

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Special Meeting – Budget Hearing #4**  
**September 15, 2015 @ 5:15 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jay Dunn  
Patty Cox  
Kevin Greenfield  
Linda Little  
Greg Mattingley

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Tim Dudley  
Keith Ashby

**COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT**

Jennifer Hoffman, P&Z  
Doug Harlan, U of I Extension  
Mike Day, Coroner  
Carol Reed, Auditor  
Rodney Forbes, Public Defender  
Mary Eaton, Recorder

Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Chair Jay Dunn at the Macon County Office Building.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion to approve minutes of prior budget hearing meeting on 9/8/2015 was made by Ms. Cox seconded by Ms. Little and motion carried 5-0.

**Budget Proposals**

Before getting to the budget proposals, Chair Dunn asked Ms. Reed if she had had a chance to check on Lt. Root's & Ms. Garrett's salary questions that came up at the last meeting. Ms. Reed said that Lt. Root was a year ahead of himself on the salary schedule so that budget proposal will be revised down about a couple thousand dollars. Ms. Garrett's was correct. The raises from 2 years ago were not in the salary line, so it didn't get projected correctly.

***Coroner***

Chair Dunn asked if a 3% cut had been achieved.

Mr. Day said he thought he was pretty well where he needs to be and explained that the budget remains pretty much unchanged. By recommendation of the Chairman of the Justice Committee, the revenue for the Coroner Fees has been raised by \$7,000 bringing it up to a projected level of \$23,573. He said he thought the figure was achievable and was within bounds. With that and some internal adjustments, the budget stands at \$207,348 as opposed to last year's \$214,348. Chair Dunn asked if the budget included raises for all of his people. Coroner Day confirmed and explained that the Coroner's salary is set by the Board, the Clerk Stenographer's 3% is by union agreement, and an adjustment of 3% has been made for the part time Deputy Coroner and the full time Chief Deputy Coroner which was taken out of the autopsy line adjusting it and a couple of other lines.

Chairman Greenfield made a motion to approve forwarding the budget on to Display, seconded by Mr. Mattingley, and the motion carried 5-0.

Chairman Greenfield complimented the Coroner on an excellent job.

***Recorder:***

Ms. Eaton said she did make a 3% cut and also included the extra day for Leap year in the wages in both the general fund & automation fund.

Chair Dunn asked if everybody in the office including the deputy would be getting a raise. Ms. Eaton confirmed.

Chairman Greenfield made a motion to approve forwarding the budget on to Display, seconded by Ms. Cox and the motion carried 5-0.

Ms. Eaton distributed a report showing the last 3 years revenue collected by the office. Chair Dunn commented that it looks like it has been stable. Ms. Eaton pointed out that the Doc Storage fund was created in 2014.

***Public Defender:***

Mr. Forbes reported that he had not been able to make the 3% cut. He said that he had presented to the Justice Committee a proposed budget without the 3% cut where he had flatlined everything except for increases for the hospitalization and a slight increase in the contract line due to contractual obligations. He said he had then attached a letter to the budget explaining his reasons and that a 3% cut would mean an office staff reduction by one attorney. The 3% cut would be \$32,519.58 with the additional hospitalization increase of \$19,572 totaling the amount of decrease in order to meet the 3% reduction at \$52,491.58. The only way this could be done is to cut somebody's salary. The Public Defender's budget is almost entirely salary. There are some expenses for telephone, contracts, witness expenses, publications that are minor compared to the amount paid in salary. The only way to come up with that amount is to let an attorney go. That was presented to Finance and was then asked to present some statistics concerning the Public Defender's caseloads as to what is recommended. He distributed a packet showing the national caseload standards on how many cases an attorney is expected to handle per year. The list shows 150 felony cases, 400 misdemeanors, 200 juvenile delinquency cases per year per attorney. The Macon County office is way over those numbers. The packet also included a summary of the monthly reports to give an idea of how many cases each attorney in the office opens and closes each month. The numbers are being exceeded in each and every position. Also, in the packet was a listing of the number of cases the Public Defender has been appointed on in the last year compared to private practice attorneys. 74% of the cases that are filed are appointed to the Public Defender's office to represent. Those are just the felony cases. At the time the report was prepared in August, there were 1,016 felony cases filed. In addition to felony cases, misdemeanor, traffic, juvenile delinquency, juvenile abuse and neglect, adoptions, post-conviction cases, mental health cases and probation violation cases are also handled. The office is composed of the Public Defender, 10 Assistant Public Defenders, 1 Investigator and 2 office support staff for a total of 14 full time employees. There are also 2 contract attorneys. Mr. Forbes said the Justice Committee members had suggested maybe eliminating a contract attorney instead of a full time attorney. In the packet, was a summary of the two contract attorneys' case-loads. Each one currently has about 12 cases. Ms. Hawkins case load consists of post-conviction cases, a pretty serious ag criminal sexual abuse case, and post-trial motions. Mr. Jones has almost all post-conviction cases where a lot of them are murder cases. Post-conviction cases are where the defendant is complaining about his counsel saying that the Public Defender's Office did something wrong. That is why those cases are farmed out to the conflict attorneys so that the defendant gets an attorney who does not have any dual loyalties or

no loyalty to the Public Defender's office. Mr. Jones also has a first degree murder case that is currently set for a fitness hearing. The contract for the contract attorneys is for \$31,800 per year. The contract line in the budget has been reduced by \$31,800.

Chairman Greenfield asked if the most recently submitted budget has raises in it for employees. Mr. Forbes said no. It cuts one contract attorney, has increases for hospitalization and the required contract increases that are obligated. Mr. Greenfield asked how badly it would hurt to cut the contract attorney. Mr. Forbes said it is a dangerous move. Mr. Greenfield commented that they are given an attorney and then they want to complain about it. Mr. Forbes agreed that it is frustrating as they have a great staff who work very hard for their defendants, and then sometimes the defendants will try to throw their attorney under the bus. Sometimes, though, there is merit behind the claims and the attorney does drop the ball and there has to be some method for reviewing those cases. Sometimes it seems like you're shielding yourself from complaints about some really good work that was done, but sometimes there's merit behind the complaints and those have to be acknowledged.

Chair Dunn said he had asked Mr. Forbes to redo his budget and put in a 3% increase. He distributed copies of this proposal to members of the committee and explained that he wanted to talk, in general, about how the U of I Extension is there tonight, but Mr. Dunn said he thought he had the 3%, but still wants to raise the levy which Mr. Dunn said he thought, after discussion with some of the members of the committee, that that would not be a problem, so basically, its getting down to the bottom line for a special meeting. It leave the Veterans Administration which is not general funds. She has a levy and a fund balance, so Mr. Dunn said he was willing to send that on to display. That brings it down to just the Public Defender and State's Attorney, except for the ones that will be presenting on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. He said he thought there wouldn't be an issue with those. He said he did not really want to see not giving the non-union employees a raise when all the union employees are getting a 3% raise. He said it would be tough on morale in the offices. He said he just wanted to see how much that amount would be. Mr. Forbes said it would be about \$11,772.15, but he would do evaluations and determine what percent of increase to give out and it would not just be a 3% straight across the board. Mr. Dunn said that they knew when they started that some offices would not be able to make the cut. Mr. Forbes did, but he cut a staff person which is what he had to do to get there on the 3%, but Mr. Dunn said he would still hate to withhold the salary increase from him. He said he has also spoken with Mike Baggett and asked him to talk with Jay Scott about doing something similar because when they first came in at Justice Committee, he was around \$120,000 over budget. He has revised that, but Mr. Dunn said he was in favor of giving the 3%, but felt that the 3% cut had to be reached in order for the committee to look at the raises. All the departments and office holders have done a great job on trying to reach this. Most of them have actually achieved it. Chairman Greenfield agreed that he would be fine with it as long as Mr. Forbes takes the \$11,700 and gives it accordingly rather than just 3% across the board. Mr. Forbes assured him he would.

Chairman Greenfield made a motion to approve forwarding the budget on to Display, seconded by Mms. Little and the motion carried 5-0.

Chair Dunn said he and Chairman Greenfield had a discussion earlier and he wanted to throw it out on the table this year rather than wait until next year. He said this has not been a fun budget session and he did not see it getting any better next year. It may even be worse, depending on

whether levies are frozen in Springfield. He said he seriously sees them doing that cutting more money in some of the areas where they used to give money. He said office holders have been asked to cut 5%, 3% or freeze them for years. Unfortunately, there is a declining population and revenue is going down. The State is a mess and they are trying to withhold any money they can for counties and townships. We are seriously going to have to look at capping salaries, cutting staff, and whatever it takes. He said he just could not see next year being a fun year either.

Mr. Mattingley commented that McLean County has salary ranges and the office holder can put however many people he wants within that range, whether there are some at the top & some at the bottom or all in the middle, but there are levels that they don't exceed. He said he would look into the Public Defender offices too to see if theirs are also set by ranges, but he thought that McLean's would be since their States Attorney's is. Chair Dunn said he thought they would be looking over the next year on what some of the other counties do because we have to stop the bleeding and maintain what little we have in reserve. We should build it up because we don't know what is coming down the road.

***County Board and P&Z:***

Chair Dunn stated that the 2 departments have kept their budget at a 5.22% cut and have been through both O&P and EEHW and said he would like to just get it approved and sent on.

Ms. Little made a motion to approve forwarding the budget on to Display, seconded by Mr. Mattingley and the motion carried 5-0.

***U of I Extension (2<sup>nd</sup> review):***

Mr. Harlan explained that since he presented at oversight, he has gone back and reworked his budget and has now been able to reduce it by 3.2%, but he left the 3% tax levy increase in it. That amounts to \$11,612. The budget was able to be reduced because two people have resigned and will not be replaced. He said they are now down 2 staff members, but that was the only place he could take it out, so that is what they did. Chair Dunn expressed his appreciation and asked about the levy levels. Mr. Harlan said that the max levy is .05. It is currently just above .025 and the increase would not even bring it to .026 if the EAV doesn't change a lot. Ms. Reed said she thought the EAV might go up a little. Mr. Harlan said that would bring the percentage down a little. It is at about half of what the authorized levy is. Chair Dunn asked why he wasn't thinking about going higher because they are talking about freezing them. Mr. Harlan said he had no problem asking for more and asked what the reasonable amount to ask for would be. He said he didn't ask for a bigger increase because he didn't think it would be palatable to do so. Chair Dunn said it is just so low compared to what it could be. Most entities are right at their max or pretty close and you've held it down for a number of years. Mr. Harlan asked what a palatable increase would be – 15%? He said, to be honest, he would like to raise it. Mr. Dunn said that considering the cut in two staff, he wondered if the increase would help. Ms. Little said she thought Mr. Dunn had made a very good point that Springfield keeps bringing up the freezing of property taxes, regardless of whether you are at max or not, and she said she thought Mr. Harlan's department would be one of the hardest hit as far as grants and things received from the state. She said she did not have a problem with that levy going up. Mr. Dunn asked if raising it a bit would help keep one staff. Mr. Harlan said if he could raise it about \$33,000 he could hire back one staff person. Mr. Dunn said he wasn't saying he had to do that, but it could be put in a reserve so if some grants were lost. Mr. Harlan did some figuring and said if it went

up 15%, it would be \$58,000 and would be more than enough to cover that and it would take the levy to \$445,135 and asked if that would be reasonable. Mr. Dunn asked what the percentage would be. Mr. Harlan said he would have to know what the EAV is to figure it. Chair Dunn said he was ok with it, asked if the committee was ok with it, and after receiving confirmation asked Mr. Harlan to resubmit it to Ms. Reed.

Ms. Little made a motion to approve forwarding the amended budget on to Display, seconded by Mr. Mattingley and the motion carried 5-0..

Committee members commented on the good job Mr. Harlan does.

**CITIZEN REMARKS – PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**OLD BUSINESS** - None

**NEW BUSINESS** - None

**CLOSED SESSION** - None

**NEXT MEETING** - Tuesday, September 22 – Budget Hearing #5

Chair Dunn reviewed presenters that are scheduled.

The Sheriff / Jail / Courtroom Secure which Chair Dunn said he thought has a 3% cut.

Animal Control are ok.

Mental Health Board which will be presenting to EEHW on 9/17 but they are not General Fund and already at their max levy. Ms. Little said there are no exorbitant salary increases and the new CCE that they are doing is bringing more money into the Mental Health Board so 100% of the dollars raised by property taxes actually goes to services.

Circuit Court made the cut, but wasn't able to give raises. Mr. Dunn said he had asked the Judge about his step program and thought it only amounted to about \$1,700. He said he didn't foresee a problem with that.

Chair Dunn asked if any of the members wanted to see Ms. Powless come back or if they were ok with sending hers on to display. It will have to be put on the agenda for the next meeting though.

**ADJOURNMENT** - Motion to adjourn made by Ms. Little, seconded by Ms. Cox, motion carried 5-0, and meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, Macon County Board Office