

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2014

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF DODGE)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2014-22 C.O.W.

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole November 25, 2014, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 4:30 p.m. CST. Chair Rodney Peterson opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m. CST.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present:	John Allen	District #1
	Tim Tjosaas	District #2
	Rodney Peterson	District #3
	David Erickson	District #4
	Steven Gray	District #5
Members absent:	None	
Also present:	Jim Elmquist	County Administrator
	Becky Lubahn	Deputy Clerk
	Scott Rose	Investigator

County Administrator Jim Elmquist presented for the Board's consideration the 2015 elected officials salary requests.

2015 Elected
Officials Salaries
Discussion

Per Minnesota State Statute 388.18, the County Board is required to work with each of the elected officials to establish salaries for the upcoming year. During this session, the Board reviews each elected official's request for an increase prior to setting the budget in December. Below are the 2014 elected officials salaries:

Sheriff:	\$91,234
Attorney (1/2 Time):	\$45,206
County Board:	\$18,842
County Board Chair:	\$19,389

Included in the Board packet were the Sheriff and County Attorney's salary requests. Mr. Elmquist noted no action is required at this meeting however, salaries for a future resolution for Board approval should be determined.

Incoming Sheriff Scott Rose met with the Board to discuss his salary request for 2015.

2015 Sheriff Salary
Discussion

Mr. Rose informed the Board the past two incoming Sheriff's (Jensen and Trihey) started their first year salary at the same salary the preceding Sheriff ended at. With that understanding, Mr. Rose is requesting his 2015 salary be set at \$91,234.

Commissioner Erickson asked Mr. Rose to explain why he felt he should start at the salary Sheriff Jensen ended at.

Mr. Rose stated past practice has been to start the incoming Sheriff's salary where the previous Sheriff's salary ended. Mr. Rose reported that as the Sheriff of Dodge County there are lots of duties he is required to perform, in addition he felt there will be more responsibilities for him to deal with in the coming years than Sheriff Jensen has had to deal with in his 4-year term as Sheriff. Mr. Rose indicated there are budgeting and staffing issues he will need to deal as well as other changes which will affect Dodge County and the Dodge County Sheriff's Office, therefore he feels it is fair to start at the requested salary. Mr. Rose informed the Board there are bridges he will have to mend within his office.

2015 Sheriff Salary Discussion - Continued

Commissioner Gray wanted to know if Mr. Rose plans to hire a Chief Deputy.

Mr. Rose stated that he intends to hire a Chief Deputy.

Commissioner Gray wanted to know if the incoming Sheriff will be hiring a Secretary.

Mr. Rose reported he has no plans to hire a Secretary at this time. Mr. Rose discussed Sheriff's Office staffing needs with the Board.

County Attorney Paul Kiltinen informed the Board his 2015 salary request is \$46,561.94. Mr. Kiltinen reported this is approximately a 3% increase from last year. Mr. Kiltinen commented everything is working well in his office.

2015 County Attorney Salary Discussion

Commissioner Gray pointed out Dodge County is the only county with a part-time County Attorney in southeast Minnesota.

Mr. Kiltinen indicated that while he likes to keep government small and simple, he sees the County Attorney position going full-time in the future and noted there is a benefit to having a full-time County Attorney. Mr. Kiltinen stated the complexion of the county is changing; a full-time County Attorney will be needed.

Commissioner Erickson asked that Mr. Kiltinen inform the Board when he gets to the point where he feels the county would be better served by having a full-time County Attorney.

Mr. Kiltinen stated that he will inform the Board when a full-time County Attorney is needed and noted the need for a full-time position will be in the near future.

Commissioner Peterson commented the county will be hard pressed to find someone that would want to work part-time.

The County Attorney informed the Board he will start looking at the need for a full-time County Attorney in 2016 when the county has more space to work with, the construction projects are complete and the county can consider authorizing someone full-time.

County Board salaries for 2015 were discussed.

2015 County Board Salaries Discussion

The County Administrator informed the Board Dodge County Commissioner salaries are some of the lowest in southeast Minnesota and this does become an issue with negotiations when we try to make a significant salary adjustment to correct it. Mr. Elmquist noted this low pay is not even in the median for counties in southeast Minnesota.

Commissioner Peterson stated he recommended a 10% increase last year and is recommending a 10% increase this year.

Commissioner Gray commented the \$20,000 range for salary would be good. Mr. Gray indicated that with a low salary, there may be low expectations for the Board.

Commissioner Allen stated he was not in favor of raising the Commissioner's salaries; he felt the County Board has already placed a burden on the county with funding the building projects.

Discussion took place on the fact that the Dodge County Board's salary continues to be low in comparison to other counties. Also discussed was how citizens view increases in County Board salaries.

Commissioner Erickson commented it is hard to raise the Board's salary.

Commissioner Tjosaas indicated he was ok with a 1% or 2% systematic increase each year.

Commissioner Erickson pointed out the County Board salary increases have typically gone along with staff increases each year.

It was Commissioner Gray's opinion that 3% is a reasonable number for an increase in salary.

No consensus was reached on the Board's salary for 2015 but Mr. Elmquist did indicate elected officials salaries don't have step increase like most staff.

Mr. Elmquist discussed with the Board the 2015 budget.

2015 Budget Discussion

Included in the packet was a copy of an updated 2015 budget. The County Administrator reported the proposed budget has been reduced from the 12.5% preliminary levy amount to 10.5% based on three factors: bond premium, unused discount, and fund balance amounts within debt service. As the Finance Director has stated to Mr. Elmquist, the bond premium and unused discount dollars from the bond sale totaling \$191,725 can be used for one purpose - to pay down the cost of the bond. The question for the Board is when the money is to be utilized; it can be used in the first year or over multiple years. The Finance Director has taken half the amount and allocated it for a 2015 payment and would like to utilize the other half for 2016. The reason for multiple years versus a single year is to reduce the impact on levy by having to make up for the \$191,725 payment from 2015 when budgeting in 2016.

The Finance Director is also requesting utilization of a portion of fund balance in the debt fund that has accrued over the years due to levying 105% of the debt levy as required in previous bonds and for refinance money that occurred with the Annex bonds several years ago. Ms. Kramer felt the time may be appropriate to utilize those debt levy fund balance dollars for this purpose. This would still leave \$24,000 in the debt service fund balance in the case there were any significant tax delinquencies in 2015.

2015 Budget Discussion - Continued

Items that have also been a part of previous budget discussions that were included in the preliminary levy resolution:

- Sheriff's (5) Vehicles Capital - \$195,000
- Custodial Positions - \$90,129
- Human Services added levy - \$96,546
- Dispatch Consoles - \$280,000
- Buffer Land - \$63,000

The chart below shows the proposed 2015 levy with a 5%, 9% or 10% increase over the 2014 levy:

2014 Levy:	\$11,034,775
5%:	\$11,586,513
9%:	\$12,027,904
10%	\$12,138,252

The County Administrator reminded the Board that 2% has come off the top of the preliminary budget to arrive at a proposed 10.5% levy.

The Finance Director discussed with the Board reserve accounts.

Commissioner Allen commented he thought the county was going to hold onto the \$192,000 and see how the building project goes.

Ms. Kramer reminded the Board that the \$192,000 can only be used for debt service.

Commissioner Erickson commented he would like to replace three squad cars in 2015, not five as requested.

Commissioner Allen informed the Board he struggles with the Sheriff and Chief Deputy driving fully outfitted patrol cars.

Commissioner Erickson reported he would like to see the Sheriff's Office go back to providing unmarked vehicles for these individuals.

Further discussion took place on how much needs to be cut from the budget and the percentages associated with those cuts. It was clarified that for every \$120,000 cut, it equaled a reduction of 1% in the proposed levy.

Commission Peterson stated he doesn't want to tell departments how to spend their money, he preferred giving them a specific amount for their budget and letting them figure out how to spend it.

Commissioner Allen expressed his frustration with the fact that the county has a few departments that always seem to have excess pots of money that they can use to purchase items that weren't budgeted.

2015 Budget Discussion - Continued

The County Administrator clarified some departments have the ability to build up a reserve, where others can't.

Commissioner Gray indicated he feels the Board should shoot for a 10% budget.

Commissioner Erickson stated he is fine with trying to get the levy under 10%.

Commissioner Allen commented he can live with a 10% levy if everyone is agreeable with that figure.

The Board discussed areas in which they may be able to make cuts to the proposed budget.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:28 p.m. CST.

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

**RODNEY PETERSON
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD**

**BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK**

DATED: