

AUGUST 7-8, 2023

BUDGET HEARING

PULASKI COUNTY COUNCIL

The Pulaski County Council met for budget hearings Monday & Tuesday August 7-8, 2023 at the Pulaski County Highway Department training room. Councilmembers present were Kenneth Boswell, Michael Tiede, Tim Overmyer, Bradley Bonnell, and Sheila Hazemi-Jimenez with County Auditor Laura Wheeler. Councilmembers Jeffrey Richwine and Jerry Locke absent.

Before starting the hearings, Council was advised that estimated revenue in County General for 2024 is around \$8,000,000.00 with the requested budget at 9.3 million. A suggestion was made to consider hiring a part time secretary/assistant for Boards (Commissioners and Council) that is knowledgeable in research and writing grants.

IN RE: PROSECUTOR

Prosecutor has four budgets: Victim's Assistance, Pre-Trial Diversion, 4D Program and Regular. The State reimburses the County 60% of the 4D funds and 4D and regular budgets are paid through County General with Victim's Assistance and Pre-Trial Diversion paid through grants. Wages requested with a 14% increase.

IN RE: SHERIFF

Ten different funds available to the Sheriff discussed and explained. Vehicle discounts no longer available and now cost \$50-55,000.00 to put new vehicle on the road. Part-time wage increase requested. 9-1-1 discussed and the need for Town of Winamac to contribute as town has about 25% of the calls including non-emergency calls.

IN RE: SURVEYOR

Wages increased and two estimates for a new pickup presented.

IN RE: TREASURER

Desk top printers will need replaced in future.

IN RE: SOIL & WATER

Soil & Water has one full-time and one part-time employee (Education Coordinator).

IN RE: EMS

Bathroom sink and kitchen counter tops need replaced. Fuel increased but internet/cable eliminated. Hiring more EMTs/Paramedics rather than paying so much overtime discussed. Overtime is cheaper due to the benefit package for full-time employees. EMS brought in an estimated \$530,000.00 in 2022. New ambulances expected to arrive January 2024 and August 2025. He also wants to replace two laptops in the ambulances.

BUDGET HEARINGS RECESSED AT 11:00AM FOR LUNCH AND RESUMED AT 1:00PM

IN RE: RECORDER

Wages and travel increased. Recorder Sue Fox announced this would be her last budget as she was retiring at the end of the year 2023.

IN RE: CLERK/ELECTION BOARD

The clerk works out of three funds: Regular, Election and Perpetuation. Wages increased based on recent wage study. Postage discussed and cost will be transferred to Commissioners' budget including machine rental. Travel/conference increased and moving part-time employee to full-time for scanning records requested.

Election Board requested an increase in pay for inspectors (\$200.00) Judges (\$150.00) and Clerks (\$150.00). Willie DeGroot is paid to cover any machine issues that arise. The proposed election budget is \$72,100.00. Election Board meets monthly in election years but board members get paid whether they attend or not which Council is taking under consideration.

IN RE: CIRCUIT COURT

Court computer system is over five years old and will need to be replaced. There is only one court reporter with two other employees cross trained. State increased Public Defender and Pauper Counsel's fees. Overtime is high due to number of trials.

IN RE: PROBATION

Probation has four full-time Probation Officers with one (Carmen Ruff) being paid through a grant. There is only one part-time secretary/receptionist and it is requested to make this a full-time position. Probation Officer's wages are set by State.

IN RE: SUPERIOR COURT

State has doubled Jury Pay and County increased mileage rate. Judge Kocher is attempting to get everything done in one day to keep costs down. State now allows Block Scheduling where multiple defendants can enter pleas or be advised of their rights simultaneously, which saves time. Overtime increased due to number of trials. State increased Public Defender fees. Grants pay for four contracted positions. New sound equipment needed soon.

MEETING RECESSED AT 2:15pm and RESUME AT 2:30pm.

IN RE: AUDITOR

The auditor has two funds: County General and Plat book fees, which generates \$15,000.00 annually. Part-time wages increased to \$30,000.00 for 2023 to take care of needed scanning but that has been paid by expected bond issue. Some part-time moved to Preservation of Records for future cost of scanning and file conversion.

IN RE: CDC

Another full-time position requested. New employee would work on CDC's strategic plan while current employee would be secretary/scanner/helper.

IN RE: CORONER

Wages and autopsies increased. Old hand-held radio needs upgraded. A smaller/newer vehicle requested.

MEETING RECESSED 3:41pm AND WILL RESUME TUESDAY AUGUST 8, 2023 AT 9:00am

HEARING RECONVENED TUESDAY AUGUST 8, 2023 AT 9:00am

Councilmembers present were Kenneth Boswell, Michael Tiede, Tim Overmyer, Bradley Bonnell, Sheila Hazemi-Jimenez, and Jerry Locke with County Auditor Laura Wheeler. Councilmembers Jeffrey Richwine absent.

IN RE: ASSESSOR

Agriculture assessed value, which is controlled by the State discussed. Wages adjusted to recent wage study. Assessor has three full-time, one part-time, and herself. Cost of Form 11 discussed. Part-time wages increased to \$35,000.00 but council reduced back to \$26,000.00.

IN RE: MAINTENANCE

Wages increased to recent wage study. Maintenance has two full-time and two part-time positions. Twelve roof AC units at Justice Center on a 2-year replacement plan (one unit replaced every two years).

IN RE: HEALTH

The health department is expecting \$164,079.00 from the new State opt-in plan. Fund 9102 (Cigarette Grant) is budgeted for \$2,000.00 travel and \$3,000.00 school/training and is expected to be depleted by 2025. Fund 1168 (Local Health Maintenance Fund) will also be going away with \$58,000.00 left at end of 2023, which will cover some salaries, PERF, SS/Medicare, and insurance. Fund 1159 is funded by Property Tax and required to maintain a match as dictated by the state. Wages increased per the recent wage study. Health currently has three full-time positions: Edwina Guffey was just hired to replace Terri Hansen as the Environmental Health Specialist/Office Manager; Celinda Briney, Registrar; and Andrea Keller, County Nurse. The health department is requesting another full-time position.

IN RE: COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The community foundation is requesting \$15,000.00 to support the Forward Thinking Initiative.

IN RE: BUILDING

Wages increased per recent study. Board currently paid \$53.00 per attended meeting. The department uses a 2002 Durango passed down by the Sheriff's department and repairs are adding up. Budget includes \$40,000.00 for a new vehicle. Discussion followed on other transportation options such as a used vehicle or something from another department. Revenue generated through fees and a new fee schedule discussed.

IN RE: EXTENSION

Wages increased to recent wage study plus 5%. Currently has one full-time and two part-time positions. Another full-time position in place of the two part-time positions requested. Educators are paid by Purdue and County reimburses Purdue through annual agreement.

IN RE: VETERANS

Requested another computer (laptop) as applications have gotten more complicated, although just another screen would help. Equipment in office is outdated and does not function correctly and was told to have DeGroot determine what needs to be done.

Sheriff's vehicles and rotation discussed briefly as well as departments not coming before Commissioners to request spending over their limit.

IN RE: COMMISSIONERS

Information Technology (IT) director position eliminated and designated \$80,000.00 plus another \$150,000.00 to consultant, which later increased to \$200,000.00. Rotation of computers discussed as 20% are out of warranty and providing "phishing" and cyber security training. The County is insured for Cyber Security but not to the extent needed. Low Tax software is budgeted for 35,800.00, which is the final payment. Document retention discussed.

American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds are committed for about 700,000.00 on Ambulances, Broadband, East Annex HVAC, Coroner's cooler, and Sheriff department raises. About \$1,700,000.00 for future use.

Opioid and Restricted Opioid Funds discussed. About \$40,000.00 committed for Drug tracking and awareness software.

Riverboat had \$90,000.00 committed for new ambulance in 2023, which will be moved to building repair and maintenance for recycle. \$10,000.00 designated to Professional services but no determination made on what this is for.

Drug Free Community Fund has been reinstated. This was used in the past to support local school proms but board has been out of compliance with State for a few years and unable to spend this money. Discussion followed on the lack of services provided by 4C Health previously known as Four County Mental Health as State dictates how much Pulaski County has to fund.

BUDGET HEARING RECESSED FOR LUNCH AT 11:53am and resumed at 1:00pm**IN RE: AVIATION**

Aviation is funded by property taxes and also has Airport Improvement Fund, three COVID CARES Funds and a Grant Fund. Airport purchases fuel and then resells at a small profit which goes back into Aviation fund. Hangar rental is \$500.00 per month but will be raised to \$1000.00 per month. Wages increased to recent wage study.

IN RE: HIGHWAY

Highway is funded through gasoline taxes. Cum Bridge fund being reinstated. \$100,000.00 budgeted for mini-excavator but can be eliminated since one was already purchased. Community Crossing grant to replace bridge #249. Requesting an increase to 18.00 per hour for two part-time positions. \$300,000.00 designated for new distributor truck but actual cost could be \$400,000.00 or more.

IN RE: EMA

EMA shares DRMO with Sheriff that was designed to fund repairs for the military vehicles, although nothing has been spent in recent years, \$5,000.00 is budgeted every year. A part-time position (3 days a week) is requested to have someone working during conferences or other training. Budgeted for repair on salamander, which is used to make badges for employees. Discussion followed because Sheriff's Department may have one.

IN RE: RECYCLING/TRANSFER

Building repair and wages increased. There are four full-time employees: Manager, foreman and two laborers and two part-time positions. \$50,000.00 budgeted for new shop roof. Transfer Station also needs work on the north wall. Income from cardboard has dropped off since now charging.

IN RE: PULASKI COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

The \$30,000.00 requested to serve Human Services in support of center, transportation and Senior Services.

BUDGET HEARINGS RECESSED UNTIL MONDAY AUGUST 14, 2023 4:00pm

MONDAY AUGUST 14, 2023 4:00pm

Councilmembers present were Kenneth Boswell, Jeff Richwine, Tim Overmyer, Bradley Bonnell, Sheila Hazemi-Jimenez, and Jerry Locke with County Auditor Laura Wheeler. Michael T. Tiede absent.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

EMA wants part time position and put \$7,500.00 in budget. Jerry Locke said EMA has gotten along without one and Kenneth Boswell did not think this is the time to increase the number of employees.

\$70,000.00 just transferred into overtime as number of jailers are down. With pay raise, empty spots expected to be filled and then overtime should come down. Discussion followed on comp time.

Bonuses rather than pay raises discussed. This was discussed with department heads but consensus is that pay raises preferred.

Grants discussed with a grant committee suggested for some oversight. 1549 pending cases in Superior Court, which is the same as 2010 but the budget has doubled. An Attorney/Client room was built in the Justice Center renovation but is now being used for the County Navigator. Why is the County providing space for non-County offices?

Council will meet again Monday August 28, 2023 4:00pm at the Sheriff's Conference room to continue budget discussion.

With no other business to discuss, President Boswell adjourned to meeting.

Approved and signed this 9th day of October 2023 by the **PULASKI COUNTY COUNCIL**.

KENNETH BOSWELL

MICHAEL TIEDE

JEFFREY RICHWINE

TIN OVERMYER

BRADLEY BONNELL

JERRY LOCKE

SHEILA HAZEMI-JIMENEZ

ATTEST: _____
LAURA WHEELER, AUDITOR, PULASKI COUNTY, IN