

WALWORTH COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
NOVEMBER 3, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Russell at the Walworth County Government Center, 100 W. Walworth St., Elkhorn, Wisconsin.

County Board Supervisor Kathy Ingersoll, District # 6, delivered the invocation.

A motion by Supervisor Van Dreser, seconded by Supervisor Stacey, to suspend the rules and take roll call by voice vote, was approved by unanimous consent. Clerk Bushey read the roll call and all Supervisors were present except Supervisor Bromley who was excused. A quorum was established.

Approval of the Agenda

On motion by Supervisor Hawkins, seconded by Supervisor Stacey, the agenda was approved as presented.

Motion to Convene as “Committee of the Whole”

On motion by Supervisor Van Dreser, seconded by Supervisor Grant, the Board convened as a “Committee of the Whole.”

Presentation of the Executive Summary

Nicki Andersen, Deputy County Administrator-Finance, began the presentation by thanking the public for attending the Public Budget Hearing as well as County staff, County Administrator Bretl, and County Board Supervisors. She then turned the Budget Presentation over to Jessica Lanser, Comptroller.

Ms. Lanser said that last year at this time the focus was on health insurance as costs rose by 27.5%. She said that in 2009 the focus shifts to the revenues. As we see a downturn in the economy, the County also faces concerns as revenues decline. She said the County must offset the declining revenues within the budget while still meeting the tax levy limits.

Ms. Lanser began the presentation with an explanation of the budget process. She said that Walworth County’s property tax bill is broken into several line items as follows: State of Wisconsin, County of Walworth, city, town or village, Gateway Technical College, school district(s), and special taxing districts. Based on the 2008 taxes, the Walworth County portion of the tax bill is approximately 24% of the bill, depending on the municipality of residence. Lanser then explained that the County’s portion of the tax bill is made up of the library levy, debt service levy, Children with Disabilities Education Board (CDEB), and other operating levy. Lanser said that the average mill rate for the 2009 preliminary budget is \$3.878148.

Ms. Lanser said that Walworth County's portion of the tax bill can be calculated as follows: a \$200,000 house (assuming 100% assessment ratio) divided by 1,000 = \$200, \$200 times the 2009 mill rate of 3.878148 = \$775. Ms. Lanser continued and summarized the 2009 preliminary expenditures and revenues. She said that the tax levy for the entire County's share of taxes for 2009 is \$57,426,336 or an increase of 4.88%, which is representative of approximately 24% of your property tax bill. She said that although the levy goes up, the growth of equalized value helps keep the mill rate down.

Ms. Lanser outlined new future initiatives in this budget as follows: mass transit program, green initiative, employee wellness, and a full-time volunteer coordinator.

Ms. Lanser concluded by saying that the 2009 Preliminary Budget books are available in the Finance Department and County Clerk's Department and also on the County's website.

Public Comments and Questions

Sara Nason, W5717 Ridge Road, Elkhorn, was representing the Master Gardener Program. She said she is a volunteer in the Master Gardener Program, which among many other activities includes park clean-up. Ms. Nason said that they work at the Walworth County Fair contributing in various different activities and outlined the many types of volunteerism that the Master Gardeners perform such as at Lakeland Health Care Center and at the schools teaching adults and children. She said that what differentiates the Master Gardener organization from other groups is that they use their education to assist and educate the public in the community. Ms. Nason said she was at the meeting to thank the Board for representing and supporting their work and said it is a good feeling to be appreciated and to know that they are succeeding in their mission.

Sara Droster, 220 Randall Place, Elkhorn, Assistant General Manager and Sales Manager of the new Hampton Inn being built North of Elkhorn. Ms. Droster said that the Hampton Inn is a 64-unit hotel, which is being built near Highway 12 and 67 and is projected to be open by mid February 2009. She said that after much research on the growth of Elkhorn and Walworth County as a whole in comparison to the remainder of the State, they chose to build a Hampton Inn in Elkhorn. Ms. Droster said their goal is to increase tourism in this area and to that end she was asking the Board to support the Walworth County Visitors Bureau and the need for an additional staff member to handle motor coach and group sales functions for the local community.

Chair Russell announced that the next County Board meeting would be held on Wednesday, November 12, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. and the Budget would be considered at that meeting. She said that the meeting is on a Wednesday night, not the regular Tuesday night meeting.

On motion by Supervisor Schaefer, seconded by Supervisor Weber, the Public Budget Hearing was closed.

