

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MONROE COUNTY, ILLINOIS SEPTEMBER 19, 2018
BUDGET HEARINGS – DAY #1

The meeting of the County Commissioners of Monroe County, Illinois (Budget Hearings – Day #1) was called to order at 1:00 p.m. Chairman Robert Elmore, Commissioner Delbert Wittenauer, and Commissioner Vicki Koerber were present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Elmore declared there was a quorum present and the meeting was ready for business.

Others present included, Annmarie Marcuson, County Clerk Dennis Knobloch, and Treasurer Kevin Koenigstein. Also present were Jonathan McLean and Jason Jones.

There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order by Chairman Elmore.

(The EMA budget request was presented to the County Board of Monday, September 17, 2018 at their regular County Board meeting. Information from that request follows---

Ryan Weber presented the budget request for the Emergency Services Department. Mr. Weber said he had included 3% salary increases for the personnel in the office. He said other than that, most of the budget line items remain the same. Mr. Weber said he would still like to trade one of the department cars for a truck that is capable of pulling some of the EMA trailers and the sandbag machine. He said there is some leftover funds from this budget year, and the department will be receiving another \$12,000 from the State of Illinois from the 2017 grant pool. Mr. Weber said he was also planning to talk with John Wagner to see if he had any excess funding at the health Department that could help with the purchase of a new vehicle. Sheriff Rohlfing said they were just given a vehicle from St. Clair County, but it is a gas guzzler, so he didn't suggest using it as a daily driver. Commissioner Wittenauer said for the few times a vehicle is needed to move these trailers, he thought it might make more sense to make arrangements to lease a vehicle for a short period of time that could be used in case of emergency. Commissioner Koerber asked if a used vehicle couldn't be acquired for this, or maybe even consider the use of Highway Department rucks. Commissioner Wittenauer asked why you couldn't compile a list of truck owners willing to help out with moving trailers in case of an emergency. Mr. Weber said he would research all of the options and then report back to the Board.

Mr. Weber said there has been communication with Jefferson County, Missouri about installing equipment on a tower there to help with first responder communications in the Monroe County river bottom area where there are always problems with radio communication. He said the initial cost to install the equipment would be \$55,000 plus \$300 per month in maintenance and rental fees. There was also discussion of replacing some radios. Sheriff Rohlfing said the radios currently being used by the Sheriff's Department are nine years old, and some of them have failed. He said it is nearing the time when parts will no longer be available, and that model of radio will not be supported. The radio committee has looked at purchasing new radios as part of a bulk purchase with several other governmental units, at a cost of \$2,000 each. Some old radios could be passed on to the local fire department for limited local use. Sheriff Rohlfing said he was planning to replace the radios over a period of years when new vehicles are purchased, rather than buying them all at one time.)

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Judge Dennis Doyle and Probation Officer Courtney Schweickhardt came to the meeting to discuss their department budgets. Judge Doyle said most of the line items will remain the same for the upcoming budget. He provided the Board with a letter from the St. Clair County Probation Office detailing the amount of funds required to provide probation services in Monroe County during the next fiscal year. Judge Doyle also provided documentation from the Public Defender, Art Morris, requesting an increase in salary commensurate with what is being paid in surrounding Counties of the same size. The Public Defender increase included about \$8,000 in salary and \$1,000 in expenses, while the Probation Officer increase was about \$7,500. Judge Doyle said the caseload for both of these offices has continued to increase in recent years. Mr. Koenigstein said the County Board sets the salary for the Public Defender, and the amount of increase in the Probation budget is established by the St. Clair County Probation office. Mr. Koenigstein also said that the State reimburses the County for 50% of the Public Defender's salary. Mr. Koenigstein asked if there would be any revision in the juror fees, and Judge Doyle said he didn't anticipate any changes. The total budget reflected an increase of 7.5%. Mr. Koenigstein said you also have to consider that the Court fees have been increased providing more revenue to the County, but he said the Circuit Clerk would have to provide those details.

Judge Doyle and Courtney Schweickhardt left the meeting.

State's Attorney Chris Hitzemann came to the meeting to present the budget request for his office. He said as the county continues to grow, and as the municipalities in the County continue to grow as well, the work in the State's Attorney's office also continues to increase. Mr. Hitzemann said his salary is set by state statute, and Mr. Koenigstein said that 85% of that salary is reimbursed to the County by the State.

Mr. Hitzemann said someone from his office has to go to St. Clair County to the Child Advocacy Office for some of the juvenile cases. For that reason he is requesting an increase in the mileage reimbursement for the office.

Mr. Hitzemann said one of his major concerns is that there is an outside chance that the Chris Coleman case may have to be retried. The first time the case was tried in Monroe County, it fell under the proper death penalty guidelines to qualify for state reimbursement of the majority of the trial expense. That will not be the case if there is a retrial, and Monroe County could be on the hook for a considerable amount of expense. Mr. Hitzemann said the estimated expense of the first trial was \$500,000, and if the case has to be retried, he said the expense could be considerably higher than that. He said to further complicate the issue, the county may have to also provide Public Defender services if Coleman is unable to fund his own defense.

Mr. Hitzemann said he calculated what the State's Attorney's office is costing per citizen in Monroe County and some of the surrounding Counties.

Monroe County – annual cost per citizen - \$9.86
Randolph County – annual cost per citizen - \$12.18
Clinton County – annual cost per citizen - \$13.04
Perry County – annual cost per citizen - \$14.91
Washington County – annual cost per citizen - \$22.45

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Mr. Hitzemann said in order to keep up with the office workload he would like to add another Assistant State’s Attorney at a cost of \$65,000 and a part-time investigator at a cost of \$20,000. Commissioner Koerber asked if the additional personnel in the State’s Attorney’s office could assist the County with labor negotiations and human resource legalities. Mr. Hitzemann said that is a possibility. Commissioner Wittenauer said he felt we need to be careful, because labor law is a specialty, and when we need it, we need someone who is familiar with the details of those laws. The total budget request for the State’s Attorney was \$432,034 as compared to the budget last year of \$336,316 for an increase of about 28%.

Mr. Hitzemann left the meeting.

Chris Howell came to the meeting to present the budget request for the Weed Eradication Department. Mr. Howell said there was no change from the prior year budget.

Mr. Howell left the meeting.

Aaron Metzger came to the meeting to present the Highway Department budget. Mr. Metzger said he has three funds that are direct tax levy items, and those are as follows – County Highway Fund, Matching Tax Fund and Bridge Fund. Comparisons of those funds are as follows:

County Highway Fund – 2018 Tax Levy - \$776,000
2019 Tax Levy - \$782,000
Matching Tax Fund – 2018 Tax Levy - \$310,000
2019 Tax Levy - \$328,000
Bridge Fund – 2018 Tax Levy - \$78,000
2019 Tax Levy – \$90,000

Mr. Metzger said his beginning balances for the coming year will be negative, because there will be no income from the real estate tax collection. He said the wage increase for the union employees in his department will be 3% for the coming year. Mr. Metzger said the County has not had an Assistant Engineer since he moved into Ron Polka’s position when Polka retired. He said he would like to add that position back into the Highway Department budget. Mr. Metzger said the addition of the Assistant Engineer position would save some of the dollars being spent on hiring outside engineering firms for some of the Highway Department projects. He said he would like to add that position by the first of the 2019 calendar year.

Mr. Metzger detailed his proposed construction budget through 2020 with the total expenditures a little more than \$3 million. The Road District CST (County Sales Tax) program summary was discussed. Mr. Metzger said previously the County Board made \$110,000 available for that program, and the Road Districts are now requesting \$115,000 to be appropriated to that fund for the coming fiscal year. He also presented his equipment “wish list” for the years 2019 through 2022.

Mr. Metzger left the meeting.

Sheriff Neal Rohlffing came to the meeting to present the Sheriff’s Department budget. He explained that the calls for service at the Sheriff’s Department continue to increase – from 6,117 in 2014 – to 9,787 in 2015 – to 10,878 in 2016 – to 13,251 in 2017. Sheriff Rohlffing said drugs

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and controlled substance arrests also continue to increase. There has been nearly a 400% increase in traffic stops from 2014 to 2017.

Sheriff Rohlfing said since working with the DEA Task Force, Monroe County has received \$235,442.11 from asset forfeiture, and there is \$2,369,338 in pending distribution, of which Monroe County will receive from 10%-20% of this amount. He said some of the County officers have also become actively involved in investigating thefts and burglaries in the County, and have been successful in solving many of those crimes.

Sheriff Rohlfing said he had no requests for any additional Deputy hires at this time – either full-time or part-time, and no requests for additional Corrections staffing. He said that he needed to ask for additional funds in the part-time Courthouse Security (increasing from \$30,000 to \$40,000). One of the Security staff spends much of his time serving as the County's FOIA officer.

Sheriff Rohlfing said he would like to see the salary of the Director of Building Maintenance Supervisor's (Brian Hooten) salary increased. There is also a request to add a new position – Assistant Director of Building Maintenance – in anticipation of the possible retirement of Brian Hooten. Sheriff Rohlfing said he thinks it would make sense to look for a candidate for this position that has some type of skilled trade, like a plumber, electrician or someone who works in the HVAC field. If necessary, the skills of this person could be used around the County as well as at the Nursing Home. Sheriff Rohlfing recommended 3% raises for all other Maintenance and janitorial personnel, as well as for the Secretaries and Records Clerks at the Jail.

Sheriff Rohlfing said he would be adding two new vehicles as is done every year. The annual service contract expense increased slightly because of the maintenance on the radio system. He went through a detailed list of the radio maintenance expenses that had been prepared by Paul Tipton. There was also discussion of adding a new radio site in Jefferson County, Mo. to help with the communication problems in the river bottom area of Monroe County. The request for uniform allowance was raised slightly to accommodate several new deputies that will be joining the department.

Sheriff Rohlfing included a substantial increase in Capital Expenditures for the purchase of new radios. The radios currently being used are now nine years old, and several of them have failed. Motorola now has a discount program available, and the radios will range in price from \$2,000 each to \$3,000 each depending on the model. He said the old radios would be given to the local Fire Department for communication within their own Departments.

Sheriff Rohlfing said the Jail is now 30 years old, and some improvements will be necessary so the building continues to function properly. The generator was replaced in 2018, and that was paid for by the 9-1-1 Board. As calls continue to increase, he said more Deputies will be needed. The dispatch area will need to be expanded and improved. The Jail population continues to increase, and plans may need to be made to add on to the Jail, or build a totally new facility.

The total increase in the Sheriff's Department budget request is approximately 6%.

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Sheriff Rohlfling presented the budget request for the Animal Control Department, and it reflected no major changes from the prior budget year, except for pay increases for the personnel.

Brian Hooten presented the budget request for the Maintenance Department/Courthouse and Jail. Mr. Hooten said due to changes that were made in the irrigation system and new water meter, the County has saved a significant amount in sewer fees. He said CTS will be coming in to analyze the changes that were made to the County utility and energy systems. The total budget request is \$521,600 compared to \$465,100 last year, reflecting an increase of 12%. There was discussion regarding the required remediation for the generator fuel tank at the jail, and Mr. Hooten said he would like to see it filled with concrete at a cost of about \$12,000. Mr. Hooten said the relief air handler in the lower level of the Courthouse needs to have a louver replacement – the louvers stay open, and let cold air in during the Winter, at a cost of \$8,950. Also included on Mr. Hooten's list was the resealing of the Annex Parking lot at a cost of \$5,500. Mr. Hooten also detailed the list of service contracts for equipment in the County buildings. There was also discussion of roof replacement at the Annex Building, along with the necessary upgrades and improvements to the building interior. Another issue discussed was possible problems with the Annex Building floor. Mr. Hooten said there was not a solid base when that building was constructed.

Mr. Hooten said he wanted to discuss a possible salary increase for himself. He said in previous years Dan Kelley always requested a minimum amount of salary increase for Mr. Hooten each year. Mr. Hooten said he currently is making \$56,000, and the median salary for someone in his position is \$69,600 for someone without a degree and \$77,576 for someone with a degree. Mr. Hooten said he is single, and has bills, and unless he receives a wage increase, he won't be able to retire. He said he would like to have his salary increased to \$67,000, so he can afford the cost of the health insurance. Mr. Hooten said raising his salary would also help to get a qualified candidate once he decides to retire.

Bob Hill came to the meeting as an observer.

Sheriff Rohlfling and Brian Hooten left the meeting.

Carla Heise came to the meeting to present the budget request for the Ambulance Service. Most of the budget line items were the same as the previous year. One significant budget increase is in the uniform line item, because all of the uniforms will have to be replaced with full protective gear (replacing coats and pants), and to provide active shooter protective gear for the service members. She said training is currently underway, and ambulance personnel will probably be required to go into active shooter situations with the police, so aid can be quickly provided to any shooting victims. This accounts for an increase in uniform expense from \$2,500 to \$28,500. Ms. Heise said she will also be looking for possible grants for this new gear. The Capital Project budget was increased from \$70,000 to \$120,000 for consideration of acquiring a new Ambulance with full power stretcher. Due to some problems with the recent remount project, a new Ambulance is being researched. Money is being placed in contingency to help with the cost of replacing the radio equipment. Mr. Koenigstein said they could be paid by the Treasurer's internal revolving loan fund if necessary. Commissioner Koerber said she would like Ms. Heise to talk with John Wagner to see if the Health Department could help with any of the Ambulance Service budget necessities.

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Ms. Heise left the meeting.

Carl Wuertz came to the meeting to discuss the proposed budget for the Assessor's office. Mr. Wuertz said his office budget will be the same as last year. There was discussion regarding the new hires for his office. Ms. Marcuson said two very good candidates have emerged from the interviews, and Mr. Wuertz would like to hire both of them as full-time employees for his office. He said he has enough work to keep both of them busy. Commissioner Koerber said she was not changing her stance on this issue – it is okay to replace the employee who moved to the County Clerk's office, and then a temporary employee can be hired to help with getting the assessments out by March 1. Commissioner Wittenauer said that was agreed upon by the County Board, and he also wanted to stick to the original deal.

Mr. Wuertz left the meeting.

Amy Roever came to the meeting to discuss the budget for the Board of Review office. The budget for the office items is the same as the past year. Ms. Marcuson said the Board of Review member payment needs to be discussed. Ms. Roever said the Board members were not happy with the way the per diems were being handled, since previously they were being paid a per diem for morning work and a per diem for afternoon work, at \$70 per diem. Carl Wuertz decided to change that system, and he only approved one per diem per day, no matter how many hours they worked. Chairman Elmore asked how much time was spent by the Board of Review. Ms. Roever said they spent the equivalent of three and one-half days over a two-week period, and they reviewed over 500 cases. There was also discussion regarding the problem with getting one of the Board of Review members to come to the meetings. Commissioner Koerber said she felt that Board member should be replaced, but it's hard to find people willing to serve. Commissioner Wittenauer said that third member had made plans to have time off work in the spring when the Board of Review normally meets, but now with the assessments being this late, he is unable to take the time off work, so it wasn't his fault that he couldn't attend the Board of Review session. Commissioner Wittenauer said those Board of Review members busted their tails to get those files done in a timely fashion since the assessments were late, and they need to be compensated accordingly – maybe those members should have some input as to how the compensation should be set up. Ms. Roever said she will contact them to see if they can meet with the Commissioners at one of the October meetings. Commissioner Wittenauer said all three of the Board of Review members should be given the opportunity to present their thoughts.

Amy Roever left the meeting.

Mike Fausz came to the meeting to discuss the budgets for the Mapping, Zoning and GIS offices. He said there were no changes in any of those offices. Mr. Koenigstein said Laura Henry's salary is paid out of the GIS budget, and with the recent fee changes in the County Clerk's office, there should be more than enough funding there to pay her salary and office expenses. Mr. Fausz said another big expense coming up will be having new aerial photography done for the County, and that will run about \$40,000. The last time it was done East-West Gateway paid that expense, but Mr. Fausz said he wasn't sure that will be covered this time. Mr. Fausz said building activity has also been up the last two years, so that will account for more income in these various offices.

Mr. Fausz left the meeting.

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Mr. Koenigstein discussed the details of the Planning and Development budget. This included expenses for SWIMPAC, East-West Gateway and Illinois South Tourism. It also includes the salaries for the Zoning Board of Appeals members. He said the County Board is in control of all of these categories. There was also discussion of the membership expense for IACO (Illinois Association of Counties) and NACO (the National Association of Counties).

There being no further business to come before the Board, motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Elmore, with a second by Commissioner Wittenauer. All voting Aye, none Nay and none Absent. Motion carried.