Commissioners’ Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, November 21, 2013 beginning at 10:17 a.m., with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Mike Kiger and Dave Levacy. Also present were Jason Dolin, Carri Brown, Rachel Elsea, Staci Knisley, Aunie Cordle and Todd McCullough.

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Davis asked everyone to rise as able, and he led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

Commissioner Davis asked Ms. Elsea if there were any announcements. There were no announcements.

Public Comment

Commissioner Davis asked if anyone from the public who would like to speak or offer comments. No public comments were made.

Approval of the Auditor’s Office Resolution

On the motion of Mike Kiger and the second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the Auditor’s Office resolution to establish the health insurance premiums for the 2014-15 plan year; see resolution 2013-11.21.a.

Discussion: Ms. Cordle stated she would be sending a benefits sheet to all county employees that shows all benefits (health insurance, PERS, Workers Comp, Life Insurance, etc.). DD employees will be receiving a slightly different sheet. Mr. Davis asked when the county joined the co-op. Ms. Cordle stated they joined in 2005.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:
Voting aye thereon: Mike Kiger, Dave Levacy, and Steve Davis

Ms. Elsea announced that the next regular scheduled meeting for the Board of Commissioners will be Tuesday, November 26, 2013 at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Davis stated that he would be unable to make the Soil and Water, JFS, and DR Court budget hearings that afternoon but would return in time for the Clerk of Courts and Treasurer’s budget hearings.
Ms. Cordle asked if there were any additional changes to be made to the personnel manual.

The Commissioners stated they were fine with the final draft.

Ms. Cordle stated she would prepare a resolution for passage on November 26th.

**Budget Hearing – Dog Shelter**

The Commissioners met at 10:32 a.m. to discuss the Dog Shelter’s 2014 Budget Request. Commissioner Davis 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 Todd McCullough.

Mr. McCullough presented his budget via slide show (see attached) which included the purpose and mission, expenses, revenues, bottom line, finding the balance, 2014 plans, improvement areas, and 2014 goals.

Mr. Davis asked if the mission and purpose statements were new.

Mr. McCullough stated they were new. Ms. Brown added that these statements were previously non-existent, so the statements are not just updated. They are newly established as a reflection of the shelter purpose and values.

Mr. Davis asked if the health insurance numbers were updated in the budget proposal.

Ms. Knisley replied that they were waiting until the resolution was passed that morning.

Mr. Davis asked why there was an increase in contract services.

Mr. McCullough stated that was due to the use of temporary employees, potential partnership with the Fairfield Area Human Society, and cost and feasibility studies he wanted to have completed. He would like to use a feasibility study to create more space to have a proper area for vets to see dogs as well as have a separate space for dogs that are entering the shelter as it is not safe for them to come in contact with those who are being adopted.

Mr. Davis asked if the dog shelter was part of the energy project and if the plan to add windows was included.

Mr. McCullough stated that the building was included but the windows were not part of the project as they would be added to the kennel and would not be replacing any existing windows.
Ms. Brown added that this was an isolated program expense that would come from Dog and Kennel fund, instead of the energy project.

Mr. Davis asked how they can avoid using all of the carry over without asking for more money in the out years.

Mr. McCullough stated that was part of his overall plan to learn, improve, and upgrade the current facilities and processes.

Mr. Davis asked if there was a requisite carry over.

Mr. McCullough stated that he hoped to find a solid requisite carry over number when doing the cost study.

Ms. Brown stated there were two practically significant factors to the cost study the first being the amount needed on hand to make payments and the second being the cyclical nature of licensing costs.

Mr. McCullough added that if the studies were managed properly they would significantly benefit the county in the long run.

Mr. Davis asked what the current population was at the shelter.

Mr. McCullough stated it was around 34 dogs, the lowest since he started. The highest has been 52.

Mr. Kiger suggested including the replacement of vehicles in the feasibility study and that the purchases be spread over a period of time.

Mr. Levacy asked if the addition of windows alone with solve the drying problem in the kennel.

Mr. McCullough stated that they would greatly help but that a few ventilation fans may be needed as well.

Mr. Levacy asked how much the multi-year licensing will affect the budget.

Mr. McCullough stated he expect an increase for the first few years followed by a negative amount. He is thinking of separating the multi-year license fees to allocate over the years. He has been working with the County Auditor on this component of planning.

Mr. Davis stated that the Commission appreciated the presentation and saw no need for a second hearing.
The hearing concluded at 11:06 a.m.

**Budget Hearing – Regional Planning Commission**

The Commissioners met at 11:07 a.m. to discuss the Regional Planning Commission’s 2014 Budget Request. Commissioner Davis 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 Holly Mattei.

Mr. Davis thanked Ms. Mattei for coming and asked if she had lowered her request from $147,500 to $132,600.

Ms. Mattei stated that was correct. The $147,500 came from the 2011 projection. They use this number at the beginning of the year based on previous discussions but RPC has had a good year and she does not want to ask for more money than they need. She appreciates the Commissioners helping out a few years ago and is not going to ask for money that RPC does not need.

Mr. Davis asked how much carry over RPC has.

Mr. Mattei stated they have $100,000 this year and their annual goal is $60,000.

Mr. Davis asked if the health insurance numbers were included.

Ms. Mattei stated that adjustment had not yet been made and would decrease her budget by roughly $5,000.

Mr. Davis stated that he appreciated RPC’s sensitivity to the budgeting process.

Mr. Levacy added that he hopes Fairfield County continues to develop.

Mr. Kiger stated that Ms. Mattei did a great job handling the Haaf Farms issue.

Ms. Brown stated she was encouraged by the administrative partnership for CDBG with RPC and believes this may make the county more competitive in obtaining grants in the future.

Mr. Levacy added it will also allow them to help outlying communities more.

Mr. Mattei added that the letters of credit were pretty well as Rushcreek will be closing out soon and Violet is a 5 year letter of credit, but she is concerned with Oakcreek I & II as the engineer may no longer see the need for the turn lanes and if that is the case the money would be returned to the developer or the bank.

Mr. Davis asked why this was a concern.
Ms. Mattei replied that she was worried about the interest that may have to be paid.

Ms. Brown stated that this has happened in the distant past and that could be addressed.

Mr. Davis thanked Ms. Mattei for her visit.

**Budget Hearing – Recorder**

The Commissioners met at 11:20 a.m. to discuss the Recorder’s 2014 Budget Request. Commissioner Davis 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 Gene Wood.

Mr. Davis thanked Mr. Wood for coming and stated that Ms. Knisley had already adjusted the health insurance numbers bringing the GRF request down to $296,690. He asked how the 2014 salary figures were flat.

Ms. Knisley stated that was because the 2% salary increases had not yet been approved. Mr. Wood wondered if a 3% increase could be approved.

Mr. Davis stated the Commissioners planned on carrying a 2% increase out in the out years as they want to fund the jail without raising taxes. The out years are currently a concern which is why they are sticking with 2% as a planning target.

Mr. Davis asked Mr. Wood to explain the legislation that was passed for the equipment fund.

Mr. Wood stated this was originally done in 1995 and that the recorder could add additional charges on documents that are filing. Currently a deed cost $28 to file with $14 going to low income housing, $10 to the GRF, and $4 to the Recorder’s equipment fund. Mr. Wood added that he doesn’t see a need to stockpile the equipment fund and would rather just ask for more money later if he needs it.

Mr. Davis asked if the Recorder’s office was completely funded by the GRF.

Ms. Knisley stated that except for the equipment fund it was.

Mr. Wood stated they used the equipment fund for computers and indexing. The amount used depends on the number of documents they take in.

Mr. Kiger left the meeting at 11:36 a.m.

Mr. Davis stated he saw no need for an additional hearing.
Commissioner Davis stated at 11:45 a.m. that the Commission would be in recess until the 1:00 budget hearing for Soil and Water.

The budget hearings closed at 1:58 p.m.

**Budget Hearing with Soil Water**

The Board of Commissioners reconvened at 1:05 p.m. Commissioner Levacy opened up the hearing. Present were Commissioner Kiger, Carri Brown, Perry Ormdorff, Dave Libden, John Albert and Staci Knisley. Commissioner Davis was absent at this hearing.

Perry Ormdorff presented a handout for information regarding their 2014 request. The request is $274,725. (See attached)

Mr. Ormdorff reviewed the handout and noted that $2,242,843 is brought into Fairfield County through conservation programs. The state matches money of county appropriation at a 75% rate. Soil & Water now has 8 employees. Rita Kemmerer has retired, and her position will not be filled. A new compensation plan will be implemented with attrition.

Mr. Ormdorff stated that Commissioners give Soil & Water additional funding for the Phase II funds for the watershed of Violet Township. Added to that will be Liberty Township’s contribution.

Mr. Ormdorff stated that Vicki Kohli with Soil & Water is working with the schools on education of their programs.

Dave Libben added that he is on his 11th or 12th year with Soil & Water and is working with producers and new farmers actively on their programs. There are new farmers that are willing to try different programs. Mr. Libben and Soil & Water are waiting for the farm bill to be passed for new programs to be implemented.

Commissioner Levacy appreciated the flat request of $274,275 due to the upcoming challenges the Board of Commissioners are facing.

Mr. Orndorff stated that they have found a way to solve their space and storage problem. The current space needed for people is good.

Commissioner Levacy added that in a year or two the Veteran’s Service office may be moving out to the Agricultural Center and that Soil and Water would be a good neighbor.

Carri Brown added that Soil & Water and the office of Veteran’s Services could have interesting connections with the comments that Mr. Libben made previously. She looks
forward to future partnerships and appreciates the partnership of Soil and Water with multiple efforts, including AIMS.

Commissioner Levacy stated that he thinks that it is great that Soil & Water is reaching out to the schools. Commissioner Levacy is also with the Friends of Buckeye Lake and they are reaching out to schools.

John Albert with Soil & Water added that the employee compensation has not been updated in 6-7 years and feels that the increase is very well deserved for his staff.

Commissioner Levacy and Commissioner Levacy agreed that no further hearings are necessary at this time.

**Budget Hearing with Job and Family Services**

The Board of Commissioners met with Director Michael Orlando and members of the JFS team regarding the JFS 2014 budget request at 1:25 p.m. Commissioner Dave Levacy and Commissioner Kiger were present at this hearing. Commissioner Davis was absent. Also present were Carri Brown, Aundrea Cordle, Ursula Laveck, Kristi Burre, Corey Clark, and Staci Krisley.

Michael Orlando provided a slide show presentation. (See attached)

Mr. Orlando reported that the 2014 request is flat based on prior year’s allocation. The total request is $1,903,678, which is reduced by the $100,000 being provided directly to Children and Family First Council for the Multi-System Youth Program. The $1,903,678 is divided into the departments as follows: $180,844 - Child Support Enforcement Agency; $315,328 - Community Services; and $1,407,506 - Protective Services. (Also see attached for further detail and history)

Two ideas for return on investment were presented: Tuition reimbursement and County Connections for Children in Crisis. The County Connections program is for protective services. Mr. Orlando proposed a request for a one time investment of $117,549 for a pilot program that will have a return of investment of 63.76%. (See attached for handout) Additional details will be provided for the request, which is for a Protective Services pilot program with the objective of reducing placement costs.

Mr. Orlando stated that in last year’s budget hearing it was asked of former CPS Director Rich Bowlen to propose a one-time cost investment for future savings. Mr. Orlando asked the current Protective Services Director Kristi Burre to propose a pilot program to the Board of Commissioners for the one time investment. Ms. Burre stated that this program would save time and money by keeping protective services at a local level. Mr. Orlando proposed that he would like to see the program start July 1st of 2014.
The program should provide data and evidence about the effort to reduce placement costs. If the program does not meet objectives, it will not be continued.

Ms. Brown added that the pilot program can be started at any point in time, as there are no state or federal deadlines specifically for a local grant, which allows flexibility in when the program will be implemented.

Commissioner Levacy and Commissioner Kiger were both in consensus with the flat allocation request. Commissioner Levacy recommended that Mr. Orlando propose the pilot program at another Board meeting with Commissioner Davis also present so that there could be more discussion and review of the pilot program. Mr. Kiger also suggested that information about the tuition reimbursement idea be presented at that time.

**Budget Hearing with Domestic Relations Court**

The Board of Commissioners met with Judge Laura Smith and Lori Lovas at 2:05 p.m. regarding the 2014 budget request for Domestic Relations Court. Commissioner Dave Levacy and Commissioner Mike Kiger were present at this hearing. Commissioner Davis was absent. Also present were Carri Brown and Staci Knisley. (See handout)

Judge Laura Smith asked the Board for consideration of adding a much needed employee for DR Court in 2014. The Court is very busy due to the increase in cases and the increase in people choosing not to have an attorney on their cases. Not having an attorney on a case causes a lot of work for staff. The staff is trained to not provide legal advice but to help people navigate the system. There are many, complex procedural guidelines.

Carri Brown added that there is an overall consensus in administrative agencies that the trend in the increased prevalence of pro se cases has resulted in an increased workload and increased complexity for multiple organizations. Judge Smith added that there has been an increase in pro se cases due to many reasons, including the economy and technology.

Commissioner Levacy stated that he felt good about adding the additional employee to Domestic Relations Court. He appreciated the evaluation and justification Judge Smith provided.

Commissioner Kiger stated that he appreciated the court’s presentation and consideration of the county goals to contain expenses as much as possible.

Ms. Knisley asked Ms. Lovas to recalculate their request with a 2% salary increase and .7% increase in health insurance along with the additional employee.

Judge Smith thanked the Board and Ms. Brown for their support of the Safehaven Grant.
Budget Hearing with the Clerk of Courts staff

The Board of Commissioners met with Cassie Strickler with the Clerk of Courts office 3:07 p.m. regarding the 2014 budget request for the Clerk of Courts. Commissioner Steve Davis, Commissioner Dave Levacy and Commissioner Mike Kiger were present at this hearing. Also present were Carl Burnette, Carri Brown, Staci Knisley, Lisa Notestone, Britney Lee, Suzette Hildinger and Kelly Turben.

Commissioner Davis reviewed with Ms. Strickler the guidelines of the hearing and thanked everyone for attending the hearing.

Ms. Strickler reported that the biggest increase in their budget was for staff and salaries. They have requested that the staff be paid out of the correct funding. Staff that was paid out of Title funds that strictly work with the legal part of the Clerk of Courts have been shifted to the General Fund legal department budget. Also shifted were the Brumfield storage expenses.

Ms. Knisley added that the Brumfield storage expenses such as telephone, utilities, security and rent are now budgeted in the Commissioner’s/Maintenance budget. This is a change for 2014.

Carri Brown reported that a 2% increase in salary and fringes were reflected, along with the .7% health insurance increase. Ms. Brown stated that an additional office holder salary is not reflected in this proposal, although this is a possibility for 2014. Ms. Brown advised that everyone should understand that in 2014 there could be multiple amendments to the budget.

Commissioner Davis pointed out that that in 2013 the total operating budget for Legal and Title was approximately $1.82 million, and the 2014 request is approximately $2.4 million.

Ms. Brown added that in the Legal Department there about $60,000 budgeted for additional imaging.

Commissioner Davis stated that in 2013 there appeared to be a substantial amount of new hires and that it appeared that they were paid out of the Title funds but should have been classified under the general fund Legal department. Ms. Strickler stated that was correct and that there were current employees who were also not classified correctly and will be for 2014.

Commissioner Davis stated that in the upcoming months it is expected that whoever is in the position of Clerk of Courts will have to lead a period of restructuring the staff.
There was a consensus of the Board that the budget presented is sufficient in detail and there is no need for further hearings at this time.

On behalf of the Board, Commissioner Davis said that they appreciated the staff’s service. Ms. Strickler stated that she appreciated the Board’s willingness to work with them.

**Budget Hearing with County Treasurer**

The Board of Commissioners met with County Treasurer Brian Kuhn at 3:48 p.m. regarding his 2014 budget request. Commissioner Steve Davis, Commissioner Dave Levacy and Commissioner Mike Kiger were present at this hearing. Also present were Carri Brown and Staci Knisley.

Brian Kuhn asked the Board of Commissioners to consider an increase in his budget to allow for a new staff member and to shift expenses from his delinquent real estate assessment fund over to his general fund budget.

Mr. Kuhn stated that he is currently using a temporary staff service for the services of Christina Fox. He would like to hire her as a staff member.

For justification of the workload and the new position, Mr. Kuhn reviewed a handout of Treasurer’s office facts. (See attached)

Mr. Kuhn added that by implementing new programs he has been able to decrease the amount of delinquent taxes. At the beginning of the year there was $15 million in delinquent taxes. Now, there is $10-11 million. He hopes to get that down to the single digits.

Ms. Brown asked if the new position would also perform any services for the Land Bank or if the Land Bank was a factor in the budget proposal.

Mr. Kuhn stated that he had not proposed that but there could be a contract with the county that could be reimbursed for $15,000.

Ms. Brown added that there is good justification for a reimbursement from the Land Bank if there are services that the Treasurer will be providing.

Ms. Knisley stated that she will follow up with Mr. Kuhn and prepare a new budget request with the DRETAC expenses shifted to the General Fund. Ms. Knisley will present the new budget to the Board.
General Discussion

The Board of Commissioners continued with general discussion. Commissioner Steve Davis, Commissioner Dave Levacy and Commissioner Mike Kiger were present. Also present were Carri Brown and Staci Knisley.

Commissioner Davis asked the Board collectively if a 2% salary increase could be communicated to county departments.

Commissioner Levacy asked Ms. Brown for the current total of requests.

Ms. Brown stated that she believed that with the 2% increase in salaries, the health insurance increase of .7%, and the remaining increases for the new staff members that have not yet been approved, the total is now around $40 million, just shy of our target of $39,800,000.

Ms. Knisley added that the surplus of Title funds at $500,000-$550,000 was proposed with the Clerk of Courts by the staff. It was reflected as a transfer to the general fund in the budget hearings but was not in the original planning projection, and this brings the estimated net request closer to the target.

Commissioner Davis reminded everyone that estimates included $2 million for the Public Safety capital improvement fund.

Ms. Brown stated that there could be a possibility of the Auditor and Treasurer sharing an employee. There are similar competencies required with the departments and that would be an option worth exploring for efficiency.

Commissioner Davis agreed and asked that a meeting be scheduled Auditor Jon Slater, Treasurer Brian Kuhn, and himself present.

Commissioner Davis asked Ms. Knisley to communicate the 2% salary increase to all departments.

Ms. Brown added that there are only four budget hearings left: the Engineer, Board of Elections, OSU Extension and Veterans Services.

Adjournment

On motion of Mike Kiger and second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 4:26 p.m.

Voting aye thereon:
Commissioner Kiger, Commissioner Levacy and Commissioner Davis
The next regular meeting for the Board of Commissioners is scheduled for Tuesday, November 26, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. with Review beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Motion by: Seconded by:

that the November 21, 2013, minutes were approved by the following vote:

YEAS: NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

*Approved on November 26, 2013

Steven A. Davis
Commissioner

Dave Levacy
Commissioner

Mike Kiger
Commissioner

Rachel Elsea, Clerk