

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DATE: April 24, 2023

TIME: 10:00 am

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, Rick LaMountain, Senior Programs Manager Misty Palmer, Economic Development Director Tory Stinnett and Recorder Laurie Cates.

10:03 am Watermaster Eric Julsrud and John Morris entered.

Minutes. The minutes of April 19, 2023 were reviewed. **MSP: Amy/Scott - to approve the minutes as corrected.**

10:04 am Planning Director Shannon Springer entered.

General discussion: Shannon clarified the status of the solar project near Prairie City that was discussed at a previous meeting. She said a zoning application has been received by her department, but is incomplete and has been since January. Shannon isn't sure when it will be completed and even after it is completed she isn't sure when construction will begin. Jim indicated the contract is supposed to be completed by September 2023. Shannon wanted the budget committee to know the status of the project since the potential revenue has been discussed in prior meetings.

10:07 am Frances Preston and Emergency Management Coordinator Eric Bush entered.

Julie said she spoke with the Assessor about the possibility of increased revenue from new housing and was told it may be several years before the county would receive any funding for properties built in the John Day Urban Renewal area. Jim stated there are plans to get the Co-Gen in Prairie City up and running again and this would bring in additional revenue. Amy pointed out it isn't fiscally responsible to count on revenue that has not yet arrived. Jim asked what the percentages are for current county investments. Julie said the current rates average between 3 and 5 percent.

Staff Present: Senior Programs Manager Misty Palmer.

Revenue

3033806 OPI: This is a program to assist seniors and allow them to stay in their homes longer.

3033828 Meal Reimbursement 93.778: Misty stated approximately 15,000 meals are served to seniors each year and without volunteers this would be impossible to do.

3033841 Transfer – General Fund: Misty said the \$25,000 in this line item is an estimate at this point since it is unknown how much funding will arrive from Community Connections of Northeast Oregon (CCNO) yet. Scott indicated he has a meeting with CCNO tomorrow.

Expense

Discussion General: Misty reviewed the staffing levels at each Senior Center and pointed out that the John Day Senior Center assists with the cost of the cook's wages. In the next 20 years, it is projected that the senior population in Grant County will be at 48 percent. Frances reported the Senior Center in Prairie City is really struggling and recognizes the Senior Centers are independent, but believes the County should do more. Frances would like to see the County contribution increase by 50 percent. She said the cooks are very dedicated and reiterated her belief that more support is needed. Amy asked Frances what she means by additional support. Frances believes the Manager position should be full-time and would like to make sure the cook's wages meet minimum wage. Misty indicated the Assistant Cook positions currently makes \$15.01 per hour and the Head Cook positions make \$15.53 per hour. Charlene asked for clarification on a couple of items including if Dayville is working on providing meals. Misty said her understanding is Dayville received some grant funding to provide a meal each month and believes they are going to approach CCNO for additional funding. Misty explained the cost of meals currently and said donations are received by the centers, for example, beef. Additional discussion followed regarding financing of the centers. Julie clarified what the wage will be for the upcoming fiscal year for the cook positions with the 6 percent cost of living adjustment. Misty added she is the Court Visitor for the County for guardian and conservator matters. Over the last year, Misty has conducted 12 Visitor Reports and Scott added this is part of Misty's job description and duties.

10:24 am Parole and Probation Officer Sam Stinnett entered.

Mark Webb appeared via telephone and reported he is on the Senior Citizens Advisory Council and wished to echo the statements made by Frances to increase funding for the Senior Programs.

5200003 Dues & Travel Expense: Misty has requested an increase of \$200 in this line for mileage costs.

5400001 Capital Outlay Equipment / Furniture: Misty has asked for a new laptop because her current one is about to failing.

MSP: Jim/Scott – to tentatively approve the Senior Programs budget.

Department: 101458 ECONOMIC STABILIZATION

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Staff Present: Economic Development Director Tory Stinnett.

Revenue

Discussion General: Tory provided several handouts to each budget committee member for review. Tory presented a PowerPoint explaining what Economic Development is, the partners involved, and the services provided by the department. Tory summarized past and future projects and programs for the committee.

Expense

Discussion General: Tory pointed out that historically her department has come in under budget for spending each year. Amy asked what the cities have done with the housing analysis. Tory said it isn't completed yet and it was a struggle to get consultants for the project, but it is moving forward. She said the project is looking at the barriers to housing and will be useful for the cities into the future. Charlene asked Tory if there is a reason there is a housing shortage. Tory reported the population is aging out of the workforce, but remaining in their homes which does not free up existing housing. John asked what affordable housing means to Tory and she replied we need more medium range housing available in our area. Tory explained some of the assistance programs that businesses can utilize and the importance of finding incentive programs to assist people. Amy pointed out one of the issues in the County is the lack of builders in the area and issues with broadband internet. Amy gave examples of issues employees coming to the hospital have faced. The aging, current housing doesn't meet the needs of people moving into the area in Amy's opinion. Charlene said she has lived in this community for a very long time and doesn't recall hearing about a housing shortage over the years. She questioned how there is a shortage of housing when the population has not increased. Jim pointed out when the population ages and retires they remain in their home, so when someone new moves in to take a job there is not necessarily a place for them to move in to. Frances reported the Forest Service used to provide housing for employees and now they do not so that option went away. Discussion followed regarding the housing issue. Amy pointed out there are several abandoned, unlivable houses in Long Creek and Monument that nothing is being done with. John Morris said that in order to get people to want to move here there has to be employment. Amy said the hospital has several openings, as do other employers. Tory mentioned the school district is also looking for employees. Amy again pointed out part of the issue is the lack of high-speed fiber internet for remote workers and if more housing was available people would move here. Amy asked if there was a way to get demographics on people who live here, but work remotely for employers who are out of the area. Tory said she will check into this.

Amy believes the north end of the county will grow exponentially once high-speed internet is available. John doesn't understand why new housing isn't being built here by people who wish to move here. Jim pointed to the lack of temporary housing. Eric Bush said he is here to support Tory and the work she does. He said after the recent fire in downtown John Day she has done a great job and is acting as a single point of contact for the businesses affected by the fire.

5100003 Economic Specialist: Tory said there is a possibility of having \$45,000 available for this position with \$30,000 coming from the Ford Foundation and \$15,000 from the County. Tory has not yet requested the \$15,000 contribution from the County Court. Tory said she was asked last year to find funding for this position and that is what she did. Kathy is not in favor of adding or increasing any positions at this time until the final budget numbers are known.

5200045 Project Dev-Marketing: Tory would like to move \$15,000 from this line into the Economic Specialist line so this would decrease to \$32,000. Julie said the \$15,000 would not include the cost of benefits.

11:16 am The committee took a short break. 11:30 am The committee returned to session.

Kathy suggested going through the budgets that have not been tentatively approved at this time.

Department: 101415 COUNTY TREASURER

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Staff Present: Treasurer Julie Ellison.

Revenue

3030415 Investment Mgt. Fee: County Counsel has indicated this has been charged historically and believes this is an allowable expense to departments.

Department: 101416 COUNTY COURT

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Staff Present: Judge Scott W. Myers, Commissioner Jim Hamsher, Commissioner John Rowell and Administrative Assistant Laurie Stinnett.

Expense

Discussion General: The committee is not recommending any increase in hours for the Administrative Assistant or Commissioners.

Department: 101451 RELIEF HELP

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Revenue

Discussion General:

3030193 COVID 19 Fiscal Recovery

Expense

Discussion General:

5100001 Relief Help Accrued Benefits

5100002 Special Projects/COVID 19: The APRA funding of approximately \$810,000, is being tracked in this line for wages for Sheriff's Department

employees. Julie said at the last meeting she was instructed to move some Sheriff's Department employees into this fund in order to utilize and track the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

5100094 Social Security/Medicare
5100095 Paid Leave Oregon
5100096 SAIF
5100097 Group Insurance
5100098 Retirement

5200001 COVID-19 Supplies
5200002 COVID-19 Supplies II
5200013 COVID-19 Fiscal Recovery: Decrease to \$0.

5400003 Capital Outlay – Bldg Imp: Decrease to \$0.

5600024 Transfer to Airport: \$16,200 of the ARPA funds will be transferred to the Airport for a grant match.

Department: 101458 ECONOMIC STABILIZATION

Page 24 TA

Staff Present: Economic Development Director Tory Stinnett.

Expense

Discussion General: The committee discussed the request for the Economic Specialist position. Kathy asked to discuss this position and pointed out this is a four-year commitment. Amy isn't sure this is sustainable. Kathy is not personally in-favor of adding this position because no other departments have been approved for increased hours or positions. Jim discussed different grants Prairie Wood and Co-Gen are applying for and the potential job increase this would provide in the future. Frances asked if Economic Development was facilitating the grants Jim mentioned, or if the employer is applying for these. Jim said they are being facilitated and assisted through Economic Development. Tory stated the grant funding is not running through her department, but she has assisted with the grants. Charlene asked the committee members if it bothered them that the county was being funded by grants. Jim looks at it as using money that would go to someone else. Amy asked what it would look like if no grants were received. Scott listed some departments that would be directly affected. Charlene would like to see a committee formed to look at grants and the ramifications of the grants applied for. Julie doesn't know of any general fund departments that would be affected if grants weren't received. Scott pointed out the Assessor gets a large grant from the Department of Revenue each year.

Kathy asked the committee to get back to the discussion of the Economic Specialist position. Jim would like to approve this position. Scott would prefer to see an agreement with the City of John Day prior to this decision. Kathy asked what this position would be providing. Tory said the position would work with all of the cities in the County. John asked what kind of return this position would

provide to the County. Tory believes this position would be able to work one on one with local businesses. She said the County would benefit because businesses would be assisted with growth. John asked for a matrix to be able to measure this against in order to see results. Jim said without Economic Development the \$500,000 grant to assist landowners with juniper removal and fire protection would have not been received. **MS: Kathy/Amy – to decrease the project development line by \$15,000 and to tentatively approve. Kathy, Amy, Charlene, John and Scott voted yes. Jim voted no.**

Charlene asked what the County provides in funding to this department and Julie said approximately \$40,000. Jim asked about including an overtime line for the Director since an assistant was not approved. Kathy pointed out this position is exempt from overtime. Julie said once Tory takes over Title III administration there will be a stipend added. Kathy stated the Title III administration needs to be paid from the Title III budget. Julie will add a line to receive and expend this money.

**Department: 116100 EQUIPMENT RESERVE
Revenue**

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Discussion General: The committee members agreed they are fine with the amount currently in this budget.

**Department: 13100 COURTHOUSE RESERVE
Revenue**

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Discussion General: The committee members agreed they are fine with the amount currently in this budget.

**Department: 101100 NON-DEPARTMENTAL
Expense**

Page 1-2 TA

5700050 Operating Contingency: Kathy asked what this number is without the LATCF money. Julie reported around \$163,544. **MSP: Kathy/Amy - to put the entire amount of the LATCF money, in the amount of \$4,363,200, into unappropriated ending balance.** This amount includes the second payment that should arrive prior to the end of June. Jim would like the Treasurer to look into the best way to get interest on this money. Julie said the money is all pooled together and she cannot separate it out. Kathy agreed with Julie that there is no way to separate this out. **The motion carried unanimously.** Kathy wanted to point out that the Sheriff's Department will use all of the ARPA money in the upcoming fiscal year. She said during next year's budget there will be \$800,000 that will need to be used for the Sheriff's Department from the LATCF funding prior to any COLA or budget requests and at this rate the money isn't going to last very long. Kathy said there is going to need to be an operating levy created for the Sheriff's Department and it needs to be voted on this November so if it fails a plan can be made for the future. She suggested going out for a \$500,000 operating levy for 5 years.

5900070 Unappropriated Ending Bal: Increase to \$4,363,200.

MSP: Amy/Charlene – to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 12:16 p.m. the next meeting will be on May 9, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Kreger
Secretary