

Minutes of Meeting
Clerk FY21 Budget Review
May 18, 2020
1:00 p.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios, Commissioner Leslie Duncan and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda item. Also present were Clerk Jim Brannon, Chief Deputy Clerk Jennifer Locke, Finance Director Dena Darrow, Staff Accountant – Budget Michelle Chiaramonte, Court Services Director Marissa Garza, Court Services Manager Kally Young, Recording Manager Melinda Roeder, Accounting Supervisor – AP & Spending Lori Shaw, Administrative Assistant Ronnie Davisson, BOCC Senior Business Analyst Nanci Plouffe and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business (Action):**

Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Review - Clerk

Finance Director Dena Darrow announced that the five divisions of the Clerk's Office Budget would be covered.

Staff Accountant – Budget Michelle Chiaramonte announced that the Clerk's Division Operating Expenses had been reduced 1.38% from FY2020. She added that the Clerk's Budget had been reduced every year, starting in 2018.

Auditor

Ms. Chiaramonte stated that the long term strategy for the Auditor's Office was to improve processes, with an eye toward improved efficiency for other departments. She commented that, since so many systems were reaching the end of their useable lives, this was the time to embrace new technology. She noted that the recent shut down had revealed areas in which technology could improve processes and reduce the need for additional overhead.

Ms. Chiaramonte reported that the Auditor's Operating Expense Budget had been held at a 2% increase. She said the capital and new program budget requests were \$100,000 for external auditors and \$50,000 for an ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) consultant's preliminary review.

Elections

Ms. Chiaramonte said that Elections' Operating Expenses' request was less than the allotted 2%. She commented that, since 2021 would be a major election year, staffing would be critically important. She stated the department was requesting \$50,000 for temporary election workers. For Election's capital request, she listed 46 Express Vote

units, at \$157,000, a Ballot on Demand Printer, at \$12,000, and a Document Counter, at \$13,000.

Chief Deputy Clerk Jennifer Locke reported that Staff Accountant – Grants Julina Hildreth had spoken to the Secretary of State’s office regarding the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) grant that the County should receive and the match that would be required. She stated that a \$66,000 match would be required to receive about \$167,000, resulting in a total of \$234,164. She said Ms. Hildreth was working on the grant seeking additional information to proceed.

Ms. Locke listed the reasons behind each of the three equipment requests, including improved speed and accuracy of both voting and tabulating the vote, better compliance with ADA regulations and a reduction in staffing needed.

Recorder

Ms. Chiaramonte announced that the Recorder’s Operating Expenses had been reduced by 7.64% since FY2020. She noted that their projected revenue remained unchanged.

District Court

Ms. Chiaramonte said that District Court had maintained their Operating Expenses Budget at the allowed 2% increase. She listed personnel expense requests:

- Position Status Change \$16,000
- Helpdesk Coordinator \$64,000
- Judicial Assistant (3) \$164,000
- Court Services Float \$58,000
- Retirement (one-time expense) \$5,000

She noted that over the last ten years there had been no over-all change to the District Court staffing, although cases had increased. She offered data on the increased caseload to support the requests and described the duties each position entailed.

County Assistance

Ms. Chiaramonte reminded the Commissioners that the Legislature had gone into recess without making a decision on the proposed Medicaid Expansion. She stated that County Assistance would, therefore, continue to operate as it had. She said they anticipated that the County would need to pick up more of the burden for FY22.

Ms. Chiaramonte reported that the Operating Expenses for County Assistance had increased by 13.76%, due to increased health care costs. She said Indigent Fund Operating Expenses had decreased by 9.63%. She stated that collections and indigent burials would continue as before. She added that the ultimate shape the department would take in the future was unknown at this time.

Ms. Locke stated that indigent burial expenses had been increased from \$700 to \$1,200. She said the Counties were not covering the portion of Medicaid Expansion being discussed by the Legislature, but it was not yet known how that would be handled.

Ms. Darrow said that the State was covering that amount this year, but expenses would be pushed down to the County level to cover for Medicaid Expansion when it happened. She said using the Indigent Fund dollars for this would not be allowed; the money would probably come from the General Fund. She confirmed that County Assistance would still accept payments on existing accounts.

Clerk Brannon confirmed that Fund 40 could not be used for anything but County Assistance, so Medicaid Expansion expenses would not be paid from there. He pointed out that most counties probably did not have a balance in their Fund 40s, although Kootenai County does.

Clerk Brannon affirmed that County Assistance would continue to collect on existing accounts for the benefit of the taxpayers. He predicted this would continue for a long time, regardless of other changes to the department.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan asked whether the hiring of the District Court Judicial Assistants could be spread out over a longer span. Various options were discussed.

Court Services Manager Kally Young offered information on the logistics of housing new judges and their support staff.

Commissioner Duncan asked if the \$50,000 for the ERP consultant were provided, the \$100,000 for external audit services could be cut.

Ms. Chiamonte said there was a small amount of overlap between the two items, but the external auditors would examine questions of compliance and risk as impartial third parties. She explained that the ERP consultants would look at a complete overview of the County and find ways to improve processes and recommend software that would benefit many areas.

Ms. Darrow said if the external audit funding were cut this year, her department would research the cost to perform the function internally. She stated that her department had a person who would soon be qualified to act as an Audit Manager. She explained this employee, with another person for support, could fulfill their needs at less than \$100,000 per year. She commented it could then become an ongoing function, which would offer greater benefits to the County than a single external audit.

D. Public Comment (Discussion): This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County-related issue. Idaho Law prohibits Board action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance. Comments related to future public hearings should be held for that public hearing. There was no public comment.

E. Adjournment (Action): Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
