

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2007**

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE  
TRUTH IN TAXATION HEARING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA) COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE  
DODGE COUNTY) MANTORVILLE, MN**

**2007-01**

The Dodge County Board of Commissioners met in a Truth in Taxation hearing December 6, 2007, in the Commissioner's Room at the Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 6:30 p.m. CST. Don Gray, Chair called the Truth in Taxation Hearing to order at 6:30 p.m. CST.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present and established that there was a quorum:

Those Present

Members present:	Klaus Alberts	District #1
	Lyle Tjosaas	District #2
	David Erickson	District #3
	Don Gray	District #4
	David Hanson	District #5
Members absent:	None	
Also present:	David McKnight	County Administrator
	Wendell Engelstad	County Assessor

The Chair turned the meeting over to County Administrator David McKnight.

2008 Proposed  
Budget and Property  
Tax Levy Discussion

County Administrator David McKnight presented the proposed 2008 Dodge County budget and tax levy. Mr. McKnight made it clear that tonight's meeting was not a meeting to discuss the value placed on property for 2008. Audience members were informed that they could adjourn to another room to discuss this issue with the County Assessor.

Mr. McKnight presented the budget and tax levy. The current draft 2008 budget totals \$20,990,931 and the current tax levy is \$9,180,751. The six main reasons for the proposed tax levy increase were reviewed. These six issues included:

1. Local highway project funding increased by \$150,000 over 2007.
  - ✓ County Road H Overlay Project (\$250K)
  - ✓ Transportation is County Board's #1 Priority
2. PERA mandated increases for every employee.
  - ✓ 0.5% for Coordinated Plan and 1.2% for Police/Fire
3. County experienced an 18.1% increase in health insurance costs. The County increased its contribution to employee cafeteria plan by \$118,000.
4. Human Services increases of \$286,000 including the out of home placement program which is primarily court ordered/correctional placements.

5. Negotiated contract increases including a 2.5% increase in contracts that are settled at this point. Three union contract negotiations are still not settled.
  - ✓ 2008 estimated HR cost of \$9,511,460
6. Tax court settlement with MTM shifted \$126,830 in county taxes to all other county property owners. Dodge Center and Triton Schools hit the most. (Additional 1.48% increase to county tax levy)

2008 Proposed  
Budget and Property  
Tax Levy Discussion  
- Continued

Mr. McKnight reviewed where property tax dollars are spent by fund in Dodge County and where Dodge County sits in comparison to the eight other southeast Minnesota counties on preliminary levy increases.

The creation of the Cedar River Watershed and the implications of the limited market value program and its proposed sunset in 2009 were reviewed.

The County Administrator reviewed the 0.575 FTE's proposed in the 2008 budget. The position changes that were made during 2007 were also reviewed.

Mr. McKnight opened the floor to questions.

Hearing Opened to  
the Public

Mary Burt asked for clarification on the MTM lawsuit.

Question and Answer  
Session Held

Mr. McKnight explained the lawsuit and settlement and the impact on all county property taxes.

Rick Erpelding made a number of statements in regards to fiscal responsibility.

Carl Martin commented on the impact of the MTM lawsuit on taxpayers.

Jim Goodman discussed the impact of the large valuation increase on his proposed 2008 taxes.

John Olive talked about his large increase and requested a moratorium on new equipment and raises for employees. If employees do not like it they can get a new job.

Nancy Kahnke agreed with the previous comments about reducing spending.

Pat Brown discussed his valuation increase from \$95,000 to \$225,000.

Mary Burt wanted to know why taxes are different in each county.

Carl Martin commented that the Sheriff's Department does not need all of the vehicles and water equipment that is parked at the Sheriff's garage.

Jim Goodman wanted to know why the state does not have a TNT meeting.

Mr. McKnight advised him to talk to our local legislators.

Rick Erpelding asked about the cost and benefit of increasing the Emergency Management Director position to full time.

Jim Goodman asked which of the tax levies on the TNT statement are final at this point.

Question and Answer  
Session Held -  
Continued

Mr. McKnight explained that only the township taxes are final as of tonight.

Rick Erpelding asked about the benefits of the School Resource Officer position.

Jim Goodman asked for some examples of optional county programs.

Mr. McKnight stated that the County Administrator and Drug Court programs are two optional departments.

Lawren Castner said he had some tax concerns but saw the benefit of the Emergency Management position.

Mary Burt expressed concern to the County Board about the proposed increase.

Mr. McKnight stated that since everyone had a chance to comment there would be no need for a continuation meeting. The County Board will consider adoption of the final budget and tax levy at their meeting on Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at 9:30 a.m.

Commissioner Gray thanked everyone for coming and closed the public hearing and adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m. CST.

Meeting Adjourned

**ATTEST:**

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DON GRAY  
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

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DAVID MCKNIGHT  
CLERK

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DATED: