

Budget Meeting

The Hancock County Finance Committee met on September 7, 2022, in the County Board room at 7 pm for the first budget meeting. Members present were Wayne Bollin, Mark Menn, Tom Bergmeier, Janet Fleming, Harry Douglas, and Dennis Castlebury. Absent was Mark Hanson. Others present were Doug Diprima, Casey Livingston, and Jeff Dedey.

Casey Livingston, the Supervisor of Assessments, opened the discussion with a request to pay a deputy an extra \$1 per hour to aid in employee retention. After some discussion by the members, a motion was made by Mark Menn to support the request and decision by Ms. Livingston, acknowledging that the deputy's budget had sufficient funds to carry that line item through the end of the fiscal year. Seconded by Ms. Fleming. Motion passed 6-0. Casey exited the meeting.

Jeff Dedey was asked to attend the meeting to discuss a possible consultation position with the county, concerning the IT needs of the courthouse staff and departments. The county is needing someone who could analyze the current IT systems and its recurring problems and give feedback to the county with direction on how to move forward in problem solving. The position would be consultation and problem solving only, any technical assistance would be handled by other IT vendors. Mr. Dedey stated that he would be interested in this limited position, and charge \$35 per hour for his advisory services. A motion was made by Ms. Fleming to secure Mr. Dedey for this position, at \$35 per hour, and begin the job by working with the County Treasurer and County Clerk first with their office systems and problems. Seconded by Mr. Castlebury. Motion passed 6-0. Mr. Dedey exited the meeting.

Doug Diprima was next to discuss some dental insurance questions he had concerning the county health insurance plan. The members referred his questions to Keith Krohe, our insurance agent. He was scheduled to come before the Finance committee on September 8, the following morning.

The committee members then discussed the EMS service with Mr. Diprima. Many concerns were presented from both sides, and more questions than answers were discussed. Concerns listed were EMS employee staffing shortages,

Keokuk Hospital closing news, the upcoming report from John Simon concerning our EMS audit, and the whole of our rural EMS struggles in remaining viable and providing efficient and consistent service to our county and residents. Again, more questions than answers, and the fact that our entire region is experiencing these problems.

Mr. Bollin then proposed the following questions to the members, concerning the upcoming budget process and our county's current financial position:

1. Where are we?
2. Where are we going?
3. How do we get there financially?
4. And, what obstacles are apparently ahead for us in our budget process?

Each member responded with a variety of concerns and positive comments. Some of those comments were:

1. Wage increase pressure, and balancing services costs vs. taxpayer satisfaction and tax increases
2. Employee retention
3. The advantage that our consultants at Bellwether have given us
4. The effect that Illinois' new criminal justice laws will have on our county's ability to recover legal fees and fines, as well as overload the system with unneeded policing and extra problems
5. Inflationary factors and the impacts to our county

Mr. Bollin then appointed Mark Menn and Harry Douglas to assist him in an all-day budget meeting with department heads and staff, along with our consultant, Bellwether, on Monday, September 12. Bellwether will compile all budget requests, then present the initial report to the committee. From there the county committees will meet with the departments to work through the process.

A motion was made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Bergmeier to recess to the Finance Committee meeting on September 8, 2022, 9am.

Motion Passed.

Respectfully submitted,

