

Commissioner's Record No. 27

MADISON COUNTY, NEBRASKA

COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS SPECIAL – BUDGET HEARING

Madison, Nebraska

September 13, 2022

The Board of County Commissioners of Madison County, Nebraska met in special session at 6:00 P.M.

Advance notice of meeting was published in the Thursday, September 8, 2022 edition of The Norfolk Daily News and posted on the Madison County website. A copy of said notice was provided to each Board member. An affidavit of acknowledgment of receipt of notice of meeting as published was executed.

Following a moment of Silence and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, Chairman Troy Uhlir called the meeting to order and notified the public of the copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room.

Present: Commissioners Eric Stinson, Ronald Schmidt, and Troy Uhlir, County Clerk Anne Pruss, and County Highway Superintendent Richard Johnson. Norfolk Daily News reporter Willis Mahannah reporter were present until 6:36 P.M.

Pursuant to published legal notice in the Thursday, September 8, 2022 edition of the Norfolk Daily News, Chairman Uhlir opened a public hearing at 6:01 P.M. to receive comments regarding the 2022-2023 budget request amount different from the prior fiscal year.

Budget committee members Troy Uhlir, Anne Pruss, and Richard Johnson, presented information on the 2022-2023 fiscal year budget. Documents were presented to the board.

Chairman Uhlir stated that the hearing is an opportunity for the public to provide input. Uhlir began with Miscellaneous General and stated that this budget is at 5.09% which includes operating expenses, services, and contributions to agencies. He explained that the Comparison of General Fund Office Functions document indicated each of the county offices and either an increase or decrease in each of the offices requested expenditures. Both of these document show increases in employees' wages along with 14.6% increase in health insurance costs. The rise in health insurance costs can be contributed to COVID since most individual had postponed surgeries and in 2021 and 2022 which then saw an influx of surgeries that increase the cost of premiums though the NACO pool.

Chairman Uhlir then went on to explain major road projects. He stated that 14.7 miles were projects that were budgeted in 2021-2022 and were not completed but should be completed in the spring of this year. So there was \$5.3 million that was levied last year and will be carried over into this fiscal year. Other adjustments were in crushed road which went from 1.5 million to \$600,000, a bridge that will cost approximately \$194,000, and overlay projects were reduced from 5.3 million to 3.2 million. Commission Schmidt asked if the budget reflect lowering the armor

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coating from \$600,000 to \$200,000 and Chairman stated yes. Chairman Uhlir told the board that the budget shows 9 miles of projects that are scheduled for this fiscal year at a cost of approximately \$3.25 million which less miles then was originally plan to help in lowering the budget.

Uhlir then presented purposed Capital Acquisition which help on the General Funds. Last year's Capital Acquisition from 2021-2022 included rewiring of the courthouse with CAD 6 cabling and electrical work for the courthouse which in return helped reduce the amount we needed in the general budget and offset the raises and health insurance costs.

An update on ARPA funds was given. These funds will be used to update the county's HVAC and telephone systems, windows for the courthouse and sheriff offices, radios for the rural fire departments, and assist other cities, within the county, projects. Commissioner Schmidt stated that he wished that the county would have reduce the amount to each of the cities by \$100,000 to offset the costs of the radios. Uhlir stated that the smaller communities didn't receive any ARPA dollars and by using some of these dollars for projects will help or prevent these communities levying for their projects. County Clerk Anne Pruss advised that the board not designate the remaining \$346,000 and reevaluate in 2024 the remaining balance and designated these dollars to projects in the road department. Commissioner Schmidt stated that he didn't want to go below this amount and keep the \$346,000 where it is at. Commission Stinson stated agreed and stated that if each of the 5 communities can't justify the remaining amount that the balances will go to the county. Uhlir stated that the rural fire districts were given \$300,000 towards the purchase of radios and three out of the five are under the amount given and two exceeded that will be responsible for paying the county.

Roger Acklie asked the board how much was allocated to salaries from the previous fiscal year. Uhlir stated that just over 6.5 % was given in wage increases. Uhlir stated that there was a comparison from other counties, the job market in Norfolk, which showed that the county needed to increase wages by that amount. County Clerk Anne Pruss advised that if you were to look at each of the counting offices budgets were under the 6.5% and this included there operating expenses. Mr. Acklie asked the board if there were any changes to the health insurance. Mr. Uhlir stated that there was a change. The change removed the deductible buy-down that the county was paying to reduce the cost employees were paying out of their pockets. By the county not paying the deductible buy-down will save the county over \$100,000 annually. Also, the deductible changed from \$2,500 to \$2,600 and the HSA coverage changed from \$5,000 to \$6,000 but employee's contribution amounts didn't change. Employee pay \$40 for Single, \$80 for 2/4, and \$100 for family per month. Uhlir stated that NACO didn't have an increase in costs but in reality they should have taking some type of increase that way this year's increase might have not been do high.

Finally, it was discussed what the county's levy would be for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Chairman Uhlir advised that the property tax request is approximately 18,049,540 million which is an increase of 8.42% from the previous fiscal year. He stated that if you look at the three budgets that use levied tax dollars, these three funds are asking for less dollars which then comes down to the fund balance transfer. So, this year fund balance transferred forward is less due to funds received from the First Responders COVID grant which translate into the balance forward being reduced. All this calculates into an increase levy amount of 0.015596 over last fiscal year for a 2022-2023 levy at 0.390331.

Chairman Uhlir closed the hearing at 6:22 P.M.

No action taken.

The Board adjourned at 6:28 P.M.

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ATTEST:

County Clerk Anne M. Pruss

Troy Uhlir, Chairman
County Board of Commissioners