

1 **WASHINGTON COUNTY FINANCE COMMITTEE**

2
3 Government Center
4 West Bend, WI

September 30, 2010
8:30 a.m.

5
6 Present: Ralph R. Hensel, Richard L. Bertram, Leslie J. Borman Todd Healy, and Joan A. Russell.

7
8 Also Present: County Board Chair Herbert J. Tennes, Administrative Coordinator Douglas A. Johnson,
9 Finance Director Susan M. Haag, County Clerk Brenda Jaszewski, Administrative Assistant Judy Steinert,
10 Assistant Finance Director Rich Abbott, Supervisors James Core, Roy Justman, Lee Krueger, Marilyn
11 Merten, William Meyers, Dennis Myers, Peter Sorce, and Paul Ustruck.

12
13 Chairperson Hensel called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and read the Affidavit of Posting.

14
15 **Administrative Coordinator's 2011 Budget Summary**

16 Mr. Johnson gave an explanation and review of the 2011 Budget Highlights, Budget Summary, Budget
17 Rate, Budget Charts and Position Requests.

18
19 **Budget Highlights include:**

20 **No Increase in County Levy**

21 The county tax levy recommended in this budget meets the challenge of not increasing above the 2010
22 amount. This is the second time in the past three years that this has been accomplished.

23
24 **Departments and Committees Hit Base Level Targets**

25 Department heads and liaison committees of the County Board did a great job of developing and trimming
26 budgets to make them at, below, or close to target levels set by the Finance Committee in June. Of the 23
27 budget units that had targets, 21 are recommended in this budget with county levy at or below the
28 respective targets. Some difficult decisions were made to reduce costs for the taxpayers.

29 Without the team efforts of managers and County Board Supervisors, these good budget results would not
30 have been possible.

31
32 **Employee Health Insurance Costs Rolled Back 5%**

33 The largest single factor in holding the line on county levy for 2011 is the reduction of employee health
34 insurance premiums for next year, 5% below those for 2010. Human Resources implemented two major
35 discount programs for payment of claims, reducing 2010 costs by \$500,000 or more, and the 2011 budget
36 by an estimated \$1 million. The re-establishment of adequate reserves for our self-insured health plan and
37 continuation of the discount programs in 2011 make the reduced premiums fiscally sound. The lack of
38 immediate health insurance cost pressures also gives HR the ability to devote staff time to continued
39 wellness promotion with health risk assessments, and piloting of new voluntary, high deductible plan
40 options. For the standard county plan, employees continue to pay 15% of the total premiums for either
41 family or single coverage.

42
43 **Public Safety is Strong**

44 The Sheriff's Department is supported by about one-third of the 2011 county levy. Good quality jail
45 operations are continued with a plan for strengthened supervision of operations and a new contract with
46 Kenosha County for placements in secure juvenile detention. Resources for the Detective Bureau will be
47 increased to better meet the workload through internal reorganization. Implementation of the new radio
48 system will be ongoing through the next year. Service levels to the public will be maintained. Public Safety
49 levy costs in this budget are up by less than 1%.

1 **People Need Health & Human Services**

2 The departments that provide human services and health programs are supported by about one-quarter of
3 the 2011 county levy. Referrals for service are growing at a record pace, as individuals and families
4 struggle in this tough economy. The needs are especially noted in the areas of economic support requests,
5 child welfare referrals, and calls to the Acute Care crisis line. Community based services continue to be
6 emphasized to keep costly institutional placements to a minimum. The capacity of public health services
7 has been strengthened by the addition of food safety licensing with fee revenues set at state levels.
8 Improvements continue through program evaluation and redesign, use of technology to make effective use
9 of data, and community partnerships. Health and human services levy costs in this budget are up by less
10 than 1%.

11 **Housing Downturn Hurts**

12 The weak condition of the housing market here is a marked contrast from the boom years of the past
13 decade. One place that this directly impacts the County budget is in the revenues collected by the Register
14 of Deeds. This is one of two departments that collect more revenue than the costs to operate the
15 department. However a drop of about \$150,000 in expected revenue caused the largest single department
16 addition to county levy for 2011. The department prepared a tight budget appropriate to the distress,
17 including realignment of one position to reduce expenses and mitigate the impact on the county levy.
18

19 **Washington County – Check Us Out**

20 Washington County Fair Park was constructed both to serve as a locale for community activities (especially
21 the County Fair and year round 4-H/ Youth Development events), but also as a regional place for business
22 and association gatherings serving county residents and those driving here from outside the county. This
23 budget covers all of the increased facility costs at Fair Park without increasing the 2010 county levy. The
24 2011 Budget also recommends a \$20,000 grant to the Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau to
25 assist them in initiating a new marketing plan and in the development of community partnerships to bring
26 more visitors here. This effort will benefit private businesses and associations, as well as local communities
27 throughout Washington County.
28

29 **Where We've Been, What's Ahead**

30 While State government has imposed both a property tax rate limit and more recently an annual levy
31 increase limit on county budgets, Washington County has relied on our elected Board to decide on
32 spending and taxing decisions. Since 2002 changes to valuation have not dictated our budgets, but rather a
33 restrained year to year change in county levy, and the realistic costs of providing a balanced array of good
34 services to county residents. It is likely that the 2012 county budget may be more difficult than the past
35 two. The recommendations for 2011 are sound and do not rely on one time funding tricks. Long-term debt
36 paid by the levy is less than 2010 and will continue to decline in the next few years. The General Fund
37 support for the budget is at a similar level to the pattern used in 2003-2009. The sales tax allocation
38 continues the same as in 2010 at 60% of the expected collections.
39

40 **Effective Services are Continued**

41 As important as money and taxes are to a budget, using the funds to provide important local services that
42 work matter too. Residents continue to get fair, timely services from the County Clerk, Treasurer, Register
43 of Deeds, and Clerk of Courts. The Child Support Agency is consistently ranked first in current support
44 collections for medium sized Wisconsin counties. The Veterans Service Office and ADRC link people to
45 the resources they need, with skill, concern and dignity. The Samaritan Health Center is a valued place for
46 seniors to receive care and services. Economic Development Washington County is working smarter and
47 harder than ever to assist businesses to succeed here. County roads are improved and maintained, and made
48 safe for driving through challenging winter weather. County parks are kept open for family enjoyment,
49

1 open space to appreciate the natural beauty of this area. None of these are a tax drain; they are a good use
2 of county tax dollars.

3
4 **Property Values and Taxes**

5 For the first time in 50 years, property valuation used to apply property taxes have declined for two years in
6 a row. This means that the tax rate will go up even though the county levy has been held to no increase.
7 The resulting tax rate is 9 cents per \$1000 value higher than 2010, just under the county tax rate in 2007.
8 For a \$200,000 house with no change in value, the county tax will be about \$573, an increase of about \$17.

9
10 Mr. Hensel recessed the meeting at 9:24 a.m. and reconvened at 9:53 a.m.

11
12 **County Board**

13 The County Board budget was presented by County Board Chairman Herb Tennes, Mr. Tennes reported
14 the base level funding is \$474,124 and the recommended and requested budget is \$466,331 (-1.6%). The
15 Requested budget is below the authorized Base level.

16
17 **ONE MORE THING:** County funding for Economic Development Washington County is budgeted as
18 part of the County Board budget.

19
20 Moved by Mr. Bertram, seconded by Mr. Borman, to tentatively approve the County Board 2011
21 recommended budget and levy, including out-of-state travel, in the amount of \$466,331. Motion carried.

22
23 **County Attorney**

24 The County Attorney budget was presented by County Attorney Kim Nass. Mr. Johnson presented the
25 base level funding of \$622,827 and the recommended and requested budget is \$594,041 (-3.7%). This was
26 accomplished with the assistance of about \$95,000 of additional State funding for Child Support,
27 originating from federal American Reinvestment and Recovery funds.

28
29 **ONE MORE THING:** The volume of legal services required by the County makes it most efficient to
30 provide these services with county employees. The work of the four attorneys and support staff would cost
31 more than double the budgeted levy if these services were purchased from private law firms at an hourly
32 rate.

33
34 Moved by Mr. Borman, seconded by Ms. Russell, to tentatively approve the County Attorney 2011
35 recommended budget of \$594,041, plus Indirect Charges of \$209,510, and User Fees, for a total levy in the
36 amount of \$803,551. Motion carried.

37
38 **Library**

39 The Library budget was presented by County Supervisor Paul Ustruck and County Clerk Brenda Jaszewski.
40 Mr. Johnson presented the 2011 base level funding of \$1,631,917 and the recommended and requested
41 budget is \$1,631,917 (+1.0%). The Requested budget is at the authorized Base level.

42
43 **ONE MORE THING:** The Requested budget will support circulation payments to the five local libraries
44 of \$1,195,143. This is restored to the 2007 level of circulation payments for the first time since the State
45 legislature imposed inter-county payment requirements on county library systems.

46
47 Moved by Mr. Healy, seconded by Mr. Bertram, to tentatively approve the Library Services 2011
48 recommended budget and levy in the amount of \$1,631,917. Motion carried.

49
50 **Administration/Emergency Management/Facilities**

1 Mr. Johnson, Emergency Management Coordinator Rob Schmid, and Facilities Manager Dave Loomans
2 presented the Administration, Emergency Management, and Facilities budget with a base level funding of
3 \$260,506 for Administration and \$2,669,174 for Facilities. The recommended and requested budget is
4 \$260,501 (+1.0%) for Administration and \$2,605,266 (-0.8%) for Facilities.
5

6 The Requested level budget for Administration is at the authorized Base level. Added health insurance
7 enrollment was absorbed with an increase to State EMPG funding for the Administrative Assistant/ Deputy
8 EM Coordinator position. The allocation for that position in 2011 is 65% general administration and 35%
9 Emergency Management.
10

11 The Requested level budget for Facilities is below the authorized Base level. Natural gas costs in county
12 buildings have been reduced \$100,000 below the 2010 budget based on 2009-10 experience. The budget
13 includes the JCI contract extension for three years in order to re-price 2011 at a zero increase from 2010.
14

15 **OUTLAY:** Replacement of full sized pick-up truck for Facilities@ \$24,000
16

17 **ONE MORE THING:** Efforts continue to improve and equip the County Emergency Operations Center
18 (EOC) in the Sheriff's Department building as grant funds allow.
19

20 Moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Borman to tentatively approve the Administration and Facilities
21 2011 recommended budget and levy, including outlay, in the amount of \$260,501 for Administration and
22 \$2,605,266 for Facilities. Motion carried.
23

24 The Finance Committee meeting was recessed at 11:18 a.m. until Friday, October 1, 2010, at 8:00 a.m.
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Brenda Jaszewski, County Clerk