

**SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 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 2:30 p.m. at the Government Center, 100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin.

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted and the following Supervisors were present, either in person or remotely: Vice-Chair Jerry A. Grant, Brian Holt, Kathy Ingersoll, Daniel G. Kilkenny, Kenneth H. Monroe, Susan M. Pruessing, Joseph H. Schaefer, Ryan G. Simons, Rick Stacey, David A. Weber and Chair Nancy Russell. A quorum was established.

○ **Presentation of County Administrator's proposed 2022 budget and budget workshop**

County Administrator Mark W. Luberda presented an overview of the 2022 Administrator's Budget.

Luberda stated the overall County tax levy needed to support the 2022 budget is \$61,095,240, an increase of \$313,760 (.52%). The overall tax levy of .52% fully utilizes the allowable growth in levy under state law, which is based upon net new construction. The levy portion applying uniformly throughout the county is \$53,323,853, an increase of \$589,606 (1.12%). Luberda explained the County Levy is just one of a number of taxes that appear on the tax bill, and variations across the County related to valuation, assessments, and equalization impact individual tax bills differently.

Luberda noted for the 2022 budget, the allowable growth from net new construction increase has dropped from 1.403% last year to 1.114% this year.

Primary New Initiatives –

● **ARPA: The Big Picture**

Luberda referred to and briefly detailed Figure 4 (Page 5); noting that the 2022 budget allocates just over \$4.4 million in funds, along with recommended usage for 2023 and 2024. Luberda gave a summation of the total planned expenditures for years 2021-2024; highlighting the following categories:

- Capital the County Would Eventually Buy-\$3,625,000 (17.97%)
- Improved Behavioral Health (Mental Health) Services-\$781,918 (3.9%)
- Communications (Dispatch) and Corrections Staffing-\$689,061
- County Roles Walworth Has Not Typically Engaged-\$4,655,000 (23.1%)
- Administrative Services and Support Efforts-\$2,117,685 (10.5%)
- Public Health Support-\$2,488,206 (12.3%)
- Helping those with negative economic impacts-\$1,852,740 (9.2%)
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – the biggest pieces-\$11,932,632 (59.1%)

Luberda noted the 2022 budget only includes appropriations for 2022 and that each project's funding can be re-evaluated and considered at any point, particularly during annual budget reviews. He also shared that \$1,088,604 or 5.4% of Walworth County's ARPA allocation remains uncommitted through the plan presented.

● **Park System Enhancements**

Luberda stated that the Parks Department has been underspending its operating budget for the past few years. Added operating levy and rolling in some levy from a partial reduction in operating supplies enabled the 2022 budget to anticipate one additional Limited Term Employment (LTE) which will provide 1,150 additional hours of labor in the parks for 2022. The budget also identifies a recommendation that \$250,000 per year, beginning with the 2020 year-end close out, be dedicated to the Parks Savings Fund. This annual year-end closeout allocation is proposed to continue through 2025 and will increase the fund balance to nearly \$1.5 million.

- **Medical Examiner and Administration Adjustments**

Luberda shared that in 2020 Walworth County transitioned from Waukesha County providing autopsy services, death certificate signing, and basic office support to an in-house Medical Examiner with office support, and autopsies performed by Milwaukee County on a per case basis. This change resulted in a cost savings of \$92,000; and average turnaround for autopsy results has gone from 180 days to 56 days. This change having taken place 18 months ago has shown that Walworth County requires additional support in the investigative/deputy medical examiner services; and found the investigative staff is better equipped to oversee customer service and clerical needs due to most phone traffic being case related. The addition of one 0.6 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Deputy Medical Examiner will allow for 24 hour coverage while reducing the demand on the case-based support investigators; which should help retention in that department. This eliminates the need for the .25 FTE Administrative Assistant position. Administration will retain the .25 FTE Administrative Assistant to allow the Office Supervisor/Communications Coordinator to devote more time to communications. Luberda shared that the response by departments for access to the Communications Coordinator has been very strong. Luberda stated he has been working on a communications plan and updated procedures potentially requiring new ordinances to explain the direction and use of the position.

- **Health Insurance Rates and the Health Insurance Fund**

Luberda reiterated that last year he recommended stabilizing health insurance impacts on employees due to stress from the pandemic. At that time he also cautioned that 2022 would be a year of change. With adjustments discussed at the Human Resources (HR) Committee incorporated into the 2022 budget current fund balance projections appear to be tracking per goal. Luberda warned that from an employee perspective the change will not be viewed positively. Although total premiums didn't go up in 2021 the increase for 2022 is 9.5%. Future projections will require premiums to increase approximately 5% annually. Health Insurance Premium rates based on the Wellness Program Requirement will also increase by .75% for 2022. These premium recommendations together result in a cost of \$830,000 for the County to cover employees and their families for 2022; which is also an increase. Luberda noted that balancing these increases between employer and employee is an important factor in managing health costs and employee attraction and retention. Luberda stated that within the budget workbook, Director-Human Resources Kate Bishop has prepared a Memorandum that summarizes all employee impacts in the budget. With changes in premium rates and employee premium share rates, further plan design considerations were not incorporated for 2022. Those plan changes continue to be under review and will receive more scrutiny for 2023 in an effort to stay current with the marketplace.

- **Lakeland School**

Luberda shared that within the Lakeland School budget is a new Deputy Director position intended to provide for succession planning. Luberda noted that in the near term the school will need to operate without its current Director, and this Deputy Director position is a temporary position intended to prepare for that challenge. Advertising for and hiring a Deputy Director with the specific intent of transitioning into the Director's role will ensure a smooth transition to new leadership.

An Eye to the Future: Risks (Potentially) on the Horizon

- **The New 911 Center Radio System's Annual Maintenance Costs**

Luberda shared that the Sheriff's Office recently informed Finance and Administration that the approximate \$200,000 annual maintenance costs for the current radio system could increase to as much as \$950,000 annually with the upgraded system. This increase of \$750,000 by 2025 will not be exempt from levy limits. Luberda stated that there are unlimited ways to address such an influx in operating costs in a levy limit environment; such as:

- Pursuing a Referendum
- Curtail a significant activity or service to free up levy funds
- Broad countywide service cuts
- Anticipate borrowing for capital

- The Long-Term View: A Worst-Case Scenario

Luberda referenced Figure 18 (Page 17) depicting annual resource levels, the amount of levy and reserves used, and expenditure types. Luberda noted that the worst case scenario reveals there is plenty of time to react and solve problems to avoid depleting fund balances. Luberda advised that every year annual budgeting addresses and solves problems as they are presented creating strong fiscal planning. He also encouraged that with ARPA the county can afford, and should take advantage of the opportunity for organizational growth, development, and enhancement.

Other Areas of Interest or Note

- Lakeland Health Care Center

Luberda warned that LHCC will be approaching 20 years old as of 2025. He encouraged long-term evaluation is needed in budget years 2023 or 2024.

- Community Initiatives

Luberda referred to Figure 20 (Page 20) noting the small adjustments incorporated within the budget.

- Sales Taxes

Luberda shared that 2021 remained stronger than anticipated allowing for a \$1,000,000 increase for the 2022 budget.

- Salary Savings by Department

Luberda noted that an organization the size of Walworth County always has salary savings due to vacant positions. Ordinance dictates these savings should be limited to 1.5% of payroll; Figure 22 (Page 21) affirms the county has continued to keep within this margin.

- Luberda noted that four projects are listed for administrative hold in 2022.

The Budget Process and Conclusion

Luberda referred to the key dates and milestones and provided a brief explanation of the budget, budget appeal, and budget amendment processes.

Luberda concluded by thanking the department heads and elected officials for their efforts and assistance in preparing the budget and commended the Administration staff and Finance Department.

Adjournment

On motion by Supervisor Grant, seconded by Supervisor Weber, the meeting was adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

Prepared By: Jennifer Stinnett, Administrative Assistant

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 14, 2021 Committee of the Whole Meeting.