest Title III Search: Julie worries that this money won't always be available.

### **Expense**

Discussion General: Frances expressed concern that if this fund runs out of money for the salary then the employee should stop putting the hours in.

5100001 Salaries Forest Patrols: Bob asked what happens when the salary amount is used up and Todd said he will stop working. Todd has billed for as much as he can from prior bills missed, but can only go back so far. Rob asked for clarification that if the employee runs out of funding for the salary then he will stop working. Julie pointed out that he would probably just take vacation and the county would still need to pay him. Julie suggested maybe making this position 25 hours instead of 30 per week. She added that if the position were made half time (.50 FTE) the entire cost for wages and benefits would be around \$52,000 per year, but this would leave nothing for expense such as fuel, vehicle maintenance, etc.

3:22 pm The committee took a short break. 3:30 pm The committee returned to session.

**Department: 101414 COUNTY SHERIFF**

**Page 6 TA**

**Staff Present:** Todd McKinley.

**Expense**

Discussion General: Rob said this department needs to take a hard look at the costs and expressed concerned that when COVID money is no longer available there could be problems.

**Department: 123100 SHERIFF PATROLS**

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**Staff Present:** Todd McKinley.

**Department: 101411 JUSTICE COURT**

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**Staff Present:** Kathy Stinnett.

**Revenue**

Discussion General: Bob asked if the money Kathy referenced that her half-time employee has collected includes new fines, or just collections. Kathy said just from collections the money brought in was \$4,300 for one month and \$5,000 for the last month. Most of the money brought in returns to the county.

**Department: 101412 PERSONNEL**

**Page 4 TA**

**Staff Present:** Laurie Cates.

**Department: 101413 COUNTY CLERK**

**Page 5 TA**

**Staff Present:** None.

**Department: 101415 COUNTY TREASURER**

**Page 8 TA**

**Staff Present:** Julie Ellison.

Discussion General: Bob declared a conflict and said he will not be discussing this budget.

**Expense**

5100001 Treasurer Salary: Sam said he has brought the stipend up previously and after doing some research he believes it would cost much more to hire someone to act as the budget officer. Kathy said other counties do not pay someone to act as the budget officer. Frances said as a taxpayer she thought the budget officer position was included in the position.

3:43 pm Planning Director Shannon Springer entered.

**Department: 101416 COUNTY COURT**

**Page 9 TA**

**Staff Present:** Scott Myers, Jim Hamsher, and Sam Palmer.

**Expense**

5200022 Water Quality Mgt Plan: Rob asked what this \$10,000 was for? Scott reported this is for a comprehensive plan with DEQ for water flow on the main stem of the John Day River. This is a set aside to build a comprehensive plan for TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) for water quality. Shannon reported the former Planning Director started this, but didn't complete it before she left.

Shannon said it is the responsibility of the county to create this plan, but is beyond the scope of her expertise. Rob suggested giving this to the Assistant Watermaster.

**Department: 101417 COUNTY ASSESSOR**

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**Staff Present:** None.

**Revenue**

3030103 Prior Year Taxes: Julie increased this to \$70,000 because the county receives more than the \$50,000 currently in this line.

**Expense**

5200011 Contracts – Dept of Revenue: Decreased to \$10,000.

5200018 Program Development: Decreased to \$3,000.

**Department: 101418 COURTHOUSE & CO BLDGS**

**Page 11 TA**

**Revenue**

3030118 Courthouse Rentals: Change to \$5,940. Julie reported the Food Bank is going to be moving. Scott said they aren't moving out of the facility, just out of the suite they are storing food in and there is already a renter interested. Scott said the rent will be based upon the square footage and will need to be figured out.

**Department: 101419 COUNTY CORONER**

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**Department: 101420 DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

**Page 13 TA**

**Staff Present:** None.

**Revenue**

Discussion General: Rob asked if the DA is still doing foreclosures and Sam said yes he is.

**Expense**

5100003 Deputy DA: This line pays for an employee to work non-benefited part-time as the Deputy DA.

**Department: 101422 COUNTY SURVEYOR**

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**Staff Present:** None.

3:59 pm Watermaster Eric Julsrud entered.

**Department: 101425 WATERMASTER**

**Page 15 TA**

**Staff Present:** Eric Julsrud.

**Expense**

Discussion General: Rob asked why the county was paying for a position for an assistant to a state office? Sam said this is also a question he has had. Sam expressed concern that not having this position could affect citizens. Rob added this position is not grant funded and has been historically paid by the county. He

wanted to know if the county was allowing the state to get a position without paying for it.

5100001 Assistant Watermaster: Rob asked Eric why this position is paid for by the county. Eric said counties across the state picked up assistant watermaster positions when state funding ended in the 1960's and 70's. Jim asked if not funding the position would directly impact our citizens and Eric said it absolutely would. Eric further explained the amount of land and water rights within the county and how his office has divided duties up in order to provide services to the taxpayers of Grant County. Rob asked how many Watermasters were in the state and how many had assistants? Eric estimates 21 Watermasters and probably 10-15 assistants. Eric said when he started in 2000 there were 4 bodies in his office and since 2005 they have been working with 2 bodies in the office and the work continues to increase. Eric said there is work being done at the state level to take assistant's back as state employees.

5400001 Capital Outlay-Equip/Furn: Rob asked why they are requesting \$1,500. Eric said it is for a new computer for the Assistant Watermaster that will run the required software that the state pays for.

**General Discussion:** Sam asked if the committee was still looking at furloughs. Scott said based on the department head meeting yesterday he believes furloughs are off the table and Jim agreed.

4:11 p.m. Sam motioned to adjourn, Rob seconded, passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m. the next meeting will be on May 19, 2021 at 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Stewart  
Secretary