

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2016**

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

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

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE  
MANTORVILLE, MN**

**2016-17 C.O.W.**

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole September 13, 2016, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Government Services Building, Mantorville, MN, at 9:00 a.m. CST. Chair Steven Gray opened the meeting at 9:00 a.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: Becky Lubahn Deputy Clerk  
Lisa Kramer Finance Director

Finance Director Lisa Kramer met with the Board in a 2017 budget work session.

2017 Budget Work  
Session

Included in the Board packet was the most recent draft of the 2017 budget. Ms. Kramer noted this is a single year budget because Dodge County has not settled contracts for 2018 and finance did not feel it was appropriate to make wage assumptions. The Finance Director provided the following preamble to the process – the draft budget was presented with the understanding that the proposed budget will be significantly reduced before the September 30, 2016 preliminary certification date, the intent is for the Board to review departmental requests to see the significant drivers of the annual budget and to determine the Board's goal rate for a preliminary levy and ultimately a final levy by December 27, 2016.

Ms. Kramer noted the budget's cover pages are budget and levy summary pages. The summary pages recap the totals of the following pages of overall expenditures, revenues and fund balance usage of various accounts and a comparison to the prior year. The Finance Director reported the proposed budget still includes a 7.7% additional levy request. With flat revenue and only a modest increase in expenditures, moving away from fund balance use is also complicating the budget process.

Items of note in the budget:

1. Revenues are essentially flat across all funds.
2. The departments are budgeting to use significantly less fund balance in 2017 than in 2016. (A reduction of \$364,417 in the general fund, an increase of \$115,400 in Human Services and a reduction of \$15,000 in Environmental Quality for an overall reduction of \$264,317 across all funds.)

3. Wages for non-union and union staff include a 2.25% increase but the county received no increase on its health insurance. Other than changes in whether employees elect single or family the cafeteria amounts are unchanged from 2016. Wage increases are reflected in bargaining unit contracts and what is planned for the upcoming year. Non-union staff raises are determined at the end of November but the overall goal is to have the increase commensurate with the settled contracts.
4. MNPrairie reflects a significant increase at this time. Ms. Kramer is unsure that MNPrairie will be able to adjust much off of their levy, since most of the increase is the result of weaning themselves off the fund balance use that has characterized their last two budget cycles. Their revenues and expenses remain fairly flat.

Several Department Heads were available to answer questions on the proposed budget.

Commissioner Allen commented he has looked at the budget and noticed some of the departments have reduced their budgets to where it needs to go, others however have some work to do, especially MNPrairie. Mr. Allen expressed an interest in going through the department's vehicle requests department by department. It was Commissioner Allen's opinion that some of the vehicles which are being replaced may be in good enough condition to pass onto other departments.

The Finance Director informed the Board she has struggled with this budget, especially since there are departments that are holding the line.

Commissioner Erickson expressed concern with setting a 7.3% preliminary budget. It was Mr. Erickson's opinion once the media publishes this figure nobody pays any attention to what the final budget levy is set at in December; even when this figure is typically lower than the preliminary levy.

Commissioner Tjosaas stated he doesn't get hung up on what the preliminary levy is set at; he knows the Board plans to lower the levy by December.

Commissioner Peterson suggested using fund balance to fund the MNPrairie increase this year.

The Finance Director cautioned against using fund balance as it would eventually require the county to fully absorb the expense of MNPrairie when the fund balance is depleted.

Incremental use of the fund balance was discussed.

Commissioner Erickson commented it is difficult to control the cost of MNPrairie at this point because it's a growing entity.

The DFO budget was briefly discussed.

Commissioner Peterson suggested tabling further discussion on the budget until 11:00 a.m. today during the regular meeting.

2017 Budget Work Session - Continued

The Chair thanked the Department Heads for their attendance during the budget discussion.

Dodge County Historical Society Board of Directors member David Dubbels and volunteer Warren Schwenke met with the Board to discuss the Historical Society's 2017 budget request.

2017 Dodge County Historical Society Budget Request

Mr. Dubbels discussed repairs that were made to the cellar door at the museum. The cost of the repair was \$5,108.10. Mr. Dubbels reported the county approved the bid for this work two years ago.

Discussion took place on how to pay for the work to the cellar door. The Finance Director stated an appropriation can be made to the Dodge County Historical Society for the amount of the repair work.

David Dubbels informed the Board the roof of the county Museum building is in need of repair. The wooden shingles are 34 years old and showing their age. The shingles are curling and missing in some areas. The Historical Society routinely sees pieces of shingle on the ground after a storm. The roof should be replaced before interior damage occurs and the historical documents and artifacts are damaged.

Mr. Dubbels noted the replacement cost is considerable but grant money is available through the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants program. The grant request is a three step process that could take up to three years before construction can begin. The grant application must be submitted by the building owner.

The Dodge County Historical Society is requesting that the county start the grant process as soon as possible in order to protect and preserve this important building and its artifacts.

Mr. Dubbels reviewed the proposed Historical Society budget for 2017. The Historical Society is asking for an \$18,760.00 appropriation from Dodge County.

Mr. Dubbels distributed a bill from the Dodge County Highway Department for the parking lot work they did at the Historical Society. The cost of the work was \$4,086.29.

The Board further discussed the Museum roof replacement cost. Commissioner Erickson suggested the Historical Society explore all options available for roof replacement and then come back to them with a list of alternative options and the cost associated with each of those options.

The Board thanked Mr. Dubbels and Mr. Schwenke for the information.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m. CST.

Meeting Adjourned

**ATTEST:**

---

**STEVEN GRAY  
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD**

---

**BECKY LUBAHN  
DEPUTY CLERK**

---

**DATED:**