



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION MINUTES

Wednesday, October 18, 2023, 2:00 P.M.

Willowbank Office Building
420 Holmes Street, Room 146
Bellefonte, PA 16823

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I. CALL TO ORDER

The public work session of the Centre County Board of Commissioners was convened at 2:01 PM by Chair of the Board Mark Higgins.

In attendance were Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Amber Concepcion, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Administrator John Franek Jr. and Executive Office Supervisor Erin Good.

County personnel present included Richard Killian, Human Services Administrator Julia Sprinkle, President Judge Grine, Kendra Miknis, Ryan Smeltzer, Don Gampe and Human Resources Director Kristen Simkins.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments received from the public.

III. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

IV. 2024 COUNTY BUDGET

A. Court Administration

Richard Killian stated the Court budget will be broke down between the various departments: Domestic Relations, Probation, Court Administration and MDJ Offices will all be covered and discussed.

President Judge Grine stated the Courts expect to get \$181,839 back from the State. Guardianship appointment percentages are coming through the ROW Office. Hourly appointments through conflict attorneys and the Courts are working with Children & Youth Services on getting percentage of funds back for those appointments. The Court appointments with \$100/hour is saving funds as well. Kendra Miknis stated the Courts have received \$6,750 back from DOC inmates that are represented by the Public Defender's office.

Don Gampe the Domestic Relations Director stated the budget is about the same as previous budgets adopted in past years. Don stated he has been fully staffed for a year, which has decreased expenses for firearm training and other various training for new employees. They are well above the federal reimbursement numbers and will maximize reimbursement. Their lowest was 87.88 percent for collection of back child support. The increase in the budget was in the EP usage and IT infrastructure

and the indirect costs going up. Commissioner Higgins commented on that Domestic Relations is a department that receives Federal funding as well, through the Department of Welfare.

Don Gampe was excused from the meeting.

Ryan Smeltzer the Probation Director gave an overview of his 2024 budget. He stated his expenditures were decreased from 2023. Purchased client services were increased by \$25,000, which is where electronic monitors are funded. There are several bullet proof ballistic vests that needed replacement in 2024. Training costs have increased, mainly due to a new training for employees for a newly purchased firearm in the department. The Juvenile probation budget was increased due to the rising cost of placement facilities. Ryan stated his department is trying to operate on digital files to downsize on the amount of paperwork. Ryan's staff are all working as a team to help eliminate paper copies of documents and they are almost halfway done with the digitizing project, which will help open more office space and easier access to all files digitally.

President Judge Grine stated Act 77 funds are in a separate account within the Probation Department and can be used for a variety of projects for the Department. President Judge Grine stated the funds could qualify for office upgrades to the Probation Department office, which is greatly needed.

Ryan stated the only revenue source that can be predicted is the supervision fees, which is normally \$500,000. The other revenue sources are grants.

Ryan is requesting to increase two current 50/50 probation officer positions within his department, who are responsible for carrying adult and juvenile caseloads. Ryan stated they are one of the hardest positions within his department and must attend two different academies for their positions. Ryan is requesting both of those positions to be categorized as a PO2, which would be an increase in pay scale from 8 to 10. Ryan stated their department is still down one Juvenile Probation Officer.

Ryan Smeltzer was excused from the meeting.

President Judge Grine stated the MDJ Offices' budgets look good and not much has changed for 2024. It was decided that the Courts will not be filing the open position at Judge Lachman's office and cross training between the current three employees has been going well.

Kendra Miknis stated Court Administration is requesting for a reclassification for one of the current five court reporters, and they would like to be reclassify one of the reporters to a senior court reporter to oversee the other four reporters as well as be responsible for creating the schedule. Kendra is proposing the senior court reporter would move from a 10 to 11 pay scale. President Judge Grine stated the schedule for the court reporters can be very challenging to create at times and the reports are due within a specified time frame.

Commissioner Dershem was excused from the meeting.

Kendra stated court appointments, psych evals, custody evals and interpreters are all categorized under contracted professionals. It is mandated that interpreters are provided, and the Courts do receive funds back for the interpreter services.

President Judge Grine stated the guardian ad litem has been essential in the Courts to ensure children are represented and safe. President Judge Grine stated the relationship the Courts have with the Children & Youth Services Department also aids in protecting children and keeping them safe.

Commissioner Higgins asked about increasing the fees where needed for various departments.

Kendra stated under professional dues, the court reporters are mandated for various trainings. Kendra stated under unrestricted grants, this is generally the contract with CACJ which has a \$2,000 increase for drug testing. There is an increase in equipment line items, mainly due to microphone replacements and court recorders.

Kendra asked what the Courts should include in the capital budget versus what facilities should include in the general capital budget. Administrator John Franek Jr. stated the various capital projects will be determined by the different funding sources. Commissioner Higgins questioned about the behavioral health courts costs and Kendra stated she will check on the behavioral health court costs and follow up with John and Richard.

- V. DISCUSSION ITEMS – UPDATES
- VI. BUDGET MEETING SCHEDULE
- VII. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Concepcion, seconded by Commissioner Higgins, the Board voted unanimously adjourn the meeting at 3:20 PM.

ATTEST: _____

John Franek Jr.

Administrator