

Minutes of Meeting
Budget Process Review
August 5, 2019
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 items. Also present were Coroner Warren Keene, M.D., KCSO Sheriff Ben Wolfinger, KCSO Undersheriff Dan Mattos, KCSO Lieutenant Ward Crawford, KCSO 911 Operations Manager Cheryl Hallgren, KCSO 911 Administrative Assistant Alicia Lynch, Chief Deputy Assessor Joe Johns, Public Defender Anne C. Taylor, Court Services Director Marissa Garza, Court Services Manager Kally Young, Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud, Finance Director Dena Darrow, Staff Accountant – Budget Michelle Chiamonte, Adult Misdemeanor Probation (AMP) Director Keith Hutcheson, Parks & Waterways (P&W)/Noxious Weeds Director Nick Snyder, Community Development Director David Callahan, Juvenile Probation Director Debra Nadeau, Juvenile Detention Assistant Director Linda Hoss, Solid Waste (SW) Principal Planner Lauren Chaffin, Buildings & Grounds (B&G) Operations Manager Greg Manley, Recording Manager Paige Gissel, BOCC Senior Business Analyst Nanci Plouffe and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business (Discussion Items):**

Budget Process Review for FY20

Chairman Fillios announced that the FY20 Budget had received preliminary approval and would be presented to the public on August 29, 2019.

Finance Director Dena Darrow said she would like to hear what people thought of the budget process this year, what they liked or did not like, and what they would like to see changed for next year.

Staff Accountant – Budget Michelle Chiamonte presented a short PowerPoint as illustration. She quoted the Kootenai County Mission Statement, which promises to provide “an innovative, cost effective government the community can be proud of, committed to a high quality of life and excellence in public service.”

Ms. Chiamonte listed the GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association) recommendations for the budget process.

- Establish broad goals to guide decision making – long term perspective
- Develop approaches to achieve goals
- Develop budget consistent with approaches to achieve goals
- Evaluate performance of services and programs it provides
 - Efficiency and effectiveness measures
 - Use actual data where possible

- Document progress toward the broad county goals

She asked those assembled to keep the mission statement and GFOA goals in mind and provide feedback on the process from the FY20 Budget.

KCSO Sheriff Ben Wolfinger noted that he had been through the budget process many times. He said he thought the teamwork shown in finalizing the budget this year had been very good. He commented that for about two whole months all the Elected Officials and department heads had been expected to attend every meeting and asked that it be made clear next time which of the meetings given that Elected Officials needed to attend, so it did not hamper the performance of their duties.

Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud said she thought the process worked well and praised the Auditor's Office for their responsiveness.

Ms. Darrow asked if it would be useful to offer an introductory training to familiarize people with the process before getting started. There was general agreement with the suggestion.

Ms. Chiaramonte predicted that they would try to streamline the budget book. She said that the published version should contain material tailored to the public's needs.

Sheriff Wolfinger pointed out that the Commissioners needed the additional details that the public might not find necessary and asked how that would be taken into account. Ms. Darrow explained that the full documentation would be included in the working documents but the published document would be streamlined.

KCSO 911 Administrative Assistant Alicia Lynch commented that she found the weekly updates useful.

Solid Waste (SW) Principal Planner Lauren Chaffin asked if the overall budget timeline could be published earlier than the last several years.

Commissioner Bill Brooks remarked that, since there was a frequent turnover of Elected Officials, especially Commissioners, a short course giving an overview of the budget process would be useful for the newcomers. Ms. Darrow said there had been one offered some years before and it could be revived. She promised to send him the PowerPoint that covered the material.

Parks & Waterways (P&W)/Noxious Weeds Director Nick Snyder voiced his praise for the teamwork and weekly updates. He said this had been the best budget process he had experienced so far while working at the County. He asked if the Commissioners could advise department heads as early as possible about the areas on which they wanted to focus. He added that the Board's early discussions of restricted funds this year were very helpful for his long-range planning.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan stated she liked the workbook provided to the BOCC but suggested be organized differently and have many more tabs for easier reference. Ms. Chiamonte and Ms. Darrow agreed.

Budget Process Ideas and Suggestions for FY21

Ms. Chiamonte listed the changes that had been proposed by the Auditor's Office. They suggested the County:

- Start process sooner
- Move away from a zero base budgeting process. She said they recommended looking at alternatives and finding one that would work better for the County. She noted that the Priority Budgeting Practice was a possibility. She said it took a more analytical approach and considered actual spending in establishing the budget, after which funds were allocated to programs based on how well they achieve stated goals.
- Have the Auditor enter amounts in the system based on direction from Elected Official or department head. Ms. Chiamonte said some departments had trouble entering their data into Logos so, if the information were given to the Auditors, they could enter it.
- Use a more holistic approach, less granular. Ms. Chiamonte suggested an approach based more on the organizational chart level as less cumbersome for both the Elected Officials and citizens.
- Streamline narrative workbooks. Ms. Chiamonte said the Auditor's Office hoped to cut down the length from about 300 pages to about 40.
- Improved departmental metrics. Ms. Chiamonte noted that the submitted departmental metrics needed improvement. She said the purpose of these were to show citizens how different departments in the County work for them.

Commissioner Brooks expressed his concern that the BOCC be given the information they needed to create the Budget, without straying into micromanaging of employees. He urged the Commissioners to trust the department managers to know and accurately report their own needs. Ms. Darrow assured those assembled that, even if the published budget book was streamlined, the detailed information would be easily available so the Commissioners could look more deeply into any area.

Ms. Darrow and Ms. Chiamonte explained that they had been examining Ada County's budget process, hoping to discover more ways to improve Kootenai's. Ms. Darrow said that Ada County tried to create a draft plan for needs ten to fifteen years in the future. She listed some of the other ideas they had taken from Ada County's process:

- Begin (the Budget) with a preliminary amount
- Use indices to establish amount for Elected Officials to work with
- Have Elected Officials submit forms for anything outside of their respective budget
- Publish interactive budget book to County Website

Commissioner Brooks asked if they might begin publishing the workbook on the County website. Ms. Chiamonte commented that Ada County had a very interesting, online, interactive budget book available to residents. Ms. Darrow noted that the topic had been discussed recently and could be done if the Board wished to pursue the needed technology.

KCSO 911 Operations Manager Cheryl Hallgren commented that this had been her first County Budget and asked if she could get some additional help with details next year. Ms. Darrow assured her that the Auditor's Office would be available for her needs.

Adult Misdemeanor Probation Director Keith Hutcheson inquired if the new Collections Department services would be made available to his staff as well. Ms. Darrow explained to those present that, in the past, District Court had only been able to accept payment in full from offenders. She said if a person could not afford to pay a fine or judgement all at once, they would have to work through a collections agency, which entailed paying large fees for services in addition to the original charge. She reported that the Auditors had worked with Court Services Manager Marissa Garza and created an in-house collections service. Ms. Darrow explained that they charged smaller fees and the money was used just to fund the service. Both Ms. Darrow and Ms. Garza said the plan was already working very well. Ms. Darrow also indicated that Mr. Hutcheson's staff would be included as soon as possible.

Chairman Fillios commented that he had participated in three budget cycles, and this one had been the smoothest and fastest he had experienced. He voiced his agreement for working towards the creation of long-term plans that could survive from one Board to the next, but noted that the resources would have to be allocated to do it.

Ms. Darrow responded that a number of the people present had experience in long term planning and that their knowledge could be shared on a larger scale.

Ms. Chaffin inquired whether the procedures for personnel changes and addition of new personnel would be kept within the budget process. Ms. Darrow confirmed that it would be, as much as was possible.

Commissioner Brooks asked if the budget timeline and progress could be shown on the website, to give the public an impression of how much time and effort went into it. Ms. Darrow agreed and suggested they also include an invitation to people to attend meetings or watch the videos on YouTube.

Sheriff Wolfinger said his final suggestion would be to hold the Budget meetings in a larger space. He remarked that some of the meetings this year had been too full for the small boardroom on the third floor. There was general agreement with his point.

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 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____

Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
