

York County Budget Committee Minutes for May 19, 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

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

a. Approval of May 12, 2021 minutes

B.C. Member Mike Cote motioned to approve the minutes of the May 12th meeting. B.C. member David Durrell seconded the motion. Roll call vote- approved by all with the exception of Dana Lajoie who was not present at meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT(S) None

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

a. Juvenile Fire Prevention- EMA Director Cleaves gave an overview of this program. He informed all that the program is run by Matt Leach and Molly Cunningham. They receive referrals from area fire departments and also go into schools. They have to date this year worked with 20 individuals. Matt Leach addressed the Committee and explained that this program is geared towards children who show an interest in or have started a fire. 80% of children in this program will not light another fire. He continued that they work with Oxford and Cumberland counties. Matt added that he and Molly also work with the Red Cross to install smoke detectors in the homes of these children as 50% do not have fire alarms/smoke detectors in their homes.

b. Deeds- County Manager Zinser informed all that the Deeds budget reflects a 3.96% increase due to wages, postage and phones. Register of Deeds, Nancy Hammond informed the Committee that she had added a staff member from one of two open positions. She added that she had reconfigured her office to accommodate COVID issues and that her department is working on digitization of records. Register Hammond continued that the deeds office currently only receives recordings electronically or via a drop off or through the mail. That is one of the reasons her postage line has increased, she explained. Register of Deeds Nancy Hammond explained that previously in her first two years as York County Register of Deeds she had hand-delivered tax liens and discharges to the towns to put a "name to her face".

B.C. Member Ed Karytko commented that it seemed like in the ytd Financial reports through the end of April, that Deeds revenues are all up half a million dollars and this surprises him.

c. District Attorney- County Manager Zinser informed all that the District Attorney's budget shows an increase of a little over \$40,000.00. D.A. Kathryn Slattery told the Committee that the court system shut down on March 13, 2020. In-custody Hearings only occurred. She added that they are still not back to live court Hearings. D.A. Slattery commended her staff and stated that they adapted to remote Hearings. Alfred still has 559 cases awaiting trial and over 1,000 awaiting arraignment. The District Attorney informed all that they will be starting files again in June and moving towards more normalcy.

B.C. Chairperson Jo-Ann Putnam commented that in the year- to- date financial reports, the D.A. budget was over budget in some lines. She asked D.A. Slattery if she needed more money or if this was due to

COVID? D.A. Slattery responded that this (overage) was definitely due to COVID. She added that she was under budget in other lines. County Manager Zinser added that the District Attorney's office purchased a new copier and the other overage is in overtime. He commented that the County hopes to be reimbursed for COVID-related overtime.

B.C. Member Ed Karytko asked D.A. Slattery if when the court system is moved to Biddeford, did she expect to have to increase her budget? The County Manager answered and stated, yes, and that it (the increase) could be quite substantial. He continued that the District Attorney has been given 500 square feet in the new courthouse. The County cannot build a new facility for the D.A. as we would have to go to a referendum, stated County Manager Zinser.

d. Layman Way Recovery Center- County Manager Zinser referenced a report given to the Budget Committee that was also circulated to the Commissioners during their budget meetings that included statistics on those who are and have been treated and those who have completed treatment. The County Manager explained that this is a quasi- diversionary program and that the entry criteria was expanded during COVID.

Program Director Megan Gean Gendron addressed the Committee and informed them that Layman Way's third anniversary was on May 7th. She continued that the Center currently has 80 graduates as well as a 55% completion rate that is 10% higher than the national rate.

B.C. Chairperson Jo-Ann Putnam asked if there is a cap on the number of persons that can be in the program at a time? Ms. Gendron replied that they are licensed for 24 beds.

Jo-Ann Putnam asked if this budget had an increase. County Manager Zinser replied that it had an .82% or \$7,800.00 increase.

D.A. Slattery added that Assistant District Attorney Linda Donovan works in conjunction with the Layman Way Treatment Center. She added that she believes the statistics are remarkable and feels strongly that the program is successful.

B.C. Member Alex Orestis asked if there was a need to expand part of the program, what would it be? County Manager Zinser replied there is a need and that is why one of our focuses for use of the American Rescue Plan funds is treatment for substance abuse. He added that there will be a Public Hearing to discuss the use of the funds. We have been having discussions with the Shelter and Maine Housing Authority. Megan Gean-Gendron stated in order to expand we have steps that need to be taken. We would have to work with the State. She continued that COVID did slow down their growth. During COVID, direct referrals (for treatment program) were taken from Police Officers and hospitals. Ms. Gendron continued that detox remains a big barrier to people we serve.

B.C. Member Marc Lessard cautioned everyone that any type of expenditure of these funds needs to be sustainable. Increasing any type of service leads to the question of who will fund it after the Federal funds are gone? They'll have to go into the York County budget to keep it going, advised Marc Lessard.

B.C. Member Alex Orestis asked D.A. Slattery if this program has a direct impact on jail population. D.A. Kathy Slattery stated, yes, and that this was the original goal of the program. Otherwise, the person(s) would be sitting in jail instead of getting the help they need. The cost is less than having them housed in jail and they are getting help.

4. Other matters (if needed)-

a. Committee requests or further questions- Marc Lessard commented that there are a lot of 3% and 4% increases on staffing lines. He stated that he does not see this in the private sector.

B.C. Member Jo-Ann Putnam asked the County Manager if these were step increases. County Manager Zinser replied yes, along with COLA raises and money built in for the next round of contracts.

b. Vote on Budget- County Manager Zinser reminded the Committee that there are changes on the summary page due to the ARP funding being decreased from \$225,000 to \$75,000. The Deeds revenue lines were put back up to last year's numbers. The MEMA revenues were increased by \$238,000.00. These changes result in a .88% cost to the municipalities.

B.C. Member Ed Karytko stated that he has no problems with any of the expenditures but wondered if there should perhaps be a motion made to increase the deeds revenue as it is up over half a million dollars at the end of April. The County has done a great job!

B.C. Chairperson Jo-Ann Putnam asked Register of Deeds, Nancy Hammond if she felt the suggested increase in revenues is attainable. (Register Hammond's internet was not working properly making her unable to answer.)

B.C. Member John Bell responded that he feels this is a reasonable budget and that he is reluctant to tinker with it. He added that he is inclined to stick with what we have.

B.C. Member Marc Lessard asked County Manager Zinser if the revenues are understated, do they go to the fund balance.

County Manager Zinser replied that they do. The recommended fund balance is 20% of our budget and we are not there.

B.C. Member Marc Lessard added that if the revenues come in over budget, the money will go into fund balance to help with the 20% goal.

The County Manager stated that he feels it is an artificial bubble and cannot be maintained. B.C. Member Ed Karytko stated that 60% of the budget comes from the coastal towns where the housing market is very good. But, he added that he understands Marc Lessard's comment and is good.

B.C. Member Marc Lessard motioned to approve the FY'22 York County Budget in the amount of \$21,369,734 and incorporate the two new requests.

B.C. Member John Bell seconded the motion. Vote by roll call is unanimously in favor of motion.

Motion passes.

c. Set Public Hearing Date and time- The Budget Committee agrees to hold the Public Hearing via ZOOM on June 2, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

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

Vote unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.