

**WALWORTH COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING  
OCTOBER 30, 2014**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 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, Tim Brellenthin, Kathy Ingersoll, Daniel G. Kilkenny, Kenneth H. Monroe, Joe Schaefer, Vice-Chair Rick Stacey, Charlene Staples, David A. Weber, Paul Yvarra, and Chair Nancy Russell. A quorum was established.

**Approval of the Agenda**

On motion by Supervisor Brandl, seconded by Supervisor Weber, the agenda was approved by voice vote.

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

On motion by Supervisor Schaefer, seconded by Supervisor Brandl, the Board convened as a “Committee of the Whole.” No “No” votes were heard.

**Finance Committee Chair to Conduct Public Budget Hearing**

Chair Russell turned the meeting over to Administrator Bretl.

**Presentation of the Executive Summary:**

Administrator Bretl stated the purpose of this meeting is to hear from the public as to any concerns or comments they may have regarding the budget. He said tonight’s presentation provides another opportunity for the public to review the budget. He introduced Nicki Andersen, Deputy County Administrator-Finance. Andersen introduced Jessica Conley, Comptroller, and Stacie Johnson, Finance Manager, who play key roles in the budget process.

Ms. Conley gave an overview of the 2015 Preliminary Budget. She noted the county achieves a budget with a conservative tax levy increase from last year, which adheres to the state’s strict levy limit. She said the state cap limits certain aspects of growth to net new construction which kept the county at a 0.45% total levy increase for 2015. She provided an overview of the budget process.

Conley provided a comparison of the county’s total tax levy to the consumer price index (CPI) which shows the county tax levy continues to be below inflation. She said the county’s equalized value with tax incremental financing (TIF) districts is equal to \$13.3 billion with its first increase being seen in the last several years. She stated the county’s equalized value without TIF districts increased by an average of 0.67%, and this increase is the 17<sup>th</sup> lowest in the state.

Conley provided an example of how to calculate the county portion of the property tax bill. She stated the county portion of the tax bill is approximately 23% of the total tax bill, and depending on the municipality in which you reside, this portion can be as low as 8% or as high as 31%. She said the county portion of the total tax bill can include between two to four levies, which are Library, Debt Service, CDEB, and Operating. She stated the 2015 total levy is \$61,153,471, which is \$275,611 more than last year.

Conley gave an overview of the county's past budget strategies and new initiatives. She stated the county has saved almost \$700,000 in interest costs by making debt payments early over the last six years. She said the county has been setting aside funds for Lakeland School to call its bonds. Currently, \$6.4 million has been accumulated, which will fund 61% of the outstanding debt eligible to be called in 2017 and 2018. She said the last debt borrowing occurred in 2011 and according to the current capital plan, there are no new borrowings expected in the next five years. She said savings from operations each year have been placed in various accounts to save for future purchases. Between 2003 and 2011, road construction and large building construction projects were paid for with debt. She said the current road construction plan results in a relatively constant annual levy impact of approximately \$3 million. She outlined the planned additions and uses for the \$4 million road construction contingency committed fund balance account. She said the strategy to set aside funds to maintain building and equipment infrastructure will provide the funding for the renovation and expansion projects of the Public Works garage facility and the Health and Human Services building. The Public Works facility project will be completed by 2018 with an estimated cost of \$10.8 million, and the Health and Human Services building project will begin in 2019 with an estimated cost of \$8.8 million.

Conley discussed the county's Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB), which are the liabilities to fund retirement health benefits. She said due to the county over funding this liability early, it has allowed the county to change its funding schedule from a 30-year schedule to an 11-year schedule. She said their current investment asset report shows that this liability is now fully funded, and according to their investment advisor, it is expected to remain fully funded through 2043 if this investment continues to grow at 5.35% or higher return rates.

Conley provided an overview of the 2015 Preliminary Expenditures. She said wages and benefits make up half of the county's budget. She stated market studies have been conducted to ensure appropriate wages are being paid to employees and numerous benefits changes have been incorporated over the years to keep wage and benefits costs down. The total cost of wages and benefits has risen by less than 3% since 2007. She stated the county's health costs have remained relatively stable due to changes in the county's self-insured plan. She said 2015 plan costs will be offset with the new revenue from the fully funded OPEB trust.

Conley gave an overview of the 2015 Preliminary Revenues. She stated the county's tax levy supports 44.07% of the county's expenditure budget. In comparison to 2008, the tax levy supported 34% of the total budget. She said the county relies more heavily on the tax levy due to the numerous revenue reductions. She stated the county's 0.5% sales tax is fast approaching the levels seen in 2008. The 2013 sales tax was \$125,000 short of where it was in 2008. She said this may be an indication that the county is seeing improved economic conditions.

Conley stated the county recognizes the growing need for cost effective transportation options for citizens in need and created the Transportation Coordinating Committee. She said transportation for clients and residents was outsourced in 2014 for Health and Human Services and Lakeland Health Care Center. The transportation grant and funding for non-county clients and residents have been moved from Health and Human Services to County Administration. She said an additional \$100,000 has been added for new program costs as well as \$25,000 for a consultant.

Conley stated due to the growing staff needs of the Public Works department, the 2015 budget includes the addition of one patrol person. The state recommends staffing levels per mile be at one patrol person per 40-42 lane miles and the addition of one patrol person will improve the county's staffing ratio to one patrol person per 49.9 lane miles. In order to adequately maintain a building, Public Works staff

recommends there should be one maintenance technician per 50,000 square feet. She said the county proposes to add one maintenance technician beginning July 1, 2015 to increase the county average to one maintenance technician per 72,800 square feet. She stated these staffing additions still place Walworth County in a lower than recommended staffing level.

Conley stated succession planning has taken place in many county departments. Linda Seemeyer, Director of Health and Human Services, has announced her retirement, and Elizabeth Aldred, who has worked as Deputy Director of Health and Human Services with Seemeyer for the last eight years, will succeed her. Sheriff David Graves announced his decision to retire and not seek re-election. With no competition on the ballot, it is expected that Kurt Picknell will be elected as the next Sheriff. Picknell has served as the Undersheriff for 14 years.

Conley gave an overview of the expenditures by department as well as the tax levy allocation by department. She said the Sheriff's Office makes up 39% of the tax levy use with 92% of its funding coming directly from the county's tax levy. She stated Lakeland Health Care Center has seen the largest department wide tax levy decrease with a 10% decrease. She said the 2015 LHCC budget includes the final payment to the general fund for the advance that was made to call debt early. With the building being fully paid, any excess funds over the minimum net position can be set aside for other purposes such as future and building needs.

Conley said the county purchased 195 acres in the Town of Lyons to open the White River County Park with 50% of the funding coming from a Department of Natural Resources stewardship grant. She stated the county also opened a dog park at Price Park. She stated the county will also begin to rebuild its parks savings account for future years with a \$50,000 allocation for future acquisition of park land. She said this allocation has been made for several years and helped fund the county share of the White River County Park purchase.

She concluded the presentation by stating the 2015 Walworth County Preliminary Budget is available for review in the County Clerk and Finance offices and the county website ([www.co.walworth.wi.us](http://www.co.walworth.wi.us)).

### **Public Comments and Questions**

There were none.

### **Motion to Close Public Hearing**

On motion by Supervisor Monroe, seconded by Supervisor Ingersoll, the Public Budget Hearing was closed.

### **Chairperson's Report**

Chair Russell stated the agenda for the November 12, 2014 County Board meeting was distributed at tonight's meeting. Bretl said the deadline for filing budget amendments is November 5, 2014.

### **Adjournment**

On motion by Supervisor Brandl, seconded by Supervisor Weber, the meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

Kimberly S. Bushey

County Clerk

STATE OF WISCONSIN    )  
                                  ) SS  
COUNTY OF WALWORTH)

I, Kimberly S. Bushey, County Clerk in and for the County aforesaid do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings of the County Board of Supervisors for the October 30, 2014 Public Budget Hearing.