

WALWORTH COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING  
NOVEMBER 3, 2009

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 Clerk Kimberly Bushey delivered the invocation.

**Approval of the Agenda**

On motion by Supervisor Weber, seconded by Supervisor Grant, the agenda was approved as presented.

**Motion to Convene as “Committee of the Whole”**

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

**Presentation of the Executive Summary**

David Bretl, Administrator, welcomed and thanked the public, elected officials and department heads for coming. He thanked the finance department for all their hard work preparing the budget presentation, and introduced Nicki Andersen.

Nicki Andersen, Deputy County Administrator-Finance, welcomed everyone attending the Public Budget Hearing. She then turned the Budget Presentation over to Jessica Lanser, Comptroller.

Ms. Lanser said that last year at this time the focus was on the declining revenues. With no turn around in the economy, the focus remains on the declining revenues for 2010. The challenge will be to offset the declining revenues while maintaining the increased demand for services.

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. The Walworth County portion is approximately 24% of the bill, depending on the municipality of residence. County’s portion of the tax bill is made up of four parts: the library levy, debt service levy, Children with Disabilities Education Board (CDEB), and other operating levy. She went on to explain these four parts.

Ms. Lanser then explained that Walworth County has an average mill rate for the 2010 preliminary budget of \$3.94217.

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 2010 mill rate of 3.94217 = \$788.

The state mandates the operating tax levy rate may not exceed the tax levy rate in 1992 excluding library, debt service and CDEB. Walworth County is under this cap by \$13,700,000. Wisconsin State Budget placed a state levy limit in 2005 which was amended in 2009, and Walworth County is under this limit by almost \$3,000,000. The strictest limits are our own self-imposed goal established by the Walworth County Board, and we are under this limit by \$3,833.

Ms. Lanser continued and summarized the 2010 preliminary expenditures and revenues.

Ms. Lanser provided an update on initiatives in the 2009 budget. The Bus Pilot program will not be continued in 2010. The "Green" initiative has resulted in the Government Center installing all new energy efficient windows next spring through a federal stimulus grant. The employee wellness initiative with the goal of reducing health insurance cost has begun with a survey and a newsletter. Volunteer initiative resulted in hiring a full-time volunteer coordinator.

Ms. Lanser concluded by saying that the 2010 Preliminary Budget books are available in the County Clerk's Department and the Finance Department and also on the County's website.

### **Public Comments and Questions**

Chair Russell announced that a letter from Pat Paulson was placed on all the supervisors' desks regarding the allocation for the Visitors Bureau.

Paula McGowen, no address listed, indicated she was an advocate for drug court and mental health, said that a new jail study should be conducted by an independent, professional company that handles jails and prisons only. It should not be done by the University of Wisconsin or anybody affiliated with the county. She focused on programs for non-violent offenders.

Tricia Gages, 198 Vernon St, Williams Bay, completed a public comment card but did not appear before the Board. She wanted to know if a wage freeze had been considered for the 2010 Budget, given the widespread county and national unemployment and pay cut initiatives.

Michael Hurlburt, N7242 Country Side Lane, Elkhorn, representing the park committee, requested more money for the parks and purchase of land for future parks.

On motion by Supervisor Bromley, seconded by Supervisor Van Dreser, the Public Budget Hearing was closed.

