

Budget Retreat Minutes

KALAMAZOO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS Committee Of The Whole

*September 10, 2013
4:00pm – 6:00pm*

Location: Conference Room A, County Administration Building

Members Present: Commissioners Carolyn Alford, Dave Buskirk, Jeff Heppler, Brandt Iden, Dave Maturen, Julie Rogers, Michael Seals, Phil Stinchcomb, John Taylor, Roger Tunier, John Zull

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Peter Battani, John Faul, Tracie Moored, Thom Canny, Lisa Bradshaw, Diane Erikson, Steve Burnham, Paul Matyas, Linda Vail, Tammy Lahman, Greg Vlietstra, Tina Keifer, Jeff Getting, Nigel Crum, Ryan Post, Susan Sayles, Dave Rachowicz, Rick Fuller, Ginny Hentz, Amanda Woodin

Chairman Maturen called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

Introduction:

County Administrator Battani opened the annual Budget Retreat and described the purpose of the meeting as the opportunity for the Board, the Department Heads and Elected Officials to take a preliminary look at the development of the formal budget for the year ahead. Administrator Battani indicated the budget outlook is better than it has been in past years, and that revenue projections are strong. The County foresees raises and step increases for the non-union employees in 2014 for the first time in several years. He predicts that 2014 will begin to bring the County out of the lengthy economic decline, and turned the meeting over to Finance Director Tracie Moored.

Budget Policies:

Ms. Moored directed the Board to their Budget Retreat handouts and began with the Budget Policy section. She explained the policies are in strikeout format so that proposed revisions and recommendations can be easily identified. She indicated that she would go through each policy, explain the changes that have occurred and why, and provide time for questions and answers.

Discussion relating to the Use of Budget Stabilization Fund; Salaries and Employee Benefits; and the Fund Balance policies transpired.

Some discussion regarding the Mileage, Meals & Incidental Expenses Reimbursement took place. Specifically regarding the method of travel as dictated and interpreted by the policy. Administrator Battani explained the County attempts to keep travel expenses at a minimum and that includes utilizing the least expensive modes of transportation. It was requested this policy be revisited at a later date.

Commissioner Iden referred back to the Law Enforcement Contracting policy and much discussion ensued about the pros and cons of consolidation at the local unit levels.

Commissioner Alford asked about the Employee Training and Membership Policy and specifically what monitors are in place to track membership fees. Corporate Counsel responded that the understanding with memberships is they must be related to the position and be a required qualification for that position.

Fund Balance was the next policy to raise discussion. Commissioner Taylor questioned the need for a policy that requires such a substantial amount be set aside. Commissioner Zull talked about the beneficial impact of this policy, and the diligence the County has practiced in maintaining the fund balance.

Five Year Projections:

Director Moored presented the 5 year projections indicating the first year tax revenue projections are at .50% and the remaining four years are at .75%. No discussion was required.

Preliminary Retreat 2014 Budget:

Ms. Moored described the preliminary budget, which is broken out into six funds: general, Parks, FOC, Health, Child Care, and Law Enforcement. The spreadsheet details the projected operational fund revenue streams and expenditure activity for 2014.

New Funding Requests:

Ms. Moored briefly itemized the 2014 new funding requests. Some discussion took place regarding the Land Bank and Public Housing allocations and use of those funds.

Historical Analysis:

Ms. Moored reviewed the historical section of the Budget Retreat booklet.

Citizens Time:

Citizens were offered the time to ask questions and express views on the 2014 budget topic.

Jim Leffler, resident in Oshtemo, spoke regarding the unrestricted fund balance and indicated that in his opinion the 20% minimum is set too high. He requested a review of all fund balances that are maintained for a “rainy day”. He also asked the Board to direct officials to meet with concerned citizens on this matter.

Chairman Maturen adjourned the meeting at 6:05pm.