

## BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** March 30, 2023

**TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

**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, Community Counseling Solutions Chief Financial Officer (CCS) Rick Worden, Frances Preston, Planning Director Shannon Springer, Reporter Neil Nispero, and Recorder Laurie Cates.

**General discussion:** John asked if any committee members had questions. Kathy said the committee has already tentatively approved the mental health and public health budgets and in her mind the question is whether or not the county will contribute the \$48,000 to public health being requested.

1:10 pm Community Counseling Solutions Executive Director Kimberly Lindsay appeared via video WebEx.

### **Department: 101100 NON-DEPARTMENTAL Revenue**

**Page 1-2**

3030139 Wolf Grant: Charlene asked about this funding and where it comes from. Jim said this comes from the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Whatever money isn't used is sent back to the state. Charlene questioned if the Wildlife Committee and Natural Resource Committee knew about the funding. John said the Wildlife Committee seems to be inactive at this point. Charlene said this is because there is no chairperson.

### **Expense**

5200027 Public Health Support: Rick advised a lot of the funding for public health comes from the state and are programs required by the state. The funding being requested is to assist the health department with operating costs. He said there is still some COVID funding available and if they can find a way to utilize this they will. Rick summarized personnel costs and staffing levels. Rick said this is a very similar budget to what CCS presented last year and the request of \$48,000 is the same. He said what is being presented is basically what is mandated by the state. John asked how many people are served each year in Grant County by public health. Rick estimated 12,000 to 15,000 services were provided. He said a lot of this is for reproductive health, babies and immunizations. Kimberly added Jessica Winegar also provides food services in the communities. She said the funding provided by the county is used exclusively

in Grant County. Frances asked about mental health and homelessness. Rick said this request is strictly for public health and not mental health. The only funding used for mental health is what is received from the state. Kimberly said most counties supplement public health and mental health is better funded by the state. Charlene asked Julie if when the county decided to contract with CCS for services the public health portion in the general fund went away. Julie replied yes. Charlene advised she is very conservative and asked if the state funding that keeps being mentioned is taxpayer funds. Kimberly stated yes, these funds are taxpayer funds and approximately 60 percent comes from federal funding and 40 percent comes from state funding. Charlene asked about people who continue to come through for services in mental health. Kimberly said the funding for mental health comes from the state and she estimates around a 20 percent recidivism rate. She added she can provide better figures for the committee if needed. Frances asked Kimberly or Rick why there are no community health centers on the east side of Oregon. Kimberly said she has not heard the term community health center, but has heard of other terms such as rural health centers. Kimberly added she would be happy to conduct some research on this if Frances could get her additional information. Charlene asked how many counties CCS services. Kimberly reported Grant County is the only county CCS provides public health services to, but the provide mental health services in 5 other counties.

5600008 Transfer – Emergency MGT: Charlene asked why the transfers were listed as transfers and not materials and services. Julie explained this makes it much clearer for the auditors in that it is a transfer and not an added expense. A resolution is completed when a transfer is made.

**General discussion:** Kathy said at some point today she is going to ask the court members if they are for or against eliminating Justice Court. She said if the court is not going to discuss this then it isn't worth discussing during the budget process. Scott said he is ready to answer and is in favor of keeping Justice Court as a public service into the future. He believes the service to the public is important. Jim said his opinion mirrors that of Scott. John feels this is a duplication of services and an additional cost to the county each year. He believes the funding could be utilized in other ways.

1:35 pm Justice of the Peace Kathy Stinnett entered.

Amy asked the court members if they are looking into some sort of law enforcement bond or levy in order to help fund the Sheriff's Office. Scott said he believes these discussions will be held in the future. Amy pointed out this was a request the budget committee made last year, but nothing has been done. John said one public meeting has been held with the Sheriff and he has been doing some research into what this might look like. He added this should be voted on by the citizens. Scott mentioned creating a public safety district and this has been discussed with County Counsel. Kathy believes an operating levy would be a

faster way to raise funding and would also be a gauge of what the voters would like to see moving into the future. Frances expressed her confusion and asked if a district were formed would it be ran by the Sheriff and who would oversee the funds. Charlene and Amy believe it would be overseen by a board of directors. General discussion followed regarding different options. Jim said in his opinion it is still up to each city to contribute to law enforcement costs. Amy pointed out this is the same discussion that was held last year. Jim plans on getting on each city's agenda to discuss this. John stated the ideas being discussed are to fund a couple of more patrol positions and possibly help with wages for current deputies, not to make a "cadillac" out of the department. John advised the court is open to ideas to fix this issue.

1:46 pm Ken Holliday, Jim Dovenberg, Nolan Riss and Shane Koyle entered.

Kathy sees a division between each court member in how they see this moving forward. She mentioned the cities all reached out to the county years ago to create economic development and they all agreed to contribute, but now the largest city doesn't contribute anything and the county is paying for the majority of economic development. Jim said Prairie City has contributed for law enforcement services every year except for one since they abolished their police force. John agrees that the court needs to keep discussing this until they come up with solutions.

1:51 pm The committee took a break. 1:53 pm Shawn Robertson entered.

2:00 pm The committee returned to session.

5200048 Animal Damage Control: Charlene asked to recuse herself from the discussion as a member of the farm bureau. Jim and Scott both didn't believe Charlene has a conflict because she will not gain financially from decisions made. John agreed. Shawn gave a summary of the history of animal damage control in the county. Shawn said a few years ago the court was presented with a request for funding assistance in order to get the program back up and running. Shawn stated they have looked at several options and have presented information to the farm bureau and members. He believes what is going to be requested today will be interim funding in order to get through until something more permanent can be put into place. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Predator Control Agent Nolan Riis introduced himself and gave some examples of predators he has dealt with along with other calls over the last year. USDA District Supervisor Shane Koyle reported they are getting more wolf related calls lately and have staff working on non-lethal options for wolves as well. Dovenberg talked about the serious decline in mule deer counts on his property (over 2,000 years ago and now down to around 100, the highest count in the last 10 to 15 years being around 300). Jim said the town deer population has increased and this brings predators to town. Ken reported he gets many telephone calls regarding wolves. He is about 80 percent finished with calving, but there have been wolves within a mile of his property. He talked about the wolf

population in the area. Discussion followed regarding the merits of the program and the increase in cougars in the area and the issues ranchers face concerning predators.

**MSP: Jim/Scott - to provide funding for the predator control position for the upcoming budget year.** Amy, Charlene, John, Scott and Jim voted yes. Kathy voted no because she was involved in these discussions beginning in 2018 and it has been discussed since that time to find funding, but nothing has been done.

Shane sent two proposals, one for \$40,000 for part-time and one for full-time in the amount of \$75,000. Scott isn't sure the committee is ready to decide on the amount of funding for this and suggested the committee may want to have additional discussion on this matter.

2:36 pm Airport Manager Haley Walker entered.

**Department: 121100 AIRPORT RESERVE**  
**Staff Present: Airport Manager Haley Walker.**  
**Revenue**

**Page 48-49 TA**

3032124 FAA AIP RW 17/35 Const 22: Charlene asked if this is the project that did not receive any bids. Haley said yes, this project is supposed to take place this summer and since no bids were submitted, she received permission to go out again for bids. She said the feedback she received was that the schedule was too tight. Haley added the project would go out for bid again with revisions to the timeline.

3032130 COAR ODA Airport Sup Eqp: Haley had a discussion with Emergency Manager Eric Bush regarding American Rescue Plan Act funds (ARPA) and the potential for use as a grant match. Haley said if there are any ARPA funds available she would like to request the 10 percent match required for this in the amount of \$16,200.

**Department: 124100 AIRPORT**  
**Staff Present: Airport Manager Haley Walker.**  
**Revenue**

**Page 52-53 TA**

Discussion General: Haley thanked the budget committee and court for the continued support over the last 6 years. She said grant funding of \$16,501,943 has been received to date with only \$32,405 in local funds being spent.

3032407 Hangar: Kathy noticed hangar rents have increased. Haley said this is because there is project underway with the Forest Service to rent additional space while they conduct a remodel of their current space.

3032417 Flowage

**Expense**

5200037 Audit: Julie wanted to point out that there could potentially be a single audit required for this fund and wanted Haley to know this. Haley is aware and

said the audit has been completed. Julie advised she does bill departments for the cost of the audit, but doesn't know what the cost will be at this time.

5400003 Capital Outlay Build & Grounds: Kathy asked if the \$38,000 being requested is for a specific project. Haley said it is for an LED light changeover and for security upgrades. The Forest Service pays approximately 73 percent of the cost of upgrades and the Airport pays 27 percent. This is reflected in revenue under budget line 3032404 Miscellaneous.

2:59 pm The committee took a break. 3:08 pm The committee returned to session.

**General discussion:** Julie wanted to review the agenda for April 19<sup>th</sup>. She pointed out it will be a busy meeting with the Sheriff, Emergency Management, Community Corrections, Domestic Violence and Forest Title III presenting.

3:11 pm Planning Director Shannon Springer entered.

**Department: 101100 NON-DEPARTMENTAL  
Expense**

**Page 1-2**

5200027 Public Health Support: The committee discussed the request of \$48,500 and how much funding to provide. Amy suggested maybe meeting in the middle. Scott said the hope has been that the requests would be lower each year and suggested providing the same funding as last year of \$30,000. Amy concurred with this idea. Charlene asked if the county had any plans to take this out to bid. Amy explained her understanding that the county is not versed in providing public health and that is why it was contracted out years ago. Scott doesn't believe there is anyone else who would be able to provide the service, staffing and building that CCS currently does. John asked if CCS was a non-profit entity and was advised they are. **MSP: Scott/Amy – to provide \$30,000 in funding for public health for this upcoming budget year.**

3:24 pm Watermaster Eric Julsrud entered.

**Department: 101430 ELECTIONS  
Staff Present: None.  
Revenue**

**Page 17 TA**

Discussion General: Amy suggested whatever additional cost there might be for a new election machine could be paid from equipment reserve if there is not enough money in this budget.

**Department: 101451 RELIEF HELP  
Expense**

**Page 19**

5100002 Special Projects/COVID 19: Julie said she would like to put the ARPA money in this line item so when the Sheriff does hire someone who will be paid with ARPA funding it will be easier to track for budgeting and for the auditors.

Kathy pointed out if the Airport is able to use any of this funding it could be transferred to the Airport. Charlene asked about the \$120,000 for broadband. Scott explained this would pay to bring high-speed fiber internet to the Courthouse and the old road department building (Berry Building). Charlene expressed confusion over why the county is funding this when the Grant County Digital Coalition has over 6 million dollars. The court will discuss what internet provider to go with at the next court meeting. Kathy asked if the ARPA funding was all received and Julie indicated it was. Julie also reported the amount of ARPA funding remaining is approximately \$626,100. Jim would like to find out if the funding can be used for current Sheriff's deputies to help offset costs. Kathy would like to put the ARPA funding into this line item for transparency. John agreed with putting all of the ARPA funding here. Jim suggested changing the name of this line to ARPA.

**Department: 101426 COUNTY LIBRARY**

**Page 16 TA**

**Staff Present: None.**

**Expense**

Discussion General: Kathy is not in favor of increasing employee hours for any department until all departments have presented. **MSP: Scott/Amy - to not increase hours at the Library.** Frances asked when the County Court would make decisions such as these. Amy said she has always felt that the court should make these decisions prior to the budget committee meeting. Kathy said in the past departments were not allowed to increase hours without court approval so that the budget committee would have the right numbers in front of them. Scott believes the Library needs to change their hours, but not increase them. Kathy asked if the court is going to make the decision to increase hours for the three departments requesting it, or if they are going to put this decision on the budget committee.

3:40 pm Justice of the Peace Kathy Stinnett entered.

**Department: 101411 JUSTICE COURT**

**Page 3 TA**

**Staff Present: Justice of the Peace Kathy Stinnett.**

**Expense**

Stinnett informed the budget committee that after discussing the budget with her staff member she has made the decision to withdraw her request for an additional .20 FTE employee and also wants to withdraw her request for a copier as long as if her copier fails she can ask the court to replace it from equipment reserve. She added that she would still like to have the \$1,000 requested for relief help. Kathy told Stinnett that it appears that Justice Court is not going away. **MSP: Scott/Jim – to approve the suggested changes and remove the request for a .20 FTE, remove the copier and to add \$1,000 to relief help.**

**MSP: Jim/Amy – to adjourn.**

Meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m. the next meeting will be on April 19, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Kreger  
Secretary