

## MINUTES

### BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Special Board Meeting  
Budget Recap  
November 2, 2010, 9:00 a.m.  
Commissioners' Conference Room  
Benton County Courthouse, Prosser, WA

**Present:** Chairman James Beaver  
Commissioner Leo Bowman  
Commissioner Max E. Benitz, Jr.  
County Administrator David Sparks  
Clerk of the Board Cami McKenzie

**Benton County Employees Present During All or a Portion of the Meeting:** Deputy Administrator Loretta Smith Kelty; Finance Manager Keith Mercer; Treasurer Duane Davidson; Auditor Brenda Chilton; Assessor Barb Wagner; Erhiza Rivera and Nick Kooker, Treasurer's Office; Superior Court Administrator Pat Austin; Superior Court Judge Carrie Runge; Juvenile Administrator Sharon Paradis; Superior Court Judge Cameron Mitchell; Jennifer Bowe, Juvenile Court Administrator; District Court Administrator Jacki Delvin; Dixie Jameson; Reva Kirby; Clerk Josie Delvin; Ed Thornbrugh, Human Services; Mike Shuttleworth, Planning; Pat Powell; Central Services Manager Randy Reid.

#### **Budget Recap**

David Sparks said the proposed budget had a \$387,000 deficit before enhancements and the Board needed to address some issues before approving it to go to hearing. Mr. Sparks summarized the following recommendations based on individual board member proposals:

1. Adult and Juvenile Drug Court - currently not in the baseline budget. If the Board decided to fund it, recommended the following:
  - a. Create a separate department with two subsections;
  - b. Verify participants are Benton County residents only;
  - c. Review annually and bi-annually (not to be included in future baseline budgets); look at funding through cash carry forward (like Park Dev. Fund and Fairgrounds Improvement Fund).
2. Work Crew 3 – eliminate due to loss of Community Litter Patrol Grant (based on Board's policy that when funding goes away the program goes away).
3. Inmate Benevolence Fund – will be a deficit in this fund. In order to maintain solvency:

- a. Eliminate three positions - 2 trustees and 1 clerk (clerk position is currently vacant);
  - b. Change 2 positions in Dept. 120 from Corrections Officers to Trustees.
4. New Clerk position - if approved by the Board, recommend the offices work together to find another revenue source other than Current Expense for the 15%.
  5. Vehicles – Dept. 121 – eliminate two vehicles (need to remain at 12 vehicles annually, not 13).

Mr. Sparks said if the Board concurred with these recommendations, it would put the County in a balanced budget situation.

Commissioner Bowman said he agreed with the recommendations for Drug Court and wanted to do what was best for Benton County citizens.

Commissioner Benitz said he agreed with Drug Court recommendations and wanted it to be funded out of capital for one year, put a the cap on 30 people and have it be only Benton County residents. He said he wanted it to be reviewed at the end of the year and funding it from Capital would not create a baseline above the current baseline for 2011-2012.

Commissioner Bowman asked about the use of capital funds and whether this would come from the same source as capital. Mr. Sparks said it would come from the same place that capital funds came from (cash carry forward). Commissioner Bowman said he agreed it should be looked at each year before it was funded but did not believe it should come from capital but be funded like Park Development and Fairgrounds Improvement from cash carry forward.

Chairman Beaver said he agreed with the recommendations. The Board agreed it should not be built into the baseline budget.

Commissioner Bowman said he also agreed with the recommendations for elimination of Work Crew 3.

Commissioner Benitz said he agreed with that recommendation. However, there were other issues that needed to be looked at before budget adoption. Commissioner Benitz said the County would be \$5.8 million out of round with current expenditures if it didn't have any new revenue and other direction should given to make sure the budget would balance for the future. He said insurance costs and union issues had not been addressed that would impact the budget. He said the following issues should be addressed:

1. Drug Court – can be addressed in cash carry forward; CASA program – he said he supported the program and wanted it maintained;
2. Retiring judge accumulated leave compensation issue;
3. Grant programs – Human Services and other departments would be taking tremendous hits from the State;
4. Juvenile Justice efficiencies with grants going away;

Commissioner Benitz said he wanted to go through the budget page by page to incorporate changes.

Commissioner Bowman said if he wanted to go through the line items, he was not opposed to that.

Commissioner Benitz asked if the proposal included the Assessor position and Mr. Sparks said that position was a new request. Commissioner Benitz said the Planning Department should look at a hearings examiner because it would bring in revenue and would be a better process for code enforcements.

Commissioner Bowman said if there was plan that outlined it would be beneficial, he had not seen it but at this time was not in favor of the Hearings Examiner.

Chairman Beaver said he was not going to micro-manage the elected officials departments. He said the last time the Board went through the budget process, they asked for a 2% reduction and the elected officials brought the reductions to the Board. He said he was in favor of the proposal and recommendations from Mr. Sparks and did not believe the Board could grant the requests, but they would have to be looked at another time.

Commissioner Benitz asked how the Board was going to address the \$5.8 million deficit in 2013 if it didn't look at efficiencies in the budget they were setting today. He said the County would not be able to balance the budget in 2013 without a tremendous amount of layoffs. Chairman Beaver said he understood the future was not bright.

Commissioner Bowman said the purpose of the biennium budget was set the stage for the future and they would be scheduling a mid-term review. He said he agreed the Board could move forward with the budget as presented and as things happen, the Board could react and do what was needed.

Chairman Beaver and Commissioner Bowman agreed to move forward with recommendations as presented by staff for budget adoption on the November 22, 2010.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:40 a.m.

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Clerk of the Board

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Chairman