

MINUTES

BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Budget Workshop Meeting
October 27, 2009, 8:15 a.m.
Commissioners' Conference Room
Benton County Courthouse, Prosser, WA

Present: Chairman Max E. Benitz, Jr. Chairman
Commissioner Leo Bowman
Commissioner James Beaver
County Administrator David Sparks
Clerk of the Board Cami McKenzie

Benton County Employees Present During All or a Portion of the Meeting: Deputy Administrator Loretta Smith Kelty; Finance Manager Linda Ivey; Superior Court Judge Carrie Runge; Sharon Paradis and Jennifer Bowe, Juvenile; Assessor Barb Wagner, Auditor Bobbie Gagner; Rosie Sparks; Central Services Manager Randy Reid; Pat Powell, Auditor's Office; Superior Court Administrator Pat Austin; Jacki Lahtinen, Dixie Jameson, and Reva Kirby, District Court; District Court Judge Bob Ingvalson; PA Andy Miller and Margaret Ault; Carrie Huie-Pascua and Ed Thornbrugh, Human Services.

Assessor

Barb Wagner discussed her requests for increases including fuel, engineering services for vehicles that were not in the replacement program, and training and travel. She specifically discussed the training/travel budget and said that every year it was getting tighter and tighter. She indicated she had tried to stretch the money by requesting employees share rooms, denied requests for special classes, applied for scholarships, used on-line classes, personally stopped turning in receipts for meals for the last three years, and had her employees use credit cards, when possible, for meals so there would not be a refund if the per diem was higher than the meal. Additionally, she did a countywide comparison of the travel/training budgets and said she had a problem with the way the money was distributed to different departments. She stated she was asking for a 15% in that line item.

Juvenile

Sharon Paradis, Judge Runge, and Jennifer Bowe presented the proposed Juvenile budget. Ms. Paradis said that based upon the letter received from Franklin County regarding budget cuts, if Benton County cut its proportionate share, they would be looking at a 10% reduction.

Ms. Paradis outlined the proposed cuts as follows: elimination of drug court; elimination of three detention officers and capping at 35 youth (average daily population was currently 46 and was down from years past due to programs); reduction of 2 ½ probation counselors; \$93,000

reduction in staff support; elimination of pre-employment polygraphs, urinalysis, and reduction in security. Ms. Paradise said they were requesting court ordered legal services in the amount of \$3,000 and using some cash carry forward to purchase the same radio system as used in the Sheriff's office. Additionally, she discussed the food services contract and failing HVAC system (estimated at \$250,000 to replace).

The Board briefly recessed, reconvening at 8:55 a.m.

Superior Court

Pat Austin and Judge Carrie Runge presented the Superior Court budget. Ms. Austin said the Court was aware of the budget situations in Benton & Franklin Counties, however, wanted to keep the Board aware of its needs. She discussed the following requests: increase in court commissioner; secretary/receptionist in Court administration office; funding for adult drug court program through 2010 to complete the participants through graduation; bailiff's clothing allowance; printing/bindery for the legal financial obligation docket; association dues; and Family Court services program. She said they were requesting the legal financial obligation docket be expanded to a weekly docket.

District Court/Probation Assessment

Jacki Lahtinen, Judge Ingvalson, and Reva Kirby discussed the District Court/Probation Assessment budget. Judge Ingvalson said the overall budget was down and they were consolidating the probation dockets and making other changes. Ms. Lahtinen said they were asking for an increase in postage and a reduction in other line items. Additionally, they were working on on-line payments, starting a pre-warrant docket to get the clients restarted on a payment plan and implementation of the e-ticketing system.

The Board briefly recessed, reconvening at 10:15 a.m.

Prosecuting Attorney

Andy Miller and Margaret Ault presented the budget and said they were requesting a new position in Child Support that was 100% paid by the State. Additionally, Mr. Miller said that when times got better, he might ask for more money for his chief civil deputies.

Commissioner Bowman asked what the chances were of losing the state funding for that position and Mr. Miller said he would be stunned if that ever happened.

The Board recessed, reconvening at 10:35 a.m.

Human Services

Carrie Huie-Pascua and Ed Thornbrugh presented their budget and said they were requesting a vehicle for the administration office. The Board said it was appropriate to look at purchasing a car.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45 a.m.

Clerk of the Board

Chairman