

**SEPTEMBER 6, 2016 SESSION
OF THE
WALWORTH COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

The Walworth County Board Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Chair Russell at 2:40 p.m. at the Government Center, 100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin.

Roll Call

Roll Call was conducted and the following Supervisors were present: Tim Brellenthin, Kathy Ingersoll, Vice-Chair Daniel G. Kilkenny, Kenneth H. Monroe, Susan M. Pruessing, Joe Schaefer, Charlene Staples, Randy Timms, David A. Weber, Paul Yvarra, and Chair Nancy Russell. A quorum was established.

○ **Presentation of County Administrator's proposed 2017 budget and budget workshop**

Administrator Bretl presented an overview of the 2017 Administrator's Budget. A copy of the 2017 Administrator's Budget was distributed to those present. He explained the important dates in the budget process as outlined in the budget book.

Bretl stated this budget proposes a 0.31% increase in the overall levy, following last year's increase of 0.65%. Bretl said we have maintained discipline in terms of limiting the growth of the levy.

Bretl said the tax cap is limited to the growth in new construction that takes place in the county. The net new construction rose seven tenths of 1 percent last year, which was then revised downward. He then gave an overview of the 2017 Budget Themes.

Low Growth Environment/Equalized Value: Bretl stated the County is at \$13.6 billion in equalized value, which is two billion dollars less than it was in 2009. The years that followed (2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013) were negative in terms of growth. Walworth County's recovery has been substantially slower than the rest of the state. Fitting hand-in-glove with the issue of equalized value is a dramatic slow-down in the population growth of our county. Throughout most of the 1990s, Walworth County was the 4th fastest growing county in the state and still placed ninth in terms of growth in 2010. Since the 2010 census, Walworth County has added just 365 new residents, with the City of Whitewater accounting for 305 of that total. The County growth rate has slowed to an average of 61 new residents per year. A number of communities have had decreases in population. The theory behind the "net new construction" tax cap is that the only justification a county has to increase spending is to serve an expanding population. The problem with this theory is that the costs of labor, utilities and third party vendors increase annually whether or not new construction takes place. Bretl stated he recommends setting the tax levy near the maximum allowable.

Bretl stated this budget will allow the County to build a new estimated \$24.1 million Health and Human Service (HHS) building in 2018 without the need to borrow. The challenge was to incorporate the HHS building into the budget by prioritizing, deferring, or taking a pass on other projects. Departments were provided the option of finding funds on hand to proceed with projects in 2016 that were in the Capital Plan, or be put on hold. He referenced the sidebar articles including the history of the County's facilities and borrowing. Bretl stated this budget will allow the County to call the last Bonds in 2018 creating a situation where the County will be debt free. The County has not issued debt since 2011 and Bretl does not foresee the need to borrow through the five year capital plan included in the budget. He said the building reserve fund will remain in place to avoid the need for issuing bonds.

Bretl referred to Appendix A of his Preliminary Budget, which gives an overview of the Major Personnel Actions; and the detailed Capital Plan on Page 35.

Fire/EMS Study: The County has received several resolutions from towns and municipalities to improve sustainability for volunteer departments. Bretl stated this budget is proposing \$40,000 to assist with the creation of an intergovernmental committee to ensure that Fire/EMS services remain sustainable in our County. The committee would consist of three fire and EMS professionals, as well as three officials, one from a town, city, village and a representative from county government.

Lakeland School Security: Bretl said funding has been included in the 2017 Administrator's budget to hire a new deputy to provide increased security for both the Lakeland School and HHS building. A portion of the cost would be shared through the HHS budget and the tax levy.

County Agricultural Society: Bretl stated the budget includes \$80,000, which will allow \$20,000 for premiums and \$60,000 for capital improvements related to the equine facilities.

Treatment Courts: Bretl recommended continuing to support the County's Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) Treatment Courts.

Bretl spoke briefly regarding Appendix B Long Range Plan and Appendix C Long-Term Planning.

Bretl then gave an overview of the Areas of Board Interest section of the report.

Tax Levy: Bretl stated the budget calls for a tax levy increase of .31%.

Parks: Bretl stated the Parks Operating Levy was increased to \$130,861 from \$71,244; \$50,000 was also included for park acquisition.

Lakeland Health Care Center: Bretl stated this budget is premised on a private pay rate increase from \$263 to \$300 per day. He said there has not been an increase since 2014 and that our private pay rate is lower than all other facilities in the County that accept MA residents.

Walworth County Economic Development Alliance, Inc. (WCEDA): Bretl is proposing a \$7,000 increase in appropriation for WCEDA totaling \$95,000 in 2017. He said the additional funds are to be earmarked for a program called Inspire Walworth County.

Community Initiatives: Bretl stated the community initiatives continue to grow every year. Since some of these organizations have a payroll, lease, or other obligations, it would be preferred to give notice to the organizations should their funding be reduced. He said this budget increases the Housing Authority's budget by \$500 and the Historical Society's by \$10,000, which will allow repairs to the Heritage Hall.

Public Works Staffing: Bretl stated in July, the Board had approved a reorganization plan for Public Works. The net increase for the reorganization plan in 2017 is \$91,000. The Board had indicated and premised the approval that this be levy neutral. Public Works Director, Eric Nitschke, is proposing to keep two of the newly created positions vacant for a portion of 2017 to ensure that the reorganization is levy neutral.

Indoor Range: Bretl stated the Sheriff requested to have the range equipment installed in 2016 using current funds in the budget, including money saved due to position vacancies.

Class and Comp Study: Bretl stated he was able to include the comp study results from the Hay Group into the budget.

Bretl concluded by thanking the department heads and elected officials for their efforts and assistance in preparing the budget. He commended the Finance department for the many hours they put into the budget.

Chair Russell inquired about net new construction as it relates to TIF District money. Deputy County Administrator-Finance Nicki Anderson stated the County does receive a percentage of terminated TIF District money to assist with the growth.

Adjournment

On motion by Supervisor Weber, seconded by Supervisor Monroe, the meeting was adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

Prepared By: Patricia Sommers, Administrative Clerk
Submitted By: 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 September 6, 2016 Committee of the Whole Meeting.