

Union County Budget Meeting
May 24, 2011

Present: Steve McClure, Commissioner
Mark D. Davidson, Commissioner
William D. Rosholt, Commissioner
Lanny Hildebrandt, Budget Committee Member
Kyle McAndie, Budget Committee Member
Dale Case, Budget Committee Member

Call to Order

Commissioner McClure called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. with all budget committee members and commissioners present.

Election of Chair

Dale Case was elected Budget Committee Chair by a motion made by Commissioner Davidson. The vote was unanimous.

Budget Message

Budget Officer Shelley Burgess reviewed the written budget message included in the budget packet materials. Shelley explained that all funds are balanced.

Public Works

Richard Comstock, Public Works Director, went over his written narrative. This budget is balanced as presented. Commissioner McClure stated that the forest receipts were supposed to go down but there was a formula adjustment that resulted in some additional funding from forest receipts.

Airport

Richard Comstock went over his written narrative for the Airport. This budget is balanced as presented. He stated that the biggest revenue is the fuel sales. If there are not as many fuel sales they will operate on what they do make on fuel sales. The general aviation is down this year.

Lanny Hildebrandt asked if it is correct that the fuel purchase is higher than the fuel sales for this year. Richard explained that the numbers do not take into account that they keep 50,000 gallons on site at the Airport.

Parks

Richard Comstock went over his written narrative on the Parks. There were no changes and the budget was balanced as presented. There were no questions on the budget.

USDA, Predator Control

Curt Mattson, USDA Wildlife Services, explained that there has been a quarter time program in Union County for two years. The budget request is to keep that the same. They do predator control and the requests for services have been increasing as people have learned that they have a presence within the County.

Ron Dake, Sheep Farmer, explained that he would like to see some expansion of the program if possible. He has put together \$10,000 from other users to put towards increasing the program within Union County and he is asking the County to match his increase. There is a need for predator control not just for livestock producers. The sunflower seed growers are losing product cost to birds. He stated that it is also not a matter of if but when the wolves are coming.

Commissioner McClure stated that he would be willing to look at the match if there are funds available. He asked Curt what the prognosis is for the wolf population in Union County and what his opinion is on wolf sitings. Curt stated that there are some tracks on the north end of the County but it is hard to say whether they are wolf tracks or not. He doesn't believe that most of them are wolves. He has seen tracks by Starkey.

Dale Case stated that last year during the budget process the committee talked to the USDA representative about having a tri-county program. He asked Curt where the other counties are at with their programs. Curt explained that Baker County has a ¼ time program as well but Wallowa County has a full time program. He explained that with the ¼ time program he is finding that he has enough time to put a band-aid on a situation. There is a situation where he knows of four pairs of coyotes with dens. He tries to remove the coyotes as they kill but if he was able to spend more time in the program he could do more long term control of the problem.

Lanny asked if there has been an increase in sheep herds. Ron stated that he has expanded last year and he will expand again this year. There are also bands that are coming in from out of the area which hasn't happened in a long time.

Corrections

Boyd Rasmussen, Sheriff, went over his budget. He explained that the budget is close to the same as last year. The SB1145 dollars have decreased which is the money that is used to house State inmates at the County facility. Also, the Wallowa County contract for beds will show an increase in revenue because there will be an increase for the cost of beds to Wallowa County.

Sheriff

Boyd explained that the new item in this budget is the live-scan unit which is an automated fingerprinting unit that is tied into the State system. This system will

make them more efficient. Once the fingerprints are scanned they are entered into the State system as well. Boyd also explained that they have received a grant to secure the front office area. The live-scan system will be located in an area within the new secure office front counter. They will be able to slide a drawer out that will have the system on it in order to do the fingerprints.

Commissioner McClure asked if it is an automated system. Boyd explained that it is an automated system. The fingerprints will be scanned directly into the system. They will increase the amount that is charged for fingerprinting from \$5 to \$10 to adjust for the service fees.

Animal Control

Boyd went over the budget narrative and there were no changes from last year. The budget was balanced as presented.

Community Corrections

Travis Miller, Community Corrections Director, explained that there have been some changes to the budget since he submitted it. The State is cutting his department another \$215,000 for the biennium. There will be a little over \$66,000 of cuts for personnel costs and benefits. There is an open Probation position that he is not planning on filling at this time. He stated that it is possible that there could be more cuts. The State is looking at cutting Community Corrections \$15 million statewide. SB1145 is the contract between the state and county and they have an option of pulling out of that program if it is more cost effective but they are not at that level yet. If SB 416 passes it will put another \$116,000 back in the budget. There are a lot of things that are unknown at this point.

Commissioner McClure asked if they need to leave the budget the way it is since they do know about the funding issues that could change. Shelley stated that it can be left as it is for now because if the State does make further cuts there are things that can be cut out of the budget such as the new vehicle purchase and a few other items that can be cut back in order to make up for the cuts. She explained that the funds are dedicated so it is typical to have a contingency in this fund.

Commission on Children and Families

Vicky Brogoitti, Director of Commission on Children and Families, explained that CCF is funded almost entirely out of the State general fund. She is not sure if it will be included in the Governor's budget yet. There are a number of pieces of legislation pending that would retain the Commission. She explained that her budget will have to be reworked once the State makes some budget decisions. Union County applied for a Federal Drug Free Communities grant but the Commission on Children and Families was the applicant for the grant and they will see if they will be able to use those funds for some of the programs.

District Attorney

Tim Thompson, District Attorney, explained that his budget is a status quo budget but there are two areas that have not been resolved that he would like the budget committee to look at. He stated that they are looking for an alternative computer system for their records since their current system is 13 years old. The current system has been unsupported and is based on old technology. There are more systems that are now in use in other Counties that are new and comparable to the type of system they need. The Courts are moving to e-filing and e-documents this Fall so it is vital that they have a system that can interact with the Court's system. They often have to provide police reports and evidence but now that other entities are upgrading their systems the system that the District Attorney has is no longer compatible. There is a new system that will be coming out soon that is the newest upgrade. There would have to be money put down as a place holder to order this program when it becomes available.

The other area that he would like the budget committee to look at is expanding the medical examiner line items for the medical examiner program. Every unattended death that happens within the County has to be investigated. Tim would like to increase the fee that goes to the Medical Examiner for investigating a death from \$75 to \$125 per investigation. He estimates that it takes between 4-6 hours to do the on scene investigation and prepare the paperwork for the investigation. He would like to be able to pay for the training for the Medical Examiner position as well so the volunteer would not have to pay out of their own pocket. He explained that if the training was paid for they may be able to get more volunteers so they can investigate more deaths than what they are doing now.

Tim also stated that there are some general increases to his budget such as for training and travel because the District Attorney's will need more training due to new laws that have come out in recent legislation.

Lanny asked what the cost savings for efficiency would be if a new computer system is purchased. Tim stated that there are many hours a day spent at the copier doing discovery that could be drastically reduced with the new program. Tim explained that for the system that he is recommending the first year cost would be \$50,000 and the annual fee for the program would be \$5160.

Commissioner McClure stated that maybe some money could be used as a place holder for the program and they can then figure out what system would work best after weighing all of the options. Tim explained that the only time sensitive issue that would come up is that if they are not able to purchase a new system a new server is needed. So, there will be some cost involved whether a new system is purchased or not.

Kathie Powell, Computer Services Manager, explained that the District Attorney's office definitely does need a new product but she is not sure where they should go. The current system has been resource intensive in the past and they need to look at what all of the options are. She doesn't think that replacing the server would help for long at this point. She does have some preliminary numbers for DACMS version 4.0. The first year they would charge \$5000 plus \$1.50 a case so it would be about \$7500 for the first year and the ongoing fee would be \$5260 a year.

Center for Human Development

Ricco Weber, CHD Fiscal Manager, stated that CHD is requesting a total of \$261,000 from the County for this fiscal year. This is a 28% increase over last year's funding. He explained that they are asking for \$195,000 to help support Public Health, Alcohol & Drug, and Veteran Services, \$45,000 to help support two school based health centers in La Grande and Union, and \$21,000 to help support the Health Network for rural schools.

The Veteran Services program will operate at a \$20,000 loss this year even with the \$40,000 that is requested from the County. Ricco explained that any loss consumes resources that could be used to provide needed services in other areas important to the citizens of the County.

CHD is asking for \$40,000 for the Alcohol and Drug Treatment program as well. This amount is the same as the previous year and meets the conditions of the "Maintenance of Effort" requirements by the Federal Government. Demand on this program is so high that for the first time clients that do not meet the priority parameters are on a waiting list.

Ricco explained that CHD is requesting \$115,000 for Public Health. The full cost to run the program is \$370,000 and the program is not funded by any other sources.

Ricco stated that CHD operates two School Based Health Centers; one in La Grande and the other in Union. The Union center opened in May of 2011. CHD is requesting \$45,000 which is \$25,000 more than the funding that was received last year. The program is budgeted to operate at a \$14,000 loss with the requested \$45,000 from the County. The balance is planned to be made up with fee-for-service billings and possibly grants.

Ricco asked that the budget committee consider increasing CHD's support based on the County's increased use of the space in the Joseph building. In 2010 the County reduced support to CHD in an amount equal to the County's reduced rent revenue as a result of CHD moving to another location. Ricco stated that if the

County's use of the space in the Joseph building has subsequently increased, CHD is requesting an increase in support based on the \$0.58 per square foot that was used in the original calculations.

Discussion

Shelley explained to the budget committee that she can go over the rest of the funds that were not discussed or the committee could discuss the items that were requested but not included in the budget.

Commissioner Davidson stated that he has been through the budget several times and asked a number of questions so for him he doesn't see that there is any reason to go through the budget by each department.

Commissioner McClure explained some new line items in the Emergency Services fund. He stated that the County is working with the City of Union to replace a bridge on Byron Street. Union received a small city grant for \$25,000. He explained that a \$50,000 contribution is being discussed by the Model Watershed because of the impact on the fish. It is very close to being funded so it is the County's intension to fund that. The bridge will belong to the City of Union but it will be a combination of funding.

Commissioner McClure stated that he has requested that Shelley put in for a re-class for herself. It was his request and he believes the Commissioners feel that she has done an excellent job. It is in the budget narrative but he wanted to make the budget committee aware of it. Lanny asked what the re-class is. Shelley explained that there are ranges and steps for each employee other than elected officials. Commissioner McClure has proposed to change the range that the Administrative Officer position is at. It would amount to a 5% increase over the current range for July 1st. Commissioner Davidson stated that he supports it. He stated that this budget is an example of Shelley's excellent work. She keeps more balls in the air than anyone he knows and the Commissioners continue to ask her to do more and more. She always seems to find a way of getting it done on time and accurately. She is everything that anyone would want in their most key employee. He feels that those things should be compensated appropriately. Commissioner Rosholt stated that she is truly an asset to Union County and needs to be compensated for everything she does.

Commissioner Rosholt explained that he oversees the facilities department. The only item that is in capital outlay in the facilities budget is to replace the alarm system in the jail. In the past there have been problems with the alarm system. There is also a \$25,000 figure in the "upgrade buidings" line item. This would be used for the upgrading and remodeling of the Joseph building when the new tenants come in. Commissioner Rosholt stated that he also oversees the Buffalo Peak Golf Course. One major expense is that the cart paths are quickly

deteriorating and although there is a line item in the budget for cart paths there was never really any revenue to be able to use that money. They need to be taken care of now. He believed it was more of a capital outlay expense than maintenance. There is \$20,000 for the cart paths. Shelley explained that she did increase the proposed transfer into Buffalo Peak from the wind energy community service fee and the economic development fund to cover the capital expenditures.

Lanny asked if the transfers for Buffalo Peak are lessening every year. Commissioner Rosholt stated that they are but the tough part is the weather can make it a bad year for revenues. Shelley stated that every year there is progress on how much money is needed to be transferred in to Buffalo Peak to cover operations. She stated that this year it will be up a little because of the capital improvement projects that are planned for the course.

Dale stated that he wanted to talk about the predator control program. The predator control program is asking for an extra \$10,000 to be provided as match from other donations to increase the presence within Union County. Commissioner McClure stated that the budget committee would have to decide to take the money out of contingency or find the money from another location. He thinks that it is a reasonable request since there are participants that are willing to put up a match. Commissioner McClure explained that he would like to limit the increase to up to \$10,000 depending on the match.

Commissioner Davidson explained that on page 30 in Special Accounts there is a duplication of account 5-20-8128 is BMCC for \$25,000 and it is duplicated at the bottom 5-20-8139 as Blue Mountain Community College so there is \$25,000 there that can be taken and redirected for other purposes.

Commissioner McClure stated that he would be comfortable making the investment into the Predator Control program with a note that it is limited to \$10,000 this year matching other local contributions.

Commissioner Davidson stated that he feels the Committee should discuss what other adjustments they would like to make and it can all be done together.

Commissioner McClure explained that when CHD shows how the money is applied in their budget the County gives them the money and they apply it where they want to. The County does not tell them that they have to apply it to any particular program. The money is discretionary to them. He thinks the program that has been very successful is the Veteran Services office. He would like to see that program to be considered being fully funded. The alternative for the Veteran Service Officer would be to turn him back into a county employee and he is not

sure that is the right thing to do. Lanny stated that they are asking for an additional \$15,000 for the program that is not currently in the proposed budget.

Commissioner Davidson stated that he thinks there should be a place holder for the case management system in the D.A. budget but he can't support the more expensive system. He thinks that the County should take the \$5000 that is in office equipment for the server and put another \$5000 with it and put it in a line item to buy in for the DACMS version 4.0 system. Lanny asked why Tim Thompson does not like the current system. Commissioner Davidson explained that it is old and unsupported but there is a new version that will be supported and will have a remote server for the hosting. Commissioner Davidson stated that he thinks if it is done right and with the engagement of Kathie Powell and other IT people if the County can have some buy-in in the system and continuing input into what annual upgrades are necessary to keep it fresh and be reactive to their needs, it can be a positive thing for the County.

Dale thinks that Union County should give some money toward Anthony Lakes. He knows that it is a Baker County Development Corporation thing. They have asked for \$25,000. He explained that he is looking at that because he knows that people come here for the skiing. If Union County wants to be included in the skiing picture he feels that the County should keep as much going towards that as possible. He doesn't think \$25,000 needs to be given to them but something should be given. Commissioner Davidson disagreed with Dale. He is supportive of Anthony Lakes and suggested that the County should participate through the Joint Tourism Promotion Committee in helping promote Anthony Lakes. But, what they are asking for is an infusion of capital for them to purchase rental equipment. He feels that once the County starts funding their capital improvements it won't ever end. He stated that the County is struggling to support the agencies that have historically been supported. He could not support that request.

Commissioner McClure stated that the County should promote Anthony Lakes and work with Baker County to see that Union County is investing money into those types of activities. Dale stated that Anthony Lakes is partly in Union County. Commissioner McClure stated it is almost all in Union County. Dale stated that it looks funny to him that Baker County is the one that is carrying the burden. Commissioner McClure explained that Union County is carrying the railroad, a golf course and Mt. Emily and he has some reluctance in this community investing in another recreational activity. Dale stated that he can understand that but he also thinks that it has value at an economic development stand point.

Commissioner Rosholt stated that the other thing that should be looked at is the medical examiner costs of \$4900 that they are asking for. Commissioner McClure stated that he has no problem funding the request.

Commissioner Davidson moved to fund \$2500 for Training/Travel for medical examiners, \$2400 for Medical examiner stipend in the District Attorney's budget, add an additional \$5000 to the \$5000 that is in the DA budget for office equipment to be re-titled for the case management system, additionally fund \$15,000 to the Center for Human Development for the Veterans Services Officer, and up to an additional \$10,000 towards the USDA predator control services to match local donations for that service, and make the amendment of \$25,000 in special accounts where the duplicate line item is and reduce the general contingency by the remaining appropriate amount. Lanny seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Davidson moved the approval of the budget for publication as amended. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Wilhelm
Sr. Dept. Specialist