

COMMISSIONERS MEETING – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2004 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Sharon A. Ray called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. with Patricia G. Geissman and Stephen D. Hambley present.

John Stricker, County Administrator, and Chris Jakob, Finance Director, were also present for the budget discussion.

Chris reviewed modifications that were made to revenues since his review with each Commissioner. The RPTT revenue was slightly increased to \$925,000. The Investment Income-Other revenue was increased by including the \$150,000 from Auto Title for the Clerk of Courts computer upgrade, which will be “a wash” for the revenue and expenditure for this. There is a 2.81% increase available in revenue and a \$6.9 million carry over for a total budget of \$40,077,066,000.

There was a review of the salary account for the Planning Department. There was agreement for a new staff person for \$27,000 for 9 months, but there was disagreement on whether overtime money should be available or at what level. Last year they had \$9,810 budgeted for overtime. A Planning Commission member had stated that overtime should not be needed and that it was discussed with Patrice Theken. It was felt that with the new person their schedules could be re-arranged to avoid overtime. However, according to Patrice due to some of the activities, particularly with Susan Hirsch working on the PUD text, there is the possibility of some overtime.

John believes that under the Fair Labor Standard Act if employees are required to attend evening meetings they can't be forced to rearrange their hours.

Chris added that with an agency like this overtime is inevitable, particularly with the clerical staff.

It was agreed to go with \$6,000 for overtime.

Under equipment the Planning Department has requested \$10,000 for microfiche. There was a discussion relative to not being provided with a full proposal for this and that it is felt something could be worked about with the Recorder's Office for this service. It is not felt to be an emergency need for this department. It was agreed not to provide the \$10,000 in this account.

Economic Development has requested \$10,000 additional for marketing. It was felt they have other funds that can be used for this and it was noted that they do have a significant carry over from last year. It was agreed not to provide the \$10,000 additional for this.

For the Port Authority Chris had submitted a proposed budget of \$33,000 that reflects a part time director's hours. The Port Authority has requested \$74,000. A couple of items listed on their sheet are items they may be trying to take care of prematurely. This is the first time this group has dealt with submitting a budget proposal and it was noted that it can be a difficult process. The legal fees have not been included in the \$33,000 proposal by Chris. When they have revenues the general fund will be reimbursed, however, they need to be kept from spending so much in their first year. Mr. Hambley agreed to talk with Ron Paydo, Chairman of the Port Authority, to have him meet with Chris to review the process and setting up a budget properly. Commissioners agreed to the \$33,000 budget.

The Board of Elections will be holding 2 primary elections and a general election this year. There are additional costs for the elections because this is a Presidential election year. They are requesting 5% increases in their salary account and funding to cover various items and unexpected replacements, painting, etc. The bills for the painting that was done have not been turned in to Chris. He noted that an expense adjustment can be done if they have paid for that rather than having them paid out of the construction fund. It was noted that their rental at the Health Department includes use of the training room. During the last election they made space for the press but they do not have space for the public. It was noted that the Chamber is the one that reserves space for the public and that was held at the high school. They may want to use the

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Administration Building auditorium in November. There was a discussion about money being available for the removal and installation of new equipment if the new electronic voting equipment comes in this year. There is concern that if the equipment does not come through this year that they could transfer the funds into other areas since the Commissioners do not have to approve their fund transfers. Everyone agreed not to provide the extra for various items and unexpected replacements, and to include the funds for the electronic equipment with the Board of Elections being told that the funds cannot be used for any other purpose if the equipment does not come through this year.

The Sheriff's Administrative budget request allows for an additional clerical position for an employee that transferred from Home Arrest in the amount of \$33,800. No job description was provided for this position to determine if it is a standard clerical position or if this person will have additional duties. It was suggested to have the starting salary for this new position at \$25,000 to keep it in line with other clerical positions. One issue has always been that they have always been paid at a higher level. John left the meeting to contact the Sheriff's Department to see about getting a job description for this position. This item will be discussed after the description is received.

The Sheriff has also requested 5 light bars and 7 MDT replacements. The replacements are in case any would go down. It was agreed to fund the 5 light bars and not the MDT's.

The Building Inspection Office has submitted a revised request for \$12,916 for training. An outline was provided of the training needed, that included technical, computer, management and customer relations. The cost for customer relations training could be lower by combining the training with the Cities of Medina and Wadsworth. Training for certifications is needed and additional training will be needed because of the new building code. It was agreed to provide \$12,000 for training with a re-evaluation of this expense next year.

The Extension Service and the Soil & Water Conservation District have similar issues. There are 2 recommendations to increase both budgets by 3%. The SWCD figure looks like a decrease but there is a base county subsidy amount that it is applied to. The other portion, the urban appropriation, is fees that fluctuate. The soil study was also included in last year's budget and is not in this year's budget. They are carrying over a significant balance but part of that is planned. The Extension Service requested a 3.6% increase. They have no special projects starting this year. Holding them to 3% will not hurt their operation. It was agreed to allow 3% increases for both budgets.

The ADAMH Board has requested \$255,000 plus a supplement of \$84,000 for the JFS Medicaid match. Chris has been unable to set up a meeting with Mike Jenks and Mead Wilkins because Mike has been unavailable. If they don't get the additional \$84,000 they could use their reserves. Chris is not sure if any housing issues will go against their reserves. After a brief discussion it was agreed to approve the \$255,000 without the \$84,000 increase. A letter will be sent to Mike stating that he needs to review this with Chris if he wants to pursue the additional funding.

The County Engineer has requested a 6% increase. It was recommended to keep the salaries at 3% increases. The general fund is supposed to pay 1/3 of the administrative staff and Auto & Gas pays the rest. They have added engineers over the last few years and the general fund hasn't been providing the 1/3 during that time. There are stormwater regulation issues that they will be consolidating information and preparing the final reports on behalf of the Board. It was agreed to approve the 6% increase.

Chris noted that Mr. Hambley has recommended a \$49,000 variance under Miscellaneous Other for \$25,000 for a comprehensive planning assistance program and \$24,000 for consulting services. The \$25,000 for the assistance program will be transferred from what would go to the TID because comprehensive plans will include doing thoroughfare planning. The idea of the program is to give grants up to \$5,000 each to encourage local jurisdictions to move forward with comprehensive planning. The total budget would be \$25,000. It was agreed to allow for

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the \$25,000 to be transferred from the TID budget to a special account for the planning assistance program.

The following portion regarding a consultant is verbatim.

Mr. Hambley stated that, as you brought up last year the idea was to bring in a consultant to assist us in, much the same as we used Al Zelina to go out and help money we needed for the infrastructure out at the Tech Park. You can't use grant money to go after grant money; you have to put the money upfront; the idea is to bring in a consultant to help us; we certainly have some identified areas that we can start looking for some additional funding; the Housing Network is one; we know it's out there and we need some help; we've got other areas; I'd like to bring in a consultant and then meet with some of our department heads and talk with them to see if know of any additional funding sources that they could assist them; kind of create a list for us to go out there and do that; at this point the \$24,000 is based on a trial 6-month contract. We could, if we decide we're going to budget it, then we could decide who we want to select as the consultant; I think that would be a separate issue. The concept is, we know there are funds out there for various areas we do have some activity, and actually bring somebody in to help deal with some of those other departments that maybe we're not aware of, but they just don't have the time and effort to be able to, at the department head level, to spend as much time as they need to go after some of this and they could use some assistance to do some of that.

John stated that there's also a level of expertise as to how to put a grant application together.

Mrs. Geissman stated that she thought Dianne (Ranftl) was doing a lot of our grant applications.

John stated that she's doing along the Community Development Block Grant area and Fair Housing, but that's different.

Mr. Hambley stated that's administering it; I would look at the consultant to work with Dianne just as they would work with some of the department heads to do that; we need somebody that's going to basically be out in the trenches, in Columbus or making the contacts with the various agencies.

Mrs. Geissman asked if this is the guy that's been trying to become a consultant for the last couple of years for us and lobbying.

Mr. Hambley stated that would be one of the functions; I'm trying to keep the selection separate from the idea of making sure we have some money to do something like that.

Ms. Ray stated that her knee-jerk reaction to this last year was no; but as I've seen our revenues go somewhat flat, and they are; the only reason our revenues have grown is the growth offsetting it; there's going to be other piles of money that we're going to need access to that we're not going to be able to find through traditional sources; I mean you can cut the budget only so much, but there is a baseline of operational costs that we have; and going after non-traditional revenue sources is something we're going to have to really work hard on in the coming years to keep pace.

Mrs. Geissman stated that she thinks somebody would have to show her an example of how they have been able to bring money back to other counties before I could go on.

Mr. Hambley stated that there is Al Zelina with the \$1 million grant and the block grant; he was able to bring in, work for us, people from the Department of Development that we met and talked to and go over the project with; that didn't just happen; he basically, on our behalf, did the phone calls, did the follow up.

John added that he wrote the grants for \$250,000.

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Mr. Hambley stated that he thinks it is money well spent; their salary can't be recaptured in that grant; it's not legal; you have to put the money up front to go after it; my proposal is that we try for 6 months.

Ms. Ray added that would be 6 months and then we could re-evaluate whether we wanted to continue on based on what they bring in; do you perceive there's a lot out there for the Housing Network?

Mr. Hambley stated that he knows the Housing Trust Fund has received a lot from us; although I know a lot of that is already spent there are some new programs that are coming up; that would be one area.

John stated that he has been told they underestimated the amount of money going into that fund and there could be more available.

Ms. Ray stated that the State said they are going to cut more for Medicaid and mental health.

Mr. Hambley stated that it depends on how much they want to get; they would basically use that revenue source from us to offset the general fund contribution to it, but they still boost it up, the available money from the Housing Trust Fund; so there are more program dollars available and now's the time to we need to go after it; that's what we've targeted; we could use some assistance with that; if we don't, I'm not saying we won't get it, but it would make it more difficult because one of us, some agency needs to go after it.

Ms. Ray stated that the City of Medina has somebody who does this for them full time, correct?

Mr. Hambley asked if it was Barb Dzur and stated that he's not sure she does that; she does more administrative stuff.

John stated that she's doing their Community Development Block Grant program.

Mr. Hambley stated that he's not sure she's given a direction to go after this grant.

Chris stated that he thinks she is doing some of that, but he's not sure how successful she's been.

Mr. Hambley stated that what he's seen of that, basically she finds the information and then transfer it to somebody else to do the work to go after it.

Chris stated that is probably more accurate.

Mr. Hambley added that somebody has to go after it.

Ms. Ray added that somebody has to know about it.

Mr. Hambley stated that it's nice to get the network and be able to get that connection but if there's nobody actively doing it they lose it. That's one area that she's involved in. My thought is that we'd talk with our other department heads; obviously Buck Adams is, he's not like any other department head in terms of going out after funds; he's kind of very different in that category.

Mrs. Geissman stated that some of our departments are getting grants; in fact they come to us for approval many times before they're sent out; I just don't see spending \$24,000 for it myself for 6 months or for whatever time period that it; one of the best lobbyist we have is the CCAO and they do it for all the counties.

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Mr. Hambley stated that they don't do it for Medina County.

Mrs. Geissman stated that they do it for all the counties.

Mr. Hambley asked where they were when we needed the grant for the road. See what I mean; that's what I'm saying, specifically for us, what we are looking for; not that they are trying to lobby for 88 counties. That is a difference.

Ms. Ray stated that not only that, unfortunately this has gotten so competitive, I think in a lot of areas of the 88 counties certainly Medina County is one of the probably financially one of the strongest.

Mrs. Geissman asked how many counties pay someone to do that.

Ms. Ray stated I don't think a lot of them; however, a lot of them aren't in the position where they have the money; I mean, we'll be able to track in 6 months whether this works or not; and we have some pretty specific areas, I think Steve has outlined; 59% of people coming into Workforce Development are over the age of 55; I would guess there's some kind of senior displaced worker money available out there that we'd be able to qualify for; I don't know I'd be willing to give it a shot for the 6 months and then certainly re-evaluate.

Mrs. Geissman stated that it certainly sounds like the 2 of you want to do it so go ahead, but I just can't; I guess we'll see; if it's successful I'll support it in 6 months, but right now I just can't see spending that kind of money to search for grants when I know some of the departments are already doing it.

The \$24,000 was approved for a consultant.

John presented the job description received from the Sheriff's Office regarding the clerical position that was discussed earlier. The description is somewhat generic. On the second page, this particular employee will be tied into project management and will be responsible for all research including Leads. Through questioning, he stated that project management deals with concealed weapons. It is not just clerical; she will be doing the research and the computerized Leads access.

Ms. Ray stated that she understood that with the concealed carrying, they have to verify that they live at the address they are submitting the application for. She thought that was what Sheriff Hassinger had said upset him was that it doesn't just involve Medina County residents. Any contiguous-county resident can come to Medina County to get their permit here, and to send the deputies out to verify those would be a problem. She wasn't sure if this person will be doing that.

John stated that it possibly could be done by doing a credit check to determine where they are living.

There was a brief discussion that they probably aren't going to residences to check on those. A good credit reference can give that information. There are no supervisory responsibilities with this new position. Through further discussion it was noted that the person was transferred from another area at the same compensation level by the Sheriff. By changing the amount the Sheriff can cut the salary or he could transfer funding from another area to cover the higher salary. Commissioners agreed to approve the salary at \$28,600, which is a compromise of the amount requested and the suggested \$25,000 starting salary.

The following discussion regarding the County Home admission rate is verbatim.

Mrs. Geissman stated that there is one other item that we didn't discuss, and that was the County Home admission rate; Steve, do you want to include that with the budget?

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Mr. Hambley stated that at the last meeting, I apologize I didn't follow up, the last minutes reflect that the committee that was examining it has recommended no changes in the rate; their suggestion is to do some additional marketing, and then revisit the rate; that's their recommendation. I don't know if you saw all the comparable rates; there was a survey done by the CCAO and then there was some additional analysis we did where we basically looked at the areas, the counties that had levies, whether they had, remember John what was in that matrix? Nursing, whether they provide nursing, whether it's a nursing home environment or not; what was the other factor.

Mrs. Geissman stated that almost all of them that were on that; the ones that were like our County Home, are actually charging whatever it cost to live there.

Mr. Hambley stated that is not expressed in there.

Mrs. Geissman stated that she talked with the gal that did it.

Mr. Hambley stated it is not in their survey; and I'm not

Mrs. Geissman stated she thinks we need to; there hasn't been any change out there in, I think 3 years now, because it was supposed to be increased in July of 2002, and there's been no increase since 2001.

Ms. Ray asked isn't the Advisory's committee going to make a recommendation to the Committee on this?

Mr. Hambley stated that basically their committee did, and basically the Advisory Council just said okay; they went along with it; they didn't do anything formal; they have a meeting next week; it's in their minutes.

Mrs. Geissman stated that actually that is a decision we should be making; it's a financial decision; just like the rates for the sewer, the water, the Building Department.

Mr. Hambley stated but there's a levy.

Mrs. Geissman stated I realize that and if we're going to ask the community to support the levy again with a renewal, I think we have to be responsible.

Mr. Hambley stated that there's not a single person out there that's paying the full rate; there was one, but that got reduced.

Mrs. Geissman stated that there should be because we purchased one resident's home that has money; there should be at least one out there that's paying the full.

Mr. Hambley stated, I don't know, do you remember the accounting? I don't have the numbers in front of me.

Chris Jakab stated that there was one at \$1200 and I didn't understand that because the rate structure is \$1100.

Mrs. Geissman stated yes, the rate structure is \$1100 except for new admission

Chris stated I don't know if it was a new admission that didn't have \$1580 but had \$1200 or what.

Mr. Hambley stated right; what I saw in account, there wasn't anyone that was paying the full amount; all paying less; so you're not going to generate any more money.

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Mrs. Geissman stated that's not the point.

Mr. Hambley asked then why are we doing it?

Mrs. Geissman stated that because when you go back to the voters you have to tell them that it costs, I think \$1625, is that what you have on your sheet?

Chris stated yes.

Mrs. Geissman added that if you have any residents that have resources, then that is what they should be paying. That way you can get your levy supported again; otherwise you may have some real problems there.

Chris stated that you would generate additional revenue for the ADAMH Board though.

Mr. Hambley stated that if we take action and move the grandfathered portion of that.

Mrs. Geissman stated that there is no grandfather.

Chris stated that if you increase it from the \$1100 for all residents to \$1300, ADAMH Board's rates go up accordingly; so you would generate that \$200 additional per residents.

Mr. Hambley stated that right now we have 2 tiers.

Chris stated that is correct.

Mrs. Geissman stated that there is no grandfather.

Mr. Hambley stated that there is.

Mrs. Geissman stated no, there isn't.

Mr. Hambley stated that we have 2 tiers; what's the second tier?

Mrs. Geissman stated that's the tier that was supposed to have went up to the \$1580 2 months later.

Chris stated that was to be for admissions after May 2002.

Mr. Hambley stated that is right, and nobody is paying that full amount.

Mrs. Geissman stated no.

Mr. Hambley added that what you're recommending is we boost that up even higher?

Mrs. Geissman stated that she thinks it should be exactly what it cost to live there and if you have somebody that has the resources to pay that then they should be paying it; and we should have one out there that would be able to do that; we purchased his property and he's at the County Home.

Chris asked if that is the New Horizons?

Mrs. Geissman stated it is; did you ever find out what happened to those funds? What happened to those; we purchased his property; where'd that money go? You know, the New Horizons property.

Chris stated that is the settlement for that purchase.

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John Stricker stated that it went into an account and it's being paid out to the County Home.

Mrs. Geissman stated that he should be paying the \$1580.

John stated that it could have been before that; I don't know; he could have been there before.

Chris asked before May 2002?

Mrs. Geissman asked if you will check that out; I was thinking it was after May 2002.

John stated that I think he was in prior, but I will double check and verify that.

Mrs. Geissman stated that I think it just makes common sense; if it cost \$1625 a month to live there, that's what the fee should be, and if there's no one able to pay it that's fine; but if there is on, which I think there is, then at least their paying what they should be paying to live there; they certainly wouldn't live anywhere else any cheaper; there is no where else that they could get a good rate like that.

Ms. Ray stated that certainly I don't think this is for discussion today; I'd like to go pull my County Home Advisory Committee notes and like to take a look at this; maybe we can take this up in Monday's meeting.

Mrs. Geissman stated that it needs taken care of because it should have been taken care of in July of 2002 and it wasn't.

Mr. Hambley that the minutes should be the ones you just got emailed; does Pam (Vereb) normally email those?

Ms. Ray stated that typically I get a copy of those; she gives me a hard copy.

Chris stated that I do too; I don't now that I got them.

Mr. Hambley stated that they may be the ones that haven't been approved yet; do you get the approved ones?

Ms. Ray stated that I get them after they're approved.

Mr. Hambley stated that they may not have been approved yet; I'll ask Pam to make copies.

Ms. Ray stated that makes her feel a little better because I think I've been reading everything, but sometimes things do slip through on me.

Mr. Hambley stated that's why because this was at the last meeting when the discussion and report came back.

Chris stated that there are a couple other items he'd like to review. A summary was presented for capital improvements. Tom Maupin presented a request of \$1.1 million. Ms. Ray has sat down with Tom and they prioritized the list for an affordable level of items to be accomplished this year. The new proposed budget is for \$844,000.

Through discussion it was noted that relative to the New Court House air-handlers, the position taken was that as long as the air conditioning units are operable these would not be replaced until needed. They may last 3 months or they may last 3 years. There is a footnote on the summary that there are contingency funds available if replacements are necessary. They are still receiving preventive maintenance, but the preventive replacement is being eliminated.

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Windows will be replaced in the Old Court House; refinishing the stairs was eliminated; cosmetic tuck-pointing at the Professional Building was eliminated. The projects listed are all to be done in 2004. There was a brief discussion about the old Prosecutor's house that is still being used for storage. Some cosmetic items are still on the list, but the priority is to keep up the maintenance.

Chris stated that there either needs to be an increase by \$50,000 or another \$50,000 worth of projects needs to be eliminated for capital improvements. After a brief review, it was agreed to have the projects reduced by \$50,000, noting there are things on the list that probably won't be able to be accomplished.

Chris stated that all capital improvements to the Animal Shelter have been zeroed out and that the D&K fund and other non-general fund departments are being asked pay for their own capital improvements, which was reflected on the final page of the capital improvements budget. The Animal Shelter revenues are not able to sustain their operation and there is a need to look at the existing fee structure. In 2003 their expenses exceeded revenues by \$23,000. The last fee increase was in 1996 from \$8 to \$10. Surrounding counties were contacted for their fee structures. Bringing our fees to \$12 would stabilize their operation.

Ms. Ray asked that the fees be reviewed closer with Chris for planning improvements, including hours of operation.

Chris stated that realistically the best time to increase the fees is near the end of the year prior to the new license season. Licenses purchases in December bring in about half of their revenue. The capital items shouldn't be addressed until there is something is worked out financially.

After further discussion it was agreed to have items, such as higher density cameras, reviewed further as part of the fee structure review.

Under Court Security there is an agreement with the Sheriff for operating the entrance security stations. Various courts were going to increase their fees to help for pay for this, but, Domestic Relations is the only court that increased their fees. \$120,000 was budgeted last year with \$42,000 coming from the Domestic Relations fees; however, only \$101,000 was expended and only \$20,000 came in from Domestic Relations. The general fund paid 80% of the costs and the fees paid only 20%. The Sheriff has submitted a new contract raising the pay for the security deputies from \$18 to \$20 in an attempt to stabilize his staffing. The agreement expired December 31. The Sheriff feels increasing the pay will help with the turn-over that has been experienced.

There was a discussion relative to the pay increase for the security deputies and it was agreed that the pay should be kept at \$18/hour. Chris agreed to check with Domestic Relations Court relative to their fee collection and Ms. Ray agreed to contact Judge John Lohn relative to the courts helping with the payment of security.

It was agreed that the information should be sent out to department heads to request their pay increase information for their employees.

There was no further discussion.

Mr. Hambley moved to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Mrs. Geissman. There was no discussion. Roll Call showed all Commissioners voting AYE.

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MEDINA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

Sharon A. Ray

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia G. Geissman

Pamela J. Terrill, Clerk

Stephen D. Hambley