

WALWORTH COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
NOVEMBER 1, 2010

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.

Roll call was conducted and the following Supervisors were present: Richard Brandl, Jerry A. Grant, Randy Hawkins, Kathy Ingersoll, Vice-Chair Daniel G. Kilkenny, Carl Redenius, Joe Schaefer, Rick Stacey, Russ Wardle, David A. Weber, and Chair Nancy Russell. Absent: 0. All Supervisors were present and a quorum was established.

Approval of the Agenda

On motion by Supervisor Brandl, seconded by Supervisor Schaefer, the agenda was approved as presented.

Motion to Convene as “Committee of the Whole”

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

Finance Committee Chair to Conduct Public Budget Hearing

Chair Russell turned the meeting over to Administrator David Bretl.

Presentation of the Executive Summary:

Administrator Bretl welcomed everyone to the Public Budget Hearing and began by stating the ground rules that are traditionally followed during the Hearing. He said this is a night to listen to the public and take ideas which can be formulated into the Budget. This is not a night for debate by Supervisors. The Supervisors will have the opportunity to debate the Budget on November 9. Supervisors can submit budget amendments prior to the meeting on November 9 and he asked that they be submitted no later than close of business Thursday, November 4, so that they can be distributed to the fellow Board members.

Bretl said that traditionally the Finance Committee Chair conducts the Public Budget Hearing and Chair Russell serves in that role as well. He said we would start with a Power Point presentation which would give members of the public an overview of the entire budget and then open it up for Public Comment. The public is permitted and encouraged by Statute to do that. He then introduced Nicki Andersen, Deputy County Administrator, Finance, and she introduced Jessica Lanser, Comptroller, to present the budget presentation.

Jessica Lanser began by stating that for the last two years the focus for the Budget had been on declining revenues. She said that the County has been fortunate that major changes have allowed the savings needed to accommodate the declining revenues. She said the 2011 budget request includes a 2.88% increase in overall tax levy. This budget increase will allow the County to continue to anticipate future needs while still working to maintain our current program and initiatives. The 2011 Total Tax Levy is \$60,790,625 and the average mill rate is \$4.206938.

Ms. Lanser began the presentation with an explanation of the budget process. Ms. Lanser then explained the parts that make up the Property Tax Bill. Walworth County's portion is approximately 22% of the tax bill depending on where you reside. Ms. Lanser explained the different parts of the property tax bill and they are: State of Wisconsin; County of Walworth; City, town or village; Gateway Technical College; School districts (s); and Special taxing districts. The County Tax portion is made up of the Library Levy, Debt Service Levy, Children with Disabilities Education Board (CDEB) Levy, and Other Operating Levy. She continued with an explanation of the 2011 preliminary revenues and expenses

Ms. Lanser concluded by stating that Walworth County is proud of its accomplishments and future initiatives and said that the 2011 Walworth County Preliminary Budget is available for review in the County Clerk & Finance offices and on the County's website: www.co.walworth.wi.us.

Chair Russell thanked Jessica Lanser for her presentation.

Public Comments and Questions

Richard Gruber, Mercy Walworth Medical Center, Highways 67 and 50, Lake Geneva, WI, said Mercy is committed to Walworth County and is a proud investor and new member of the Walworth County Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA). He said partnering with Walworth County government and the Walworth County Economic Development Alliance is a good way to retain and grow our existing businesses and position us for future job growth and development that will come to Walworth County in time. He thanked the Board for their past support of WCEDA and for their continued support.

Richard Telfer, 304 Woodland Drive, Whitewater, WI, spoke in support of WCEDA. He said economic development is important to Walworth County. He said he is Chancellor of UW Whitewater and spoke of the connection between Walworth County and WCEDA and the University. He said WCEDA helped the University to write a grant of \$4.7 million as part of a \$11 million dollar project to build the Whitewater University Technology Park. He said he is on the Board of WCEDA and he is very interested in helping to see that the graduating students have options to stay and work in the area and especially Walworth County.

Mike Van Den Bosch, 612 Outlook Drive, Twin Lakes, Executive Director of WCEDA, said he was there to address some information that was recently in the paper and wanted to set the record straight. He said it is not true that WCEDA was operating with a \$72,000 deficit in 2009 nor was it true in 2008. He said that WCEDA is currently running with a positive net income, WCEDA is in compliance with all Federal agencies including the IRS, and they have corrected all those past issues. He thanked the Supervisors who supported WCEDA during their transition and said he looked forward to working with the Board.

Doug Wheaton, 300 South Edwards Boulevard, Lake Geneva, WI, said these are very challenging times for people in Walworth County. The unemployment rate has grown to 7%. He said that economic development is crucial in these troubled times. He said that funding WCEDA is a fraction of the cost of running an economic development department as a branch County government. He said that Kenosha and Racine Counties are both increasing their support for economic development for 2011. He asked for support of Walworth County development.

John Henderson, W4723 Pine Court, Elkhorn, said he is a life-long resident of Walworth County, has been involved in a business in the County and supports WCEDA. He said he thinks the Board needs to take a new look at where WCEDA is going now. He said he would ask for serious consideration of support for WCEDA and he thinks public-private partnership is the best way to do it.

Cass Kordeeki, W3437 Royal Glen Ct., Lake Geneva, spoke regarding taxation of property owners. She said she has a home that she wanted to rent out for short-term but could not rent it for less than 30 days. She said she found that, in just two weeks, there were \$89,000 to \$139,000 worth of weekly rentals going on in Walworth County which could be taxed. She said that pursuant to State Statute, 70% of the tax revenue has to go to tourism and 30% can be returned to the municipality. She said if short-term rental was made a legal and regulated activity, as it is in many other tourism communities, she is predicting that between \$50,000 and \$150,000 could be returned to tourism and WCEDA and could offset the burden of the taxpayers. She asked that short term rental be reconsidered at the County Zoning level.

Hearing no other requests for public comment Chair Russell asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

Motion to Close Public Hearing

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

Chairperson's Report

Chair Russell reminded everyone to vote on November 2, 2010.

