

Minutes of the Board of Ward County Commissioners
Budget Hearing
August 17-18, 2016

Chairman Fjeldahl called the Special Commission Meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. August 17, 2016. The purpose of the meeting was to hear 2017 Budget requests. Present were Comm. Louser, Comm. Walter, Comm. Wepler, and Comm. Nybakken. Also present was Auditor/Treasurer Devra Smestad.

Smestad presented proposed 3.5% salary increase for Ward County employees and informed Board Health Insurance costs will be increasing across the board.

Veterans Service Officer John Crosby appeared to request slight increase in office supply and equipment budget for portable printer and future equipment repairs.

Moved by Comm. Louser, seconded by Comm. Wepler to adopt budget as requested. Smestad stated in previous years, Board would delay decisions until all Departments had presented requests. Comm. Louser and Wepler withdrew motion and second; motion died.

Highway Engineer Dana Larsen appeared to present budgets for Planning/Zoning, Rushville Township, Highway Department and Ward County Park District. The Planning/Zoning budget asked for additional funding to cover change in employee salary and benefits.

During 2016, grade raise projects on Rushville Township roads using CDBG Funds provided noticeable improvements for local residents. Annual budget allocation covers cost of snow removal, blading, and signage, leaving no money to pay down township debt.

Larsen requested 10 mills for Highway Department and indicated downward trend of fuel tax and oil impact revenue already taking toll.

The Ward County Park District is requesting additional money for improvements.

Weed Control Officer Derrill Fick appeared and requested slight budget increase to cover salary and employee benefits.

NDSU Extension Agent Paige Brummund appeared and presented her budget. She's requesting salary increase to cover cost of part-time employee working two additional hours per week and County's share of Part-time Seasonal Extension Assistant. She'd also like slight increase for office equipment to replace aging printer/copier. Brummund reminded the Commission that NDSU pays 50% of their salaries and operating expenses.

Director of Tax Equalization Ryan Kamrowski appeared to request small increase in budget to cover state required Professional Development Training and employee wages and benefits.

Facilities Management Administrator Leona Lochthowe appeared to request grade change from Level 22 to Level 29; two additional employees for upkeep and maintenance of courthouse, administration building, and jail; as well as an assistant supervisor position at a Level 22. Lochthowe is considering contract for snow removal on sidewalks/parking lots and requests money for repairs of County North building.

At 10:15 a.m. the Board recessed.

At 10:25 a.m. the Board reconvened.

Library Administrator Kerrienne Tyler appeared to present her budget. Tyler requested grade change from Level 22 to Level 29 and salary to cover additional

17 hours per week for one part-time employee. These additional hours would be dedicated toward grant research, publicity and promotion of County Library.

Chief Deputy Bob Barnard appeared and requested budget increase to replace few aging vehicles in fleet and hire two additional employees.

Juvenile Detention Administrator Mark Schrader appeared and requested additional funding since facility expanded from 7 beds to 13, nearly doubling number of housed juveniles.

Jail Commander Paul Olthoff requested money to cover six additional employees hired last quarter of 2017 for expanded jail facility.

States Attorney Roza Larson appeared to present her budget. Larson requested slight increase in budget to cover salary increase and additional office equipment.

Superintendent of Schools Jodi Johnson appeared to request a small budget increase to cover salary and legal publications.

Court Administrator Carolyn Probst appeared to present the budget for District Court. She requested increase for Indigent Defense/Involuntary Commitments and plans to apply for additional Facility Improvement Grants to defray cost of Courthouse Renovation Project.

At 12:00 p.m. the Board recessed until 8:00 a.m. August 18, 2016.

At 8:00 a.m. on August 18, 2016, Chairman Fjeldahl reconvened the special meeting to hear the remaining 2017 budget requests. Present were Comm. Louser, Comm. Walter, Comm. Wepler, and Comm. Nybakken. Also present was Auditor/Treasurer Devra Smestad.

Social Services Director Melissa Bliss appeared requesting money to cover salary and employee benefits.

Auditor/Treasurer Devra Smestad provided information about the following agencies since representatives were not available: Rehab Services; Emergency Management; Central Dispatch/911; Garrison Diversion; Souris River Joint Board; and Council on Aging.

Lyndsay Ulrickson from Souris Basin Planning Council appeared with budget and provided information about Council and future projects in 7-county region.

The board then heard from the following Historical Societies: Bruce Brooks from Ward County and Bryan Quigley from Lake County. Smestad commented on requests from Makoti and Ryder as representatives were not present. All present were informed that their budget requests would be discussed after all departments had presented their budgets.

The following appeared on behalf of Economic Development Corporations to present budget: Bob Inman from Berthold and Rebecca Resiskin from DeSour Valley. Smestad commented on the requests from Kenmare, and Minot as representatives were not present. Ward County did not receive request from Makoti.

Wanda McFadyen appeared on behalf of the Assiniboine River Basin Initiative and presented their budget. They're requesting funds to support ongoing and future work in the Souris/Assiniboine Basins in 2017.

Tara Bjornson, Domestic Violence Crisis Center appeared to present her budget. She stated funds from Ward County Allocation are essential for the continuation of this

program and will be utilized for the general operating expenses, as well as staff salaries.

Janell Regimbal, Vice President of Lutheran Social Services, appeared with budget request for provision of Attendant Care services provided on behalf of county.

Renaë Korslien appeared to present the North Dakota State Fair (NDSF) budget. The NDSF has a great economic impact on Ward County, attracting people from all over the U.S. and Canada.

Mark Koep from Ward County Soil Conservation District requested a small increase in their budget to cover expenses.

Maurice Foley from Ward County Water Resource Board appeared to present budget. Future projects include repairs to the Robinwood Levee and Flood Control for Puppy Dog Coulee.

Pat Murphy from Ward County Weather Modification appeared with request for slight increase in budget to cover expenses.

At 10:11 a.m. the Board recessed.

At 10:20 a.m. the Board reconvened.

Kristen Kowalczyk, Deputy Recorder, appeared to request slight increase in budget to cover salary and employee benefits.

Smestad presented information on Auditor/Treasurer and Commissioner Contingency.

Comm. Walter commended Department Heads for being fiscally responsible when submitting 2017 budget requests; however is recommending the following changes to reduce needed levies:

| HISTORICAL SOCIETY | FROM | TO |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Makoti Threshers | \$ 14,295 | \$ 9,000 |
| Ward County | \$ 52,425 | \$ 40,000 |

| Economic Development Corporations | FROM | TO |
|--|-------------|-----------|
| Berthold | \$ 32,000 | \$ 26,000 |
| DeSour Valley | \$ 89,000 | \$ 26,000 |

| DEPARTMENT | FROM | TO |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bookmobile/Library | \$ 453,724 | \$ 441,269 |
| NON-DEPARTMENT | | |
| Domestic Violence | \$ 35,000 | \$ 33,075 |
| Juvenile Attendant Care | \$ 27,070 | \$ 16,000 |
| ND State Fair | \$ 680,000 | \$ 550,000 |
| Soil Conservation | \$ 299,925 | \$ 177,050 |
| Souris River Joint Brd | \$ 695,400 | \$ 250,000 |
| Water Resources | \$ 3,170,000 | \$ 1,390,800 |
| Weather Modification | \$ 244,500 | \$ 190,000 |

Board unanimously agreed to recommendations.

Smestad stated the 2017 preliminary budget will be presented at the next regular Commissioner Meeting on September 6, 2016.

At 12:10 p.m., with no further business, the meeting was adjourned.