

**Budget Hearings  
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office  
October 17, 2012**

**Budget Hearing: Juvenile/Probate Court- Judge Steve Williams**

The Commissioners met with Judge Steve Williams to discuss the budget for the Juvenile/Probate Court. Commissioner Davis called the meeting to order at 1:39 p.m. with the following Commissioners present: Steven Davis, Mike Kiger, and Judith Shupe. Also present were Staci Knisley, Ed Laramée, Branden Meyer, Cheri Shaw, and Judge Steve Williams.

Commissioner Davis stated that "the budget looks great." He stated that the casino revenue is not being included in the budget. He stated that the Commissioners had a "good exchange with JFS the previous day." He stated that JFS had discussed a large expenditure that will help children who are being placed out of county could be spent in 2013 to reduce future expenses. He stated that the Commissioners were told that the investment to try to protect the children locally would save money.

Commissioner Shupe stated that they plan to try to recruit more local foster parents.

Judge Williams stated that he was unclear whether this would work or not.

Commissioner Davis stated that a concept discussed at the leadership conference was what items can be paid for now that will reduce the out year expenses.

Commissioner Kiger stated that he had no questions.

Commissioner Shupe expressed her thanks to Judge Williams for his work with Crossroads.

Ms. Shaw stated that the schools have also been appreciative.

Judge Williams stated that Crossroads has a good board and also stated that the new Lancaster Schools Superintendent has also been supportive.

Commissioner Shupe asked whether there are cases where juveniles are assigned to Crossroads in lieu of detention center.

Judge Williams and Ms. Shaw stated no.

Judge Williams stated that the juveniles are receiving a proper education. The students have problems with truancy, drug issues and school issues. One of the successes is that more kids are there and then go back to their home schools and then graduate.

Commissioner Shupe asked whether schools can assign students there.

Judge Williams stated yes.

Commissioner Shupe asked how many.

Ms. Shaw stated 20 students short term.

Judge Williams stated that Dave Smalley has told him that the Commissioners were in favor of pursuing an opportunity with the Community Transitions Center (CTC) for the court to refer offenders there in lieu of jail.

Commissioner Kiger and Shupe stated that they have not had discussion with Mr. Smalley regarding this.

Commissioner Davis stated that Mr. Smalley had discussed this issue with him for about a year. HE stated that he would like to hear about any solutions that help with jail overcrowding. He stated that the judges and Sheriff would be involved with these discussions. He stated that no public meetings have been held on this issue and the Commissioners have not discussed this. He stated that he received an email from Mr. Smalley a few days ago listing the price per day. He stated that the reputation of the CTC may not allow this to work.

Judge Williams stated that effective September 18 the law changed stating that the juvenile court holding people ages 18-21 cannot send them to the county jail. He stated that the law finds that it is unsafe to send 19-21 year olds to the detention center. He stated that the jail must separate these individuals. He stated that the CTC does not have a good reputation. He has a concern sending 18-21 year olds to the CTC. He stated that he has no idea whether their program the CTC has. He stated that there is an obligation of the Sheriff to house the individuals that he sends to jail.

Commissioner Davis stated that it has been a marketing effort, knowing that the jail annex was not the long term solution. He stated that he was surprised that it filled up so soon. He stated that if someone has an idea about saving money he was willing to hear about it.

Commissioner Shupe stated that she has not heard anything about this program.

Commissioner Kiger stated that he has not had any discussions with Mr. Smalley about this.

Commissioner Davis stated that he is not for or against this; he would like information because he is interested in saving money.

Commissioner Kiger stated that he was not happy that an email was sent to the judge stating that the Commissioners agreed to this when they have not discussed this issue.

Commissioner Shupe stated that Mr. Smalley had not discussed this with her either.

Commissioner Davis asked whose budget the prisoner housing is included in.

Ms. Knisley stated that prisoner housing is listed under the Commissioner's budget including Dr. Vajen's salary, electronic monitoring and the SCI annex costs.

The meeting concluded at 11:02 a.m.

### **Budget Hearing: Common Pleas Court- Judge Martin and Judge Berens**

The Commissioners met with Judge Chris Martin and Judge Richard Berens to discuss the budget for the Common Pleas Court. Commissioner Davis called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. with the following Commissioners present: Steven Davis, Mike Kiger, and Judith Shupe. Also present were Judge Richard Berens, Magistrate Susan Eyerman, Staci Knisley, Judge Chris Martin, and Branden Meyer.

Judge Martin stated that the judges were requesting additional employees in the Probation Department, the first to begin in January and the other to begin in July. He stated that he had requested funding for an assistant for Kathy Hartman, but she does not want one. He stated that \$43,000 was being removed from their request.

Magistrate Eyerman stated that there will be a reduction of \$43,802 which is salary, insurance, workers comp and benefits. So, \$766,494 minus \$43,802 is the actual request.

Commissioner Davis asked whether a raise for employees was included in the salary line item.

Magistrate Eyerman stated that a \$3,000 cushion was included, but no raises.

Commissioner Davis asked whether the judges follow the parameters set by the Commissioners.

Judge Berens and Judge Martin stated yes.

Commissioner Davis stated that half of the General Fund revenues are improving and the other half is stagnant. He stated that the sales tax is 6% increasing and everything else is flat.

Judge Martin stated that a 6% was included for insurance.

Commissioner Davis asked whether family insurance was assumed.

Judge Martin and Judge Berens stated yes.

Judge Martin stated that there are several accounts that salaries come from. He stated that two full families were included.

Commissioner Davis asked why the workers compensation line item increased.

Judge Martin stated that they were instructed the previous year to include more.

Ms. Knisley stated that that will not affect until next year's numbers.

Commissioner Davis stated that he was told the county is in line for a reduced rate and were told this in late 2011, but would have to wait until 2013.

Ms. Knisley stated that it may go up for the 2014 budget.

Commissioner Davis stated that they will hopefully find out that those percentages could drop. He stated that once a full year of casino revenue is seen, a year to year comparison will be able to be done. He stated that the Commissioners do not plan to budget the new casino revenue. He stated that approximately \$1.5 million will be coming in each year to cover the debt structure of a new jail facility. He stated that if the Local Government Fund is cut, then the Commissioners could use the casino revenue in place of the LGF.

Judge Martin asked whether retirements should be budgeted for.

Commissioner Shupe stated yes.

Ms. Knisley agreed.

Magistrate Eyerman asked about the changes that need to be made.

Ms. Knisley asked Magistrate Eyerman to email her the changes.

Commissioner Davis stated that the proactive approach to communicate with the Commissioners was much appreciated.

Judge Martin stated that they will hire the new person in the Probation Department and then use a few months to see if an additional person is needed.

Commissioner Davis asked whether the judges had any additional questions.

Judge Berens thanked the Commissioners for their "open door policy."

Judge Martin stated that he received a message regarding the Community Transition Center (CTC) from Dave Smalley.

Commissioner Davis stated that he had spoken with Mr. Smalley regarding this. He stated that if anyone has ideas on how to handle an inmate for less than \$65 a day he is interested in hearing about it. He stated that the concept is of concern due to the historical reputation of the CTC and the concept that is being proposed. He stated that he has not discussed this with the Sheriff, but will be meeting with the Sheriff to discuss the mail inspection reports in November.

Judge Martin stated that transportation costs as well as safety concerns about individuals escaping are concerns.

Commissioner Davis stated that Judge Williams mentioned these concerns as well. He stated that he was concerned with certain individuals being placed in there with certain individuals. He stated that Judge Williams was concerned with inmates being sent to the CTC. He stated that the SCI Annex has no treatment area.

Judge Berens stated that this would be similar to community control individuals being ordered to SEPTA, the State run program at Nelsonville, to be used as an alternate to jail.

Commissioner Davis stated that he hoped that the \$1.2 million that the county is spending to run the SCI annex would reduce the expense of sending prisoners out of county. He stated that they all knew that the jail annex was not the long term solution. He stated that Judge Berens mentioned last year that the jail numbers would increase during 2012 because of the changes to sentencing laws.

Judge Berens agreed.

Judge Martin stated that the judges do not have authority to order the individuals prior to conviction, only post-conviction.

Judge Berens stated similar to community control.

Commissioner Davis stated that this may help the Municipal Court inmates more.

Judge Martin stated that

Commissioner Davis stated that he aware of the rising population and the rising cost associated with it.

Judge Berens stated that if the treatment was equal to a state run facility the CTC could possibly be considered. He stated that the judges do not send people there.

Judge Martin stated that people are send to programs to teach them life skills, work release programs and work on obtaining their GEDs.

Commissioner Davis stated thank you.

Commissioner Shupe thanked the judges.

Judge Berens stated that one additional item on his "wish list" was that the second floor hallway in the Hall of Justice looks very institutional. He stated that if there was a way to cover the cinder block walls with drywall or some wood paneling.

The meeting concluded at 2:28 p.m.

## **Adjournment**

With no more business to discuss, on the motion of Mike Kiger and a second of Steven Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 2:29 p.m.

Roll call vote on the motion resulted as follows:  
Voting aye thereon: Steven Davis and Mike Kiger  
Absent: Judith Shupe

The next regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners is scheduled for Tuesday, October 23, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.

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Motion by: Mike Kiger

Seconded by: Judith Shupe

that the minutes were approved by the following vote:

YEAS: Steven Davis, Mike Kiger, and Judith Shupe

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

\*Approved on November 13, 2012.

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Steven A. Davis  
Commissioner

Mike Kiger  
Commissioner

Judith K. Shupe  
Commissioner

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Branden C. Meyer, Clerk