



CURRY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approval Date:

June 15, 2020

Commissioners' Hearing Room, Courthouse Annex
94235 Moore Street, Gold Beach, Oregon

www.co.curry.or.us

BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 21, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

The meeting was called to order by Chair Alcorn at 9:37 a.m. Present were Chair Brad Alcorn, Vice Chair Richard Thode, Budget Committee Member Court Boice, Budget Committee Member Sue Gold, Budget Committee Member Christopher Paasch, and Budget Committee Member Wayne Richards.

Also present: Legal Counsel John Huttli, Director of County Operations Julie Schmelzer, and Administrative Assistant John Jezuit.

By Phone: Summer Sears, CPA.

2. ADOPTION/AMENDMENT OF AGENDA

Motion by Gold, seconded by Boice, to approve agenda as written. Motion carried unanimously.

3. CURRY COUNTY BUDGET PRESENTED

Schmelzer introduced Summer Sears to the Budget Committee, explained how the public could participate in the meeting by E-Mailing to BOC_Office@co.curry.or.us, read the budget message, advised the County has been keeping track of COVID-19 pandemic related expenses, and summarized changes in the 2020-2021 FY (Fiscal Year) budget document compared to 2019-2020 FY. Schmelzer then summarized each of the individual tabs in the budget book, which resulted in a lengthy discussion. The highlights - -

- Jim Kolen, Assessor spoke about the impact a decades old wage study has on the Assessor's department employee retention issues, noted the length of time for training new employees, stated the Assessor's Department is losing employees to other departments due to higher salary ranges in those departments, asked the Budget Committee to increase the salary allocated to the Assessor's Department to give each staff member a one (1) range increase, and concluded stating the annual CAFFA (County Assessment Function Funding Assistance) grant will increase if the requested salary range changes are included in the 2020-2021 FY budget.
- Thode asked about the amount of the CAFFA grant increase if Assessor's Department salary increases are included in the 20-21 FY budget; and wanted to know, regarding Public Health, whether the County hired any new employees.
- Richards noted a pay scale study will help as Port Orford has lost police officers due to compensation issues, asked if the County is applying for eligible stimulus funding, cautioned the County does not want to be the last to apply, and asked about franchise fees from electric, telephone, and cable utilities.
- Gold asked if other counties employee compensation was checked, suggested doing a supplemental budget once the Assessor's Department is fully staffed, noted the Road

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Department's fuel and oil expenses may decrease due to the effect of the pandemic on the economy, asked if the County may get reimbursed for money spent on COVID-19 pandemic response, and observed cities can charge franchise fees to Coos-Curry Electric, but the County cannot.

- Alcorn observed the County is in a difficult recruiting environment; asked if the courthouse feasibility study includes what to do with the existing facility; stated, regarding communication towers, it's important to have coverage on the rivers; and asked about details on dog licensing.
- Boice stated he appreciates police issues being brought up, stated we saved money by switching from Brandt Media, observed the Road Department has a good relationship with other businesses in the county, praised Becky Crockett, Planning Director, commented we are going to have to battle for COVID-19 pandemic expense reimbursement funding, emphasized we need to keep exceptional records on COVID-19 related expenses, and observed the City of Brookings has an agreement on franchise fees.
- Paasch asked if the professional services in the contract with Juvenile is for the detention center; spoke about the feasibility study which will include the courthouse and jail as well as county offices; praised Richard Christensen's, Roadmaster, work operation, ethics, style, and skill set; observed, due to pandemic's effect on the economy, the County may have an issue with lower than projected 20-21 FY TLT (Transient Lodging Tax) revenues.
- Sears stated she updated the proposed budget to include revised TLT fees.

4. COMPENSATION COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Bruce Raleigh, Compensation Board member, presented the Compensation Board report. Raleigh praised the county staff for giving the Compensation Board adequate and timely information; explained how the Compensation Board used the data provided on peer counties to make their recommendations; stated the Compensation Board recommended (1) a salary increase for the Assessor, Clerk, Sheriff, and Treasurer, and (2) a pay decrease for Commissioners (1) based on the Director of County Operations position which directly impacts the Commissioner functions and (2) observed many of the peer counties can operate with part time Commissioners. A discussion followed- -

- Thode commented the Assessor, Clerk, and Treasurer are below average and stated these are all critical departments, disagreed with the Compensation Board regarding commissioners, stated, based on the amount of work the Commissioners do, part-time time commissioners just don't work; believes a reduction in Commissioner salary is not feasible; and asked what would be better a salary increase or a health insurance benefit increase.
- Richards does not agree with cutting Commissioner salaries as he knows what Commissioners do, and stated an increase in the County's portion of employee health insurance premiums would go directly to the employee as it is not taxed.
- Alcorn observed the Compensation Board has used the same peer group over the years; acknowledges the impact the DOC (Director of County Operations) has on Commissioner functions; stated some previous years did not have increases which causes problems today; feels based on the service provided by the Sheriff's Department, the Sheriff's position could have a higher increase; strongly opposes a Commissioner salary decrease; and believes we need full time commissioners not part time commissioners in this county.
- Huttl explained the salary change process, specifically, salaries are recommended by the Budget Committee, but can only be set by the Board of Commissioners.
- Boice thanked the members of the Compensation Board, stated he works hard, knows his responsibilities, has spent tens of thousands of dollars over the past three (3) years out of his own pocket; and cited five (5) letters he has worked on during the past week that are not the

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responsibility of the DOC. Boice also stated he feels he deserves a raise; but strongly stressed and emphasized he is not asking for a raise, nor will he accept a raise.

- Paasch observed law enforcement is much more difficult now than in the past; commented, because of this, the Sheriff earns his salary every year; stated the Assessor, Clerk, and Treasurer have not gotten a fair shake over past few years; mentioned elected officials are behind in health insurance benefit pay, emphasized he is not in favor of a salary increase for Commissioners, and favors an increase in the health insurance benefit.
- Gold asked if the proposed budget included a salary increase for elected officials and stated a health insurance benefit increase is better to take care of people.

Motion by Alcorn, seconded by Paasch, regarding position of Sheriff, to recommend a salary increase up to 5% and covering a portion of health insurance. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Alcorn, seconded by Paasch, regarding positions of Assessor, Clerk, and Treasurer, to recommend an increase up to 4% per position and explore covering some of the health insurance costs. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Alcorn seconded by Paasch to recommend no change to Commissioner salary, however, leave open the exploration of covering some health insurance cost. Motion carried unanimously.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Schmelzer stated staff has more to add to the Appendix in the Budget Book. Sears commented she is very impressed with the positive improvements the County has made and is impressed with the transparency of County employees.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS/DISCUSS SCHEDULE

The Budget Committee discussed moving the budget forward to a public hearing with or without accepting the Assessor's request to increase Assessor department salaries by one (1) range.

- Paasch spoke about not having the salary study yet, spoke about how much devastation the COVID-19 pandemic will cause to our economy, warned we might come up short, and is concerned about stimulus funding going to metro areas and not rural counties. Looking to the future, Paasch commented on the need to create an emergency funds reserve for such expenditures as communication towers, phone system, and new server; and commented on the anticipated increase in operational efficiency with installation of the new software. Paasch also voiced concern about upcoming union negotiations noting he would be much more in favor of including the increase in Assessor's Department salaries with union cooperation, is fearful of giving up a negotiating point, fearful of a strike in seven (7) or eight (8) months, hopes to see the assessment reappraisal timeline go from twelve (12) to fifteen (15) years to six (6) years, and wants to wait for the wage study completion.
- Gold was concerned about the effect of the Assessor's salary increase request on union negotiating; suggested doing a supplemental budget rather than being pressured, due to CAFFA grant May 1, 2020, deadline, to make a decision today on increasing Assessor's Department salaries; emphasized using a common sense approach to opening the County; and agrees with creating an emergency funds reserve.

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- Alcorn acknowledged the state of our economy may impact the budget, expressed optimism about not, at this stage in the budget process, having to use road funds; feels re-opening the County is necessary and possible with proper communication and consistency; praised this year's budget format as it makes it easier to navigate compared to last year's budget; supports the Assessor's request to include higher salaries in the budget for the Assessor's Department.
- Boice stressed the County is going to have to compete for the County's share of CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act funding, and stated he is struggling with issue of the Assessor's request to include higher salaries in the budget for the Assessor's Department.
- Schmelzer stated Sears and Cena Crook, Senior Accounting Clerk, were instrumental in the formatting of the 20-21 FY budget, spoke about the great disparity in county pay scale, and stated the goal is to have the wage study in front of the Board at the April 29, 2020 meeting.
- Kolen stated the Assessor's Department is really 'ham strung' by the need for higher salaries; and he stressed, for the CAFFA grant to be increased due to higher salaries, the amount must be submitted by May 1, 2020, to avoid missing out on an opportunity.
- Huttel stated the Budget Committee can give notice for a public hearing and decide on budget related issues then.

Motion by Alcorn, seconded by Gold, to move the budget forward to public hearing and include the higher salaries requested by Assessor Kolen. MOTION WITHDRAWN

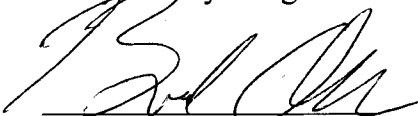
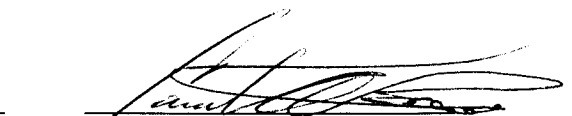
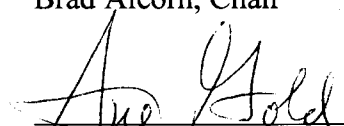
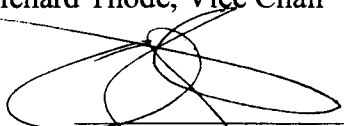

Motion by Alcorn, seconded by Boice to include the higher salaries and benefits, not to exceed \$32,500.00, requested by Assessor Kolen at this time and to rule on it after the wage study, Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Paasch, seconded by Alcorn to adopt proposed budget and move forward to a public hearing on June 15, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

7. **ADJOURN** Chair Alcorn adjourned the meeting at 1:07 p.m.

Dated this 15th day of June, 2020.

Curry County Budget Committee of 2020-2021

 Brad Alcorn, Chair	Absent Richard Thode, Vice Chair	 Court Boice, Member 6/15/20
 Sue Gold, Member	 Christopher S. Paasch, Member	 Wayne Richards, Member

Minutes prepared by: John Jezuit, Administrative Assistant

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