

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DATE: March 29, 2023

TIME: 1:00 pm

Members Present: Scott W. Myers, Jim Hamsher, John Rowell, Amy Kreger, Kathy Smith, and Charlene Morris.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Budget Officer Julie Ellison, Administrative Assistant Laurie Stinnett, Frances Preston, Watermaster Eric Julsrud, Librarian Chris Ostberg, Reporter Neil Nisperos, and Recorder Laurie Cates.

Minutes. The minutes of March 20, 2023 were reviewed. **MSP: Scott/Jim - to approve the minutes as corrected.**

Department: 101425 WATERMASTER

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Staff Present: Watermaster Eric Julsrud.

Expense

Discussion General: The only expenses in this budget are for supplies and telephone. The Assistant Watermaster is currently a state funded position for the eastern region of the state specifically targeted for cannabis enforcement as it relates to water usage. There is currently no talk at this time about eliminating this position. The County provides office space and office supplies for this department and the state provides the equipment.

Department: 101426 COUNTY LIBRARY

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Staff Present: Librarian Chris Ostberg.

Expense

Discussion General: Chris is requesting additional hours for the Librarian and Assistant Librarian position. Chris reported the Library Foundation has agreed to provide automated doors for the Library and additional hours will be needed so staff can be available during this process. Chris intends to get court approval for this once she has cost figures in place. She also wants to start a reading program at Valley View Assisted Living. Chris said a new program is also in the works to provide additional resources that patrons can utilize (games, puzzles, cake pans, etc.) and there will be additional training needed for this program. The Library has partnered with Oregon State University (OSU) to encourage people to walk as a group together and OSU has provided \$5,000 to purchase items for this group. This amount is showing under grant revenue in the proposed budget. Charlene asked if the Library might once again be open on a Saturday. Chris is not opposed to this, but would want two staff members working due to safety concerns. Discussion followed about how the hours might work if the Library were to be open on Saturdays. The committee discussed the request for

additional hours at the Library and whether or not a decision could be made until after they see what the final budget numbers are. Adjusting the current schedule was mentioned as an alternative to increasing hours.

5100003 Intern: Chris received funding from the Library Foundation last year to hire two high school students to work in the Library during the summer. The Foundation once again agreed to provide funding for this program for this budget. The interns work approximately 16 hours per week for a few weeks during the summer.

1:10 pm Judy Kerr entered.

Department: 101420 DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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Staff Present: None.

Expense

5400001 Capital Outlay – Equip/Furn: Julie reported the District Attorney has advised that the \$4,000 requested can be removed because they have already purchased computers and scanners. This amount will be added back into contingency.

1:24 pm Juvenile Director Cindy Tirico entered.

Department: 101100 NON-DEPARTMENTAL

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5700050 Operating Contingency: Increase by \$4,000.

1:28 pm The committee took a 10-minute break. 1:35 pm Roadmaster Alan Hickerson, Safety and Risk Manager Ryan Palmer and Office Manager Tammy Workman entered. 1:38 pm The committee returned to session. John Rowell asked that people raise their hands prior to speaking and to please speak loudly so everyone can hear.

Department: 102100 ROAD

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Staff Present: Roadmaster Alan Hickerson, Safety & Risk Manager Ryan Palmer and Office Manager Tammy Workman.

Expense

5200021 Legal & Property Appraisal: Tammy asked why the department is charged for legal fees each month even when they haven't used legal counsel. Scott said this is for a portion of the monthly retainer for county counsel and has been charged this way for many years. Departments are also individually charged for their use of legal counsel. Tammy read off the percentages being charged to each department and again questioned why the road pays legal fees when they haven't used legal services. Charlene asked Tammy if her question was answered. Tammy stated she just isn't sure the way this is being done is correct. John reported decisions may need to be made after County Counsel renders an opinion.

5200066 Blue Mtn CC Allocation: Charlene asked about this \$16,000. Kathy said this is considered school money just like regular school transfers. Scott said

all of the schools in the county receive excess funds from the road department. Public schools are funded with this money, not private schools. Twenty-five percent of Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding goes to schools and the Education Service District (ESD) decides how much goes to each school. This is a statutory requirement.

5400002 Capital Outlay Road & Shop: Alan explained there was a mistake made in this line and instead of \$0 there should be \$250,000 in this line.

5400006 Capital Outlay Bridges: Additional funding was put in this line. Jim asked Alan about the bridge grant applied for and Alan said he hasn't heard anything as of this date. They did get a grant in partnership with the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District and reported they work very well with the Soil and Water District.

5600004 Trans-School Forest: This should be \$600,000.

5600021 Transfer – Treas Invest: Kathy asked if this was the investment fee for the Road and Road Reserve. Julie said this is just the reserve funds portion. Discussion followed about what this will be depending on County Counsel opinion regarding the reserve fund.

1:46 pm John Morris entered.

Investment fees are charged for budgets that have over one million dollars as of June 30th of the year. Kathy stated this was done by resolution years ago. Frances asked if an investment firm was used by the county and Julie stated she does the investing for the county. Frances asked if the county had ever thought about reaching out to a professional brokerage firm. John stated he doesn't know how this would apply to public funds. Jim said there are requirements for public investing. Kathy reported when she was the Treasurer she wasn't aware of any county using a private brokerage firm and Treasurer's and Financial Officers did the investing. The investment fee is a percentage of the ending balance on June 30th of each year. Kathy said this money goes into the general fund.

5900070 Unappropriated End Bal: Julie will be adjusting this line by \$350,000 for the changes made above.

2:13 pm The committee took a break. 2:15 pm Fair Manager Mindy Winegar entered.

2:28 pm The committee returned to session.

Department: 111100 FAIR RESERVE
Staff Present: Fair Manager Mindy Winegar.
Revenue

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Discussion General: Mindy reported this fund is slowly being built back up after COVID.

Revenue

3031223 Fair Rev: Sponsorship money is put in this budget line.

3031247 Infrastructure Grant: Mindy said about \$30,000 has been spent out of this line. Mindy sends in receipts for reimbursement up to \$275,000.

Expense

5200010 Contract Services: Mindy would like a new budget line called Community Outreach with \$12,000 in it that would be for things such as community ceremonies for long term fair donors, purchase of flowers for funerals, etc. Kathy is opposed to using public money, which all of this is, for discretionary type spending. She recognizes the gesture, but her personal opinion is that public money should not be used this way. Mindy says they are independently funded through lottery dollars, gate fees and the like. Kathy still feels that these are public funds. Charlene said not using public funds like this has been county policy for years. Scott believes any spending like this would need to be approved by the County Court. Frances said when she worked for the federal government staff members would pitch in their own money for a party fund, so to speak, but would not use federal money. Mindy still feels there are times that this is a common courtesy. Charlene said she can see both sides of this. Amy agreed. Kathy pointed out the general fund used to have to give the Fair money to operate, but gave kudos to Mindy that this is no longer the case. Amy suggested meeting in the middle on the money request. Mindy said she is the only Fair in the state that doesn't provide a sponsor dinner or volunteer dinner. Charlene asked how other fairs use public funding to provide these. Mindy again said it is because fairs are independently funded. John feels that recognition is important for volunteers that really put the time in to help with the fair. Jim pointed out that without fair sponsors the fair wouldn't be possible. Kathy asked if the same guidelines would be applied to Search and Rescue (SAR) who volunteer their time. Scott said SAR created a 501c3 non-profit corporation to pay for their dinners, etc. Jim believes a budget line should be created for community outreach. **MSP: Jim/Scott: to approve a Community Outreach line item in the amount of \$12,000, the motion was then amended to \$5,000.** Scott suggested making this line \$5,000 to start with. Jim agreed to amend his motion as long as it can be adjusted later. Charlene asked Mindy how other fairs budget this. Mindy said she can find out exactly what other fairs call it if needed. Frances asked if there is anything in state law that prohibits this from being done. Kathy and Scott do not believe there is. Jim believes money that is fund raised should be able to be used. Kathy said any money deposited into a county budget becomes public money and Charlene agreed. **John, Scott, Jim, Amy and Charlene voted yes and Kathy voted no.**

5200037 Audit: Julie pointed out that once a threshold of around \$750,000 is reached it will require a single audit and if the fair hits this then Mindy will need to

be aware that this fund might be billed for the cost. Mindy would like to know how much this might be.

5400003 Infrastructure Grant: Kathy asked what this is going to be used for. Mindy said so far a storage shed, permanent outdoor pavilion picnic area with a stage, 25 more RV spaces, widen the grandstands and add ADA ramps, rodeo lights and work on Keerins Hall. The additional RV spaces would be on Third Street and not where the current RV Park is located. Charlene asked how they are dealing with potential illegal camping at the fairgrounds. Mindy said the new sites would be gated and they will have a camp host. Mindy is hopeful that with increased revenue she will be able to hire an additional staff member. She projects the increased RV revenue at around \$125,000.

5600060 Transfer – Gen Admin Cost: Mindy asked if her administration fees would be going up. Julie’s understanding is that if a department has one million dollars or more on June 30th then the investment fee is charged. Amy said because this is due to a grant she isn’t sure if it should be charged. She is concerned that if departments go out for grants it seems like they are penalized for bringing in this money. Julie said she isn’t saying it should be done and this would be a County Court decision. Ultimately it is a County Court decision on whether or not to charge the investment fee.

Department: 136100 COUNTY RV PARK
Staff Present: RV Park Manager Mindy Winegar.
Revenue

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Discussion General: Mindy said the revenue might be a bit different because they went to an online reservation system. She said it will depend on how many people use the online system.

Department: 101439 JUVENILE DEPT
Staff Present: Juvenile Director Cindy Tirico.
Expense

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5100002 Counselor 60%: Cindy said she will be going before the County Court to request a change for this position from a Juvenile Counselor 1 to a Juvenile Counselor 2. The current employee has the qualifications and experience for this increase.

5200005 Utilities Expense: Cindy is requesting an increase in this line to \$2,000 due to the fact she doesn’t know what the actual cost of utilities will be in the new office.

5400002 Capital Outlay – Vehicles: Cindy reported the request for \$50,000 can be removed because Community Corrections has given her department a vehicle.

Department: 101100 NON-DEPARTMENTAL
5700050 Operating Contingency: Increase by \$50,000.

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Department: 115100 JUVENILE REVOLVING
Staff Present: Juvenile Director Cindy Tirico.

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Department: 101426 COUNTY LIBRARY
Staff Present: None.

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Expense

Discussion General: The committee discussed the request to increase the hours for the Librarian and Assistant Librarian. Kathy stated she is not ready to increase any hours or add positions until other departments like the Sheriff have presented. Charlene agreed with this. John suggested waiting on this one until after the remaining general fund departments have presented.

3:18 pm Justice of the Peace Kathy Stinnett entered. 3:21 pm The committee took a break. 3:30 pm The committee returned to session.

Department: 101411 JUSTICE COURT
Staff Present: Justice of the Peace Kathy Stinnett.

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Expense

Discussion General: Stinnett said the additional staffing she is requesting of .20 FTE (or one day per week) is to help re-coup the staffing level cut last year. She used to have 1.5 FTE and she is now down to .80 FTE. She said it would be ideal to have a full-time staff member to match a full-time department head and the extra help she is requesting would be to cover for times when her current staff member is gone. Kathy questioned whether it would be plausible to keep a staff member for only one day per week. Stinnett said she has tried everything she can think of and Laurie Cates agreed. She is also requesting \$1,000 in relief help. Stinnett stated she has been asked what she does if she doesn't take money at the window and so she made a list of improvements and items she has completed since she started as the Justice of the Peace and explained the list to the committee. Stinnett has created 3,222 legal forms and charts to try to make the office more efficient and instituted a merge process to utilize the current software in Word and Excel. Stinnett said that the governor signed a new eviction bill into law today that will require her to make changes to the current forms she uses. Currently Justice Court has 1,000 to 1,200 total cases; traffic violations, misdemeanors, fish and game, evictions and small claims actions. In comparison, Grant County Circuit Court had 354 cases filed in 2022 of which 172 were crimes. Kathy thanked Stinnett for working to make her office so efficient. Jim told Stinnett he appreciated the list provided. Frances asked Stinnett when her current term expires and Stinnett said January 7, 2025. Frances suggested funding the Justice of the Peace until the end of Stinnett's term and then eliminating Justice Court. John pointed out this is not a discussion for this time. Stinnett asked that if a discussion were held about eliminating Justice Court she would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this and to look at other possible

alternatives such as reducing the Justice of the Peace hours in order to at least preserve Justice Court.

Julie said she received a telephone call from Kevin and Ashley Stevic opposing the closing of Justice Court and they requested this be included in the minutes.

**Department: 101100 NON-DEPARTMENTAL
Revenue**

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3030137 LATCF 21.063: Charlene questioned a handout the budget committee received regarding this funding. She wanted to know what happens if the money is not spent? Charlene asked if the funding were put into contingency or unappropriated ending balance does that count as expended. Jim said there is no sunset or expiration date regarding the use of these funds, but use of the funds must be reported once per year to the Treasury.

MSP: Scott/Jim – to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m. the next meeting will be on March 30, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Kreger
Secretary