

## York County Budget Committee Minutes for May 12, 2021

6:00 p.m. via ZOOM

Members Participating: Jo-Ann Putnam, Ed Karytko, Chad Perry, John Bell, Dave Durrell, Paul Philbrick, Michael Cote, Alex Orestis, Marc Lessard, Jonathan Kinney

Absent: Dana Lajoie

**1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME** - Chairperson Jo-Ann Putnam welcomed all and took attendance.

a. Approval of May 5, 2021 minutes

B.C. Member Ed Karytko motioned to approve the minutes of the May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. B.C. member Michael Cote seconded the motion. Role call vote- unanimously approved.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT(S)** None

B.C. Chairperson Jo-Ann Putnam recommended discussion about revenue as it was a concern of some of the members at last week's meeting. B.C. Member Ed Karytko stated that he is concerned with the \$150,000 reduction in (deeds) revenues and mentioned this at the last meeting. He added that he would like the budget to result in a zero percent increase to all York County cities and towns. County Manager Zinser explained that it is a conservative figure in the event the "bubble bursts". B.C. Member Ed Karytko replied that he spoke to the tax assessor in his town and he feels the housing market will continue to be busy and he feels no one believes this is going away soon. He added if we increase those two (deeds revenue) areas, the rest of the budget is a "piece of cake".

County Manager Zinser replied that based on what he is hearing and reading, he does not believe the housing market will continue to be as robust as it is forever and that he feels inflation is creeping up.

Mr. Zinser stated that he actually has to bring to the Committee's attention that the American Rescue Plan funding information was received earlier in the week and it does not allow for funding the budget for the loss in deeds funding so he does feel that the revenue line can be increased by \$150,000. There isn't any other revenue line that the County Manager feels safe in increasing. Ed Karytko replied that we will just have to see where the rest of the budget review goes then.

Chair Jo-Ann Putnam asked the County Manager if there are any other realizations of gains from the ARP funding. The County Manager responded no, except for the jail funding.

**3. Review and discussion of the following FY'2022 budgets:**

a. Emergency Management Agency- County Manager Zinser gave an overview of this budget stating it shows an increase of 6.53%. This increase, like in other department budgets, is a result of wages and benefits. Also, the deputy director's position is now in the general fund and no longer dependent upon grant monies. Also, there is a new position request for EMA that is not in this budget but contained in the "new request" portion.

EMA Director Art Cleaves addressed the Budget Committee and added that the other increase to his budget is in the phone lines partly due to the pandemic and the increase in employees. Over one-half of this expense will come back in Federal grant reimbursements. He continued that EMA receives many

grants, among them are: EMA Performance Grant-\$250,000, Homeland Security Grant-\$155,000, Seabrook Grant-\$16,000, LEPC grant-\$20,000 and a \$23,000 training grant. Director Cleaves continued that to date, York County has received \$1.25 million in reimbursements due to COVID and probably another \$500,000 will be coming for the Vaccination Center. We also were successful in obtaining \$400,000 in supplemental funding that we will be using to create a collaboration center in our current building. This collaboration center will be used to work in conjunction with other agencies, including the CDC, during disasters. There is also a "soft match" of \$80,000 that comes back to the county. We assist all of your towns, continued EMA Director Art Cleaves, with getting your storm and disaster reimbursements from the Federal Government. During the last disaster, we were able to recoup over \$10 million for York County cities and towns.

B.C. Member, Ed Karytko asked Art Cleaves to explain what the new position is. Director Cleaves explained that his department is extremely "light" on personnel. This has certainly been highlighted during the pandemic as his employees have been working more than 60 hours a week and have been for over a year now. Cumberland County has 9 employees and York County EMA has 6. We cover more area than they do.

County Manager Zinser realized that the revenue line can be increased to reflect the 50% funding reimbursement from EMPG.

B.C. Chairperson Jo-Ann Putnam asked that the County Manager recalculate the budget to reflect the changes and distribute the updated budget to the members of the budget committee.

Director Cleaves added that they may be able to reduce some of the phone line increase in next year's budget as they have had to purchase more phones and purchased i-pads for the Vaccination Center.

County Manager Zinser interjected that there may not be a lot of savings realized as we did have to increase our bandwidth as most meetings are conducted virtually.

Budget Committee Chairperson Jo-Ann Putnam announced that the Committee will vote on the budgets at the end of the review unless any member(s) object. There were no objections.

b. Sheriff's Office- Sheriff King stated that both budgets (Sheriff's Office and jail) are relatively flat funded). He introduced Chief Deputy Forbes and Major Mitchell who were also present at the meeting via ZOOM and Captain Bean from the jail.

Sheriff King explained that like other departments, his increases occur in wages and benefits and the telephone line. The Sheriff added that the police contract (FOP) had just been settled. B.C. Member John Bell asked if the county typically renegotiated with the Union on a yearly basis as he thought contracts run for three years. Sheriff King explained that the Union went three years without a contract. Ed Karytko asked if the one year contract will affect how you negotiate with other unions. The County Manager explained that first a three year contract was settled that had expired and the current one expired on June 30, 2020. The Union agreed to a two year contract. He added that we try to have all of our contracts expire at the same time as other unions want what others have when their contract expires.

Sheriff King explained the new court security position request. The State Marshals are at the courthouse to primarily protect the Judges. The County did not close the courthouse during COVID but the State did close the court system for a time. We decided it was important to have an armed presence at the courthouse to assist with entry screening. The employees feel much safer.

Ed Karytko asked the status of where the District Attorney's office will be. County Manager Zinser replied that we do not know yet but we do know we are not going to be in the new courthouse after a two year battle to secure space.

Jail budget- Sheriff King informed all that this budget reflects a 2.28% increase and again, the only increases are in wages and benefits. He continued that the NCEU (jail corrections officers) contract is settled and that we are currently moving forward with the next contract. Sheriff King continued that they were able to reduce some of the cleaning supplies line due to the lack of movement in the jail and also EMA doing some of the cleaning/sanitizing. The inmate medical contract increased by 3%. Our plumbing repairs line increased by 14%, explained the Sheriff and he added that they do not have a system to grind things up. The \$567,690 ARP funding will make up the funding gap as explained at the first meeting.

Sheriff King added that he would like to give a "shout out" to Police Chiefs Putnam and Lajoie who are both on the budget committee as well as all other York County Police Chiefs for stepping up to the plate to keep people out of jail. All departments and the D.A. worked together to reduce the number of people being put into the jail during the pandemic.

County Manager Zinser added that they will be going out to bid for the medical contract soon and that although the jail budget shows a 3% increase, he is hearing from other counties of higher increases.

B.C. Chairperson Jo-Ann Putnam inquired as to the overage of \$30,000 in the legal expense line of the jail budget. County Manager Zinser responded that they hope to have issues resolved by next year and this is largely due to the COVID situation.

B.C. Member Dave Durrell asked the Sheriff if he feels there will be an uptick in sentencing in the coming year. The Sheriff explained that he had put an intake modification plan in place so that people arrested for minor offenses were not brought to the jail. He will be lifting some of his modifications so therefore, he does see an uptick as it will be back to business as usual.

Captain Dan Bean agreed but stated the D.A.'s office is doing a great job in delaying the process of directing people to jail.

#### **4. Other matters (if needed)-**

##### **a. Next department budgets to review before the Committee-**

Facilities - Facilities Manager, Rick deRochemont, was available and since time permitted he presented his budget to the Committee. County Manager Zinser informed all that this budget's primary increases are wages and some contractual increases that bring the increase up 4.85%.

Facilities Manager, Rick deRochemont explained that the HVAC contracts are higher than last year. He added that the water district had a rate increase and also, there were water leaks at the courthouse. The Facilities Manager told all that the courthouse does have a geothermal heating system. B. C. member Ed Karytko asked the age of the system. Mr. deRochemont replied that it is about 15 or 16 years old. Mr. Karytko stated that it will most likely be needing repairs soon. B.C. member Chairperson Jo-Ann Putnam asked why the phone budget line is over budget (in the ytd reports). Facilities Manager, Rick DeRochemont explained that a portion of his phone bill has been reallocated so there will be a decrease.

Probate- Register of Probate, Carol Lovejoy and Casey Hartford, Deputy Register of Probate, were also available to present their budget. County Manager Zinser explained there is a \$42,000 increase in wages that include a \$10,000 increase request for the Judge's wages. Register Lovejoy explained that the Probate Judge is now working three full days per week. She continued that their case load has exploded. Adding to that are the new guidelines in Title 18C. B.C. Member Ed Karytko questioned the \$10,000 increase as he sees the budget line for elected official wages is increased higher. The County Manager explained that line includes all elected Probate Officials.

Register of Probate Carol Lovejoy explained that on top of the Judge holding court cases three days per week, he must also write lengthy Findings of Facts and Opinions in a timely manner. Register of Probate Lovejoy continued that the professional services line will also be increasing if a proposed Bill is passed that requires any guardianship case involving an adult be appointed an attorney.

B.C. Member Ed Karytko asked if Register Lovejoy knew the logic behind the more court appointed counsel requirement. Register Lovejoy responded that it is driven by the Legal Services for the Elderly.

Deputy Register of Probate Casey Hartford added that there is definitely a higher case load than last year.

Commissioners budget- B.C. Member Ed Karytko asked who determines the Commissioners' rate increase? County Manager Zinser explained that he inputs the same amount into the budget that other workers receive.

Administration- The County Manager explained again, the increase is in wages. B.C. Member Ed Karytko asked why is there a decrease in department head wages to which the County Manager replied there is a new Finance Director who is being paid at a lower rate than the prior one.

Treasurer- County Manager Zinser explained that is an elected position that we do not have any control over.

Communications- County Manager Zinser stated that this is a contract and we do have in the budget, monies for repairs and maintenance. B.C Member Ed Karytko asked if the county previously had it's own dispatch center. The County Manager replied that it did but it was discontinued back in 2009 or 2010. Mr. Karytko asked County Manager Zinser if he was happy with contracting it out or would he prefer the dispatch center be brought back to York County. County Manager Zinser stated that monetarily, he would not recommend bringing it back even though it makes much more sense to run the dispatch through county government. He went on to state that the County may use some of the American Rescue Funds to put in a back up dispatch center as there currently is not one.

Commissioner Ring explained that when York County Government had a dispatch center, the budget was at \$1.2 million. The county dispatch center took care of the rural towns and their fire and rescue calls for some of them.

Juvenile Fire Prevention will be discussed at next week's meeting.

Retirement- The County Manager explained that there is Maine State Retirement and ICMA 457 retirement plans offered to employees. B.C. Member Jo-Ann Putnam asked if the County did matching contributions to which the County Manager replied, yes.

Medical/Dental- The County Manager explained that some additional funds were put into these budgets due to contract negotiations. The last four years there were static contributions so we anticipate an increase in future negotiations this year.

Debt service- County Manager Zinser explained that this budget is down a little over half a million dollars and that it will decrease more next year and maybe even be entirely gone. He would have to verify but he knows there is either one or two more payments left on this bond.

B.C. Member Ed Karytko asked what the County Manager attributed to the decrease. The County Manager replied that these were 20 year jail bonds and that the County does not anticipate taking on additional debt and has been setting aside money for our capital needs. For example, the bell tower at the courthouse will need some work done to it.

Contingency Fund-The County Manager explained that this line is not funded this year as last year the reservation of the fund balance was created under a contingency fund as a requirement of State law.

b. Next meeting date- May 19, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. The District Attorney, Deeds, Layman Way Recovery Center and Juvenile Fire Prevention budgets will be presented to the Committee

c. Any other matters- B.C. Chairperson Jo-Ann Putnam asked the Committee if any of them had any further questions or requested any other information. B.C. Member Marc Lessard said, "the budget came in strong opening day." He is happy with the budget, he stated.

B.C. Member Dave Durrell informed all that he will be joining the meeting a bit late next week.

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**6. ADJOURN-** B.C. Member Ed Karytko motioned to adjourn. Marc Lessard seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.