

## BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** May 18, 2022

**TIME:** 2:00 pm

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

**Members Absent:** None.

**Others Present:** Budget Officer Julie Ellison, Recorder Laurie Cates, Kathy Stinnett, David Thunell, Tory Stinnett, Eric Julsrud, John Morris, Charlene Morris, John Rowell, Louis Provencher, Haley Walker, Todd McKinley, Eric Bush, Laurie Stinnett, and Reporter Steven Mitchell.

**General Discussion:** Bob said public comment will be accepted, but advised people to raise their hands and wait to be called upon. He also asked that any comments received stick to the subject at hand.

**Minutes.** The minutes of May 11<sup>th</sup> were reviewed. **MSP: Rob/Jim: to approve the minutes as presented.**

2:04 pm Frances Preston entered.

**Department: 101414 COUNTY SHERIFF**

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**Staff Present:** Sheriff Todd McKinley and Emergency Management Coordinator Eric Bush.

### **Revenue**

Discussion General: Julie presented some suggested changes to the committee to show possible cuts if additional personnel weren't funded. Julie clarified that these are only suggestions and she did others across the general fund so that if questions were asked she had some figures put together.

3030179 Prairie City/John Day Contract: Amy asked if there was any commitment from Prairie City for funding in this line item. Jim said Prairie City has not had their budget meeting yet and it is scheduled for June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

3030188 School Resource Officer: The school advised Todd they are willing to provide \$50,000 in funding for this position and ESD has agreed to provide around \$40,000 for a truancy officer. He has provided the contracts to the county court and they have been reviewed by legal counsel.

### **Expense**

Discussion General: Todd said he could do without the steel targets, but he is required to provide body armor to staff. Sam asked how Julie came up with the cuts she provided and she said she looked at historical figures and made estimates based upon that and based upon no additional hires. Frances asked if the figures Julie provided would balance the budget. Julie said depending on

which options are chosen it will and could allow for money to be returned to reserve accounts.

5100003 Deputy Patrol Salary: Todd advised the court has been aware since last October that he would need additional staff because of the John Day Police Department being eliminated. Jim suggested ARPA funding could be used until 2026 to fund 2 additional patrol deputies and a part-time clerical and this could buy some time until additional federal funding is received. Bob asked Jim what money he was talking about and Jim reported changing the percentages of SRS funding to increase incoming PILT funding. Julie said money still needs to be returned to reserve accounts as well and spending needs to be cut for the future. Sam spoke with a state trooper and was advised they will only respond to emergency calls within cities. Todd agreed they don't provide the same level of service as the Sheriff's Office. Bob asked how much ARPA money is left and Julie reported there is around \$100,000 from this year depending on what's allocated and another \$700,000 should be received this year. Eric Bush provided a handout showing if the court allocated funding for broadband there would be \$45,000 left this year. Bob asked Julie if she had seen the handout Bush provided and she said she hadn't had a chance to review it prior to the meeting. Bush reported he always copies Julie on the documents he creates to track ARPA funding and he has been tracking the funding since he started work for the county.

5100013 Corrections Officers (10): Rob suggested seriously looking at whether or not the county needs a jail. He said Todd provided a cost of 1 million dollars if the jail were eliminated and adults in custody had to be sent to Norcor. Todd believes they have the figures to show this and there would still need to be transport officers. Frances Preston asked if the county would save money if corrections officers were eliminated. Rob reported that is what he is trying to figure out. Julie advised there have been 4 new positions added in the jail since she started and personnel services keep increasing. In the last 5 years the cost for personnel has increased approximately \$844,000.

5200006 Fuel – Vehicles: Fuel continues to climb so this cost will also continue to increase.

5200011 Uniforms & Clothing: This line item used to include guns and other equipment and has been separated out into different line items and should provide for better tracking.

5200016 Training Fees: The only cost to the county when an employee goes to the academy is in wages, the state pays for the academy cost.

5200038 Communication Maint. & Repair: Jim asked if the communications grant could help with this cost. Todd reported this is not covered by the grant and is for new radios in the jail. The current radios are old and failing and need to be replaced for safety.

5400002 Capital Outlay-Vehicles: Todd said with this removed they will end up with a larger maintenance line for upkeep on the current vehicles.

**General Discussion:** The committee discussed ideas for potential expense cuts. Bob asked for court recommendations for budget cuts. Scott reported they did not come up with a consensus in court today. Jim said he asked each

department to re-visit their budgets for potential cuts. For example, Economic Development Director Tory Stinnett cut \$18,000 out of her proposed budget. Jim read an email from the head of the National Association of Counties to the committee which could provide additional funding to counties for the next two years. Jim estimates it will provide approximately 1 million dollars. Amy expressed concern about spending money that hasn't arrived. The committee reviewed some options provided by Julie. Option A: reducing full time employees to 36 hours per week, not including the Sheriff's Department – savings approximately \$144,659. Option B: reducing full time employees to 32 hours per week, not including the Sheriff's Department – savings approximately \$289,321. If the maintenance person were reduced to 19 hours and the custodian were reduced to 19 hours - savings approximately \$58,317 (but the maintenance person is also included in the 36 and 32 hour figures). Option C includes reductions to several general fund line items from different departments – savings approximately \$373,475. If a contract with Prairie City is included the savings would be around \$400,000. Option D – elimination or cutting of non-mandated departments – savings approximately \$538,786. Bob reminded everyone these are just suggestions. Sam read an email to those in attendance suggesting contracting bookkeeping and payroll duties out to a private entity and wondered what this cost would be. Jim Carpenter is one of the department heads who suggested this. Sam heard a lot of frustration from departments during the court meeting this morning. Jim explained this wasn't due to the court being irresponsible, but rather due to a miscalculation during the budget process. Frances said if HR were eliminated then payroll would have to be outsourced and if not, payroll would be kept in-house. Frances also feels the Treasurer is being unfairly targeted. The antiquated computer system currently in use was discussed. Julie contacted Chaves Consulting who provided the computer system and they provided her with a revenue/expenditure report just like what she can print herself. Bob said after the last meeting he thought there was an error of around \$500,000 and then the newspaper article reported it was \$800,000. Julie advised she believes she made the mistake with the ARPA funding which would be the \$800,000. Bob said he thinks the revenue/expenditure report is actually fairly easy to read. Tory explained how she struggles to know exactly where the funding in her department comes or goes because of the way the current system is set up. Bob believes this is all beside the point and the committee just needs to figure it out. Bob suggested using all of the ARPA funds for the Sheriff's Department and stop working on the new emergency operations center. Sam suggested looking at reducing the ARPA broadband funding because there are other funding sources available. Julie said the email she received regarding ARPA funding didn't seem that cut and dried to her about how the funding could be used. Julie suggested getting a very clear email from legal counsel saying the ARPA money can be used for law enforcement before moving forward. Bob is concerned about the timeframe to get the budget approved in order to meet the deadline for adoption. Amy asked if the court planned on meeting in the near future to provide a recommendation to the budget committee regarding cuts. Scott said he is working to get additional funding for the seniors from Community Connections. The committee asked to see the email from legal counsel regarding ARPA funding use. Frances

requested recognition for the Treasurer of her diligent work in providing information to the committee. She added the court body has not brought anything forward to the committee at this point. Laurie Stinnett said Carpenter mentioned eliminating the stipends during the court meeting and that might be something the committee should look at. Bob would like departments to provide proposed cuts to the court by Monday. Frances questioned if this is possible without knowing how much is needed. She doesn't believe the court has worked as diligently as the other committee members and the Treasurer on this budget. Bob asked everyone to please calm down and reminded those in attendance the committee is working to best manage the citizens money.

3:19 pm The committee took a 10 minute break.

3:29 pm The committee returned to session.

Bob asked Bush if there is something from legal counsel that indicates the ARPA money can be used for law enforcement. Bush sent a request to legal counsel requesting an opinion on the use of ARPA funding and said he was advised it can be used for law enforcement and he will email the opinion to the committee members. Bush is required to submit a yearly report of how the funding is used. Rob believes the committee is at an impasse until the court makes some decision about potential reductions. Future meeting dates were discussed. Bob asked if it was the consensus from the committee to use ARPA funding for the Sheriff's Department. David Thunell asked why a meeting couldn't be held next week? Jim said it provides the court time to come up with ideas. Amy requested the budget committee be invited to a court meeting or hold another budget meeting if additional funding is received. Bob asked if an email can be sent to the committee once the court comes up with some decisions and suggested also possibly posting it on the Treasurer's website. Tory asked the court members if they had any ideas on how this might affect the departments facing the largest cuts. She believes without some idea of what to expect employees will be lost to attrition. Thunell said departments going through and cutting a little bit here and there isn't going to do enough and is a waste of time. Kathy Stinnett advised her budget has already been cut and she won't be doing anything further.

MSP: Scott/Rob – to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m. the next meeting will be on June 1, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Stewart  
Secretary