

**Budget Hearings - 2014
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
October 30, 2014**

Budget Hearing – Prosecutor's Office

The Commissioners met at 9:59 a.m. to discuss the Prosecutor's Office 2015 Budget Request. Commissioner Kiger called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Mike Kiger and Dave Levacy. Also present were Carri Brown, Rachel Elsea, Staci Knisley, Gregg Marx, Jason Dolin, and Lynette Barnhart.

Mr. Marx thanked the Commissioners for their time. He reviewed his salary account sheet. Mr. Marx stated he would attempt to explain why the salary increase was higher than the parameters. Previously half of all of attorneys were part-time. They are now all fulltime. \$45,000 of the increase requested is due to losing the OSU fellowship. This is not a new position but is a position that needs to be funded by the general fund now. Another increase is due to hiring another attorney for the Juvenile case load (a request from Juvenile Court and JFS). This individual was working part time as a secretary making about \$20,000 and is now making \$42,000 as a fulltime attorney. They also had to replace the secretary position she vacated. When Mr. Marx started as the prosecutor, they were operating with four attorneys fewer than they had in the past. The staff size hasn't increased so much. The main factor is that the staff is now fulltime. They have 13 attorneys on staff (including Mr. Marx) and have brought in \$6.6 million in collections since adding an additional civil attorney in 2021. While the caseload has increased 39% since 2009, the budget has only increased 2% each year. They are able to provide more services with a fulltime staff. Mr. Marx noted that there was a decrease in salaries from 2009 to 2012 and that five attorneys have left since 2012. Mr. Marx is very deliberate in his hiring. He noted that Joshua Horacek is paid for out of the DTAC fund, as opposed to the general fund.

Mr. Levacy asked for a spreadsheet by position with hourly rates and salaries for 2014 and 2015.

Mr. Marx stated he should be able to provide that by next Tuesday.

Mr. Davis asked which rate increase was used for health insurance.

Mr. Marx stated it was 8%. He added that it was important to replace employees that were hired away and that they need to be funded to keep experienced attorneys.

Mr. Marx also reviewed the packet he provided (attached).

Mr. Dolin reviewed the civil division successes and added that they are doing their best to put money into the general fund (by representing Violet Township and through collections). He added that civil attorney demand has significantly increased and that they are getting more Board of Elections work as well (including a lot of levy work). Mr. Dolin estimated that every time an attorney left the office they took with them \$15,000-

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\$20,000 in training time. This takes away from other things that are needed. Hiring those with more experience is more helpful. He noted that they are paying under market rate, even compared to the City of Lancaster rates. The salaries they offer hurt with the amount of law school debt most graduates have. Mr. Dolin stated that not making pay competitive may be penny wise, but it is also pound foolish. He added that those factors account for a good deal of the salary increases requested this year.

Mr. Davis reviewed the employees who have left over the last two years and the reason for leaving.

Mr. Levacy asked if the training was done in-house.

Mr. Dolin stated that a majority of it was done in-house.

Mr. Marx stated that the Matrix software was very helpful in training and with operations. He added that a partial reason for the jail numbers being down is due to speedier trials and shipping the inmates to prison quicker.

Mr. Davis had a few suggestions. He suggested a follow-up hearing. He stated that more than anything, he appreciates the prosecutor's services. Next, he explained that the Commissioners have asked the Sheriff and Juvenile Court to trim their requests so that the county can stay on track with being able to pay for the new jail. They want to get the budget to a number that the county can afford overall. He added that the City of Lancaster may pay higher rates in some aspects, but that the City is also experiencing financial issues, and the county is not facing such issues, and no one wants to drift to into financial problems.

Mr. Dolin stated that he knew the Commissioners would make an informed decision, but that a failure to make the Prosecutor Office competitive is not cost free and will cost the county at some point.

Mr. Marx added that they have returned roughly \$200,000 over the past three years and still intend to be fiscally tight. It is extremely important that people be held responsible for their crimes.

Mr. Kiger stated they want to make an informed decision.

Mr. Davis added that the county is getting better and decreasing the difference between the requests and budget. While there used to be a \$3 million difference, now it was just \$500,000.

The hearing was closed at 10:45 a.m.

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Budget Hearing – Emergency Management Agency

The Commissioners met at 10:48 a.m. to discuss the Emergency Management Agency's 2015 Budget Request. Commissioner Kiger called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Mike Kiger and Dave Levacy. Also present were Carri Brown, Rachel Elsea, Staci Knisley, and Jon Kochis.

Mr. Kochis reviewed his PowerPoint presentation (attached). The main EMA budget is comprised primarily of grant dollars with a general fund match. The match this year is 4%, with a differential in the match of \$1,800. This is based on the grant funds available for Fairfield County. If the grant is not matched, the unmatched grants will be put back into a supplemental fund. The LPEC grant for a storage building is 100%, but they need to find a location and obtain quotes. They are working on this project. He also reviewed the 2014 highlights and 2015 goals. Mr. Kochis pointed out the positive aspects of mitigation for the City of Lancaster and specifically the west side.

Mr. Davis asked how mitigation would help the west side.

Mr. Kochis stated there would be more retention (such as what is behind the mall) and added that Lancaster had very detailed plans for this project. He added that EMA is funded 67% by grants.

Mr. Davis asked Ms. Elsea and Mr. Kochis to coordinate a meeting with Lancaster to discuss Miller Park, perhaps early in 2015.

Ms. Brown added that Mr. Kochis did a good job with a concise budget presentation and that she is pleased with his work as the EMA Director. The Commissioners agreed.

The hearing closed at 11:00 a.m.

Budget Hearing – Facilities

The Commissioners met at 11:04 a.m. to discuss the Facilities' 2015 Budget Request. Commissioner Kiger called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Mike Kiger and Dave Levacy. Also present were Carri Brown, Rachel Elsea, Staci Knisley, and Dennis Keller.

Mr. Keller presented his information (attached). He added that he is trying to instill a new culture in the department. He noted that the budget sticks to the parameters and included items you normally wouldn't expect in a facilities budget, such as paper and postage. Mr. Keller added that the salaries would likely need to be adjusted when the comp plan was completed as there were employees who might be paid below market rate. This is not included in the 2015 budget and could involve a phased in approach. He also reviewed goals and objectives; 2014 progress and improvements; and 2015 challenges.

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Mr. Levacy asked what the county was paying yearly for storage.

Mr. Keller estimated it was at least \$70,000 in leases.

Mr. Davis asked some questions regarding postage, looking at the current year expenditures. Ms. Brown replied that there likely was prepaid postage in the works to be paid yet this year.

Mr. Keller also reviewed the news of note.

The Commissioners indicated that there was no need for an additional hearing.

The hearing was closed at 11:31 a.m.

Budget Hearing – Municipal Clerk

The Commissioners met at 11:31 a.m. to discuss the Municipal Clerk's 2015 Budget Request. Commissioner Kiger called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Mike Kiger and Dave Levacy. Also present were Carri Brown, Rachel Elsea, Staci Knisley, and Sherri Eckman.

Ms. Eckman noted there were no significant changes and that she was happy to report the disbursements for 2014 were up \$48,000 from last year.

Mr. Davis asked why the budget request was up 5%.

Ms. Eckman noted it was due to witness fees which were out of her control. Other increases were for the standard salary increases.

Ms. Knisley asked what the city's salary and health insurance increases were.

Ms. Eckman stated the salary increase was 2.5% and that the insurance was higher, but broken down monthly, not by percentage. She could provide that information later for the files.

Mr. Davis thanked Ms. Eckman for her visit.

No follow-up hearing is necessary.

The hearing concluded at 11:38 a.m.

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Budget Hearing – Treasurer's Office

The Commissioners met at 12:59 p.m. to discuss the Treasurer's Office 2015 Budget Request. Commissioner Kiger called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Mike Kiger and Dave Levacy. Also present were Carri Brown, Rachel Elsea, Staci Knisley, and Jim Bahnsen.

Mr. Bahnsen presented his budget for 2015. The salary has been increased due to the new employee who will be shared by the Land Bank. There would eventually be a contract with the county and the Land Bank. He noted that was reflected in his presentation.

Ms. Brown noted that there may be additional amounts to include for reimbursement, such as rent or utilities, but those elements are not yet defined. This would mean that the contract would not be limited to salary related items.

Mr. Davis asked if the Land Bank reimbursement would be listed as revenue.

Ms. Brown replied that it would be reflected as revenue within the general fund, essentially offsetting a portion of the new position.

Mr. Bahnsen stated that the Treasurer's DTAC fund previously had carryover cash issues but they expect to have plenty to carry over this year and are moving some appropriate expenses to DTAC.

The hearing was concluded at 1:08 p.m.

Budget Hearing – Domestic Relations

The Commissioners met at 1:42 p.m. to discuss the Domestic Relations 2015 budget review. Commissioner Kiger called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Mike Kiger and Dave Levacy. Also present were Carri Brown, Rachel Elsea, Staci Knisley, Lori Lovas, and Judge Smith.

Judge Smith noted there were no changes to present to what was recorded in the system earlier. Her department has followed the parameters.

Mr. Davis thanked Judge Smith for her willingness to meet and for sticking to the suggested parameters.

Judge Smith thanked the Commissioners for allowing them to add the additional position last year. The position has been very helpful to managing the increased number of pro se cases.

Ms. Brown thanked the court for their work with the federal grant for parenting time.

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Judge Smith stated she found the leadership conference very productive but missed a detailed financial update.

Mr. Davis stated that they tried to have the conference this year be a bit softer due to the bond ratings preparations which were a work in progress, but they plan on bringing it back more financial information next year. He provided Judge Smith with a brief financial update.

Judge Smith stated she thought the update at the conference helps keep everyone informed.

The hearing concluded at 2:03 p.m.

Adjournment

With no further business, on the motion of Dave Levacy and a second of Mike Kiger the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn 2:19.m.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: Dave Levacy, Steve Davis, and Mike Kiger.

The next regular meeting for the Board of Commissioners is scheduled for Tuesday, November 4, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. with review session at 9:00 a.m. on the same day.

Motion by:

Seconded by:

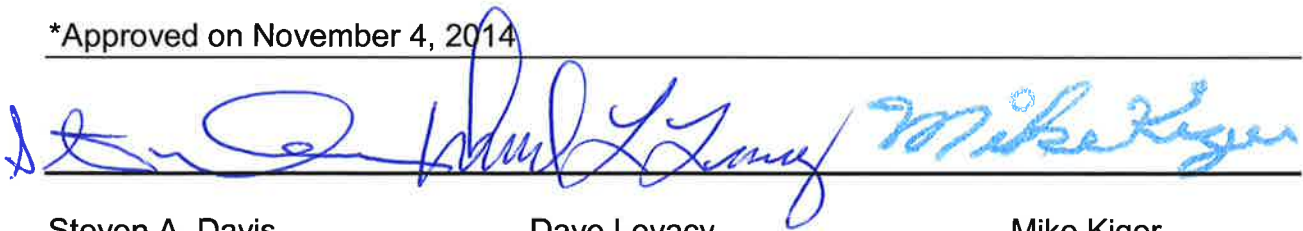
that the October 30, 2014 minutes were approved by the following vote:

YEAS:

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

*Approved on November 4, 2014



Steven A. Davis
Commissioner

Dave Levacy
Commissioner

Mike Kiger
Commissioner



Rachel Elsea, Clerk