

IN A SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE WHITE PINE COUNTY COMMISSION & FIRE COMMISSION & BUDGET WORKSHOP HELD ON MARCH 8, 2021 IN THE COUNTY LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM IN ELY, NEVADA

The Following Were Present:

County Commission
Richard Howe, Chairman
Travis Godon, Vice-Chairman
Ian Bullis, Commissioner (via Zoom)
Shane Bybee, Commissioner
Laurie L. Carson, Commissioner
Nichole Baldwin, Clerk of the Board
Jill Perez, Deputy Clerk

County Officials:

Brett North, WPCFD Fire Chief
Tim Bunch, Human Resources Dir.
Mike Johnson, IT Specialist
Catherine Bakaric, Treasurer
Burton Hilton, Assessor
Martha Rivera Sindelar, Recorder
Sheriff Scott Henriod

Also Present:

Present via Zoom:

Lori Romero (Library Director), Mary Kerner, Burton Hilton (Assessor)

Chairman Richard Howe called the meeting to order at 8:33 am. Human Resources Director Tim Bunch led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MOMENT OF SILENCE/SILENT INVOCATION

This was duly observed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Finance Director Elizabeth Frances advised the Board that she will need to ask for a brief recess later to attend a conference call for a meeting with the Nevada Tax Commission regarding the county's SCCRT status.

1. BUDGET WORKSHOP:

A. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Workshop/Discussion/For Possible Action: Direction on FY 2022 Revenues, Central Services, Public Safety, Fire, EMS and Elected Officials

Budget Overview, Discussion of Revenues and Central Services

Finance

Finance Director Frances reminded the Board and public that the packets contain proposed expenditures from department heads and some have been edited by her. If she changed something, she added her initials and a note explaining the change. Revenues are

not in yet and she won't have them until March 25th. We went thru expenditure requests this day. She summarized changes in the finance department with everything staying the same except for a request for an increase for necessary supplies and postage. Training will most likely be via video conference and webinars to keep up on the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, GFOA, and other important required trainings and seminars, but some will be attended in person. The miscellaneous line is for GFOA and submission of financial statements for the financial reporting award. In software maintenance and services, she asked for a permanent solution to get data from the IBM ADS server into a cloud based solution to be easily accessed, which contains PERS data. Contract services were taken back to zero due to a prior project being completed. The Chairman asked if she factored in a trip to the legislature; that is in the current FY per the Director. Commission Vice Chairman Travis Godon confirmed an overall \$7,000 decrease from the current FY.

Director Frances asked for a new position for a county manager and included a proposed budget and backup material for that. She handed out 2 different scenarios. She felt our county government needed reorganized. The budget would be \$188,449 for salary, office supplies, travel, benefits, and office equipment. If approved, she would ask them to reorganize the organizational chart to provide for better integration of services and better responsiveness to available opportunities. She proposed a direct line between the commission and the finance director and county manager. She felt this needed to be discussed with big projects on the horizon that may change local government even if this discussion continued into next FY. The Chairman was not in agreement with this request as he hoped to have one government (combine the city and county) and to have a county manager in place to make that happen. As we grow and move forward, we can think about it in the future, he felt. Commissioner Godon felt we need to do something at the airport since we can't recruit anyone; maybe we can use airport funds to subsidize this position. Commissioner Shane Bybee thought that Commissioner Godon's idea could be helpful. He thinks at the end of the day, it would be great to stop the buck at one place. The Finance Director preferred option 1, but from the county standpoint, the county would need the right person to step up and take on the majority of the county. The Chairman asked if a county manager would be able to absorb some of what she does and if we could we reduce certain departments. She responded that each department head has a full time job other than the airport manager and that would be a stretch. Commissioner Ian Bullis, via Zoom, apologized for arriving late, he thought it started at 9 am. He felt it was a good idea to have a county manager, but the concern was budgetary. He felt we would run more efficiently if we had one. The Board had discussion about combining a county manager with an airport manager, which would be possible since our airport is not a certified airport. Commissioner Godon felt the interim airport manager could help get someone up to speed on airport related stuff. Commissioner Laurie L. Carson felt it was important for that person to have aviation knowledge.

Human Resources

Human Resources Director Tim Bunch asked for an increase of \$254 in operating expenses, dues and publications. Travel expense and training is the public risk management conference on the east coast this year and asked to attend that along with a Human Resources meeting in Reno occurring and he'd like to attend that in person. Office supplies

have been reduced to offset his travel requests. Legal advertising has been the biggest anomaly as he does not find a return on the investment by publishing in the paper. He's been doing more with less allowing him to reduce operational expenses. He made the Board aware that to get the safety team up and running, he had a responsibility to pay into the public risk management fund and found out POOL PACT covers that, but has to pay a subscription fee at \$3,760 per year. Commissioner Carson asked about online training; is \$1,600 enough? He responded, yes, he's been aggressive to get grants from POOL PACT to cover those. The Chairman asked about the need for advertising. Director Bunch replied that posting for exempt positions is the struggle. Job Connect is not operating the same as before so ads get funneled to Fallon and postings are taking more time to appear. Word of mouth is the biggest spreader for job openings.

Information Technology

Finance Director Frances was proposing a change in staffing to eliminate her stipend to hire an IT engineer, an expert in networking, to be added as a new department head level position with two IT positions reporting to them reducing contracting expenses with BCT. This would provide better leadership and services to end users. Overtime was the same due to staff being on call for public safety needs. The Chairman asked if a county manager could also be an IT engineer since we're looking at big bucks. Commissioner Carson felt this position is more important than a county manager. She recalled some borderline experiences that took place in regards to Commissioners walking a fine line and supported a county manager to alleviate that. The Chairman suggested looking at what was more important, an IT engineer or a county manager, and to look at doing one or the other if we can't do both. Commissioner Carson noted how much the Finance Director had been handling and getting someone with her level of knowledge and ability to do grants would be an asset. The contract with BCT would go down as knowledge is transferred and will eventually be eliminated. Commissioner Bybee sees what BCT goes thru to get engineers, and they aren't rural. He noted the challenges we will face in recruiting someone and their family to come here, but he felt the IT engineer took priority. Commissioner Bullis felt both positions were great, but we need to see where we're going to be financially. If we can afford it, we should have both county and IT managers.

In equipment under \$5,000, Director Frances was asking for money to provide for the ongoing replacement cycle of computers and new robo devices in the network. Travel and training expenses increased for Stormwind online training for two to allow IT specialists to take any courses they need and obtain an A+ certification.

At this point, the Finance Director left to attend the SCCRT meeting and the Chairman called a short break. The meeting came back into session at 9:44 am.

Finance Director asked for an increase for Adobe Professional to avoid buying individual licenses, BlueJeans for state connectivity for use in court proceedings, and Microsoft licenses bought in bulk. The BCT contract services can be reduced if we hire an IT engineer. In equipment over \$5,000, she requested three new servers and Ruckus for WiFi.

Cooperative Agreements

Finance Director Frances had one for contract services for animal control in the general fund for a 1.5% annual increase for animal control services to the city.

Other Miscellaneous Expense

Finance Director Frances handed out some backup and noted she was still waiting on more information. Group health insurance can be reduced by \$45,000 this year due to retirees that were eligible moving off insurance due to being Medicare eligible or passing on. Internet access will need to be adjusted as we move to a new service provider plus a request for a new NCIS dedicated line in the DA's Office. The master insurance policy was increased by 5% due to not having final numbers at this time, but will need to be adjusted further for the Justice Center.

Transfers

The first transfer out is 80% of net proceeds of mines to the Justice Center fund and that will need to be adjusted after adjusted revenues arrive later this month. The Justice Center should be done by November and her hope is to use funding here to lessen transfers from debt services. The task force transfer was kept the same as it is difficult to know how to budget this. She took out \$10,000 in the current FY for Victim Witness Services to offset utilities and rent. They would like that back in the next FY as they rely on that. The Justice Courthouse arrest is not to exceed \$2,500. A new request to transfer \$750,000 in to capital improvements to renovate the historic courthouse was mentioned. Commissioner Godon clarified that the sale or lease of the admin building would help offset this expense.

Contingency

This fund is kept where it was at in FY 2021. Commissioner Godon felt we should put \$100,000 in legal expense to allow for the county to defend our citizens given what's been happening and Commissioner Bybee agreed. After brief discussion, the Finance Director will increase contingency by \$100,000 per that request.

Intergovernmental Budgets

Finance Director Frances explained what this used to be budgeted for, but these are just agency funds and are not required pursuant to NRS. She had transferred those to agency funds a couple of years back. They include funds for the state of Nevada, City of Ely, hospital, school district and all have ad valorem tax that comes in and is transferred back out. She just reminded them that they are there and the fact that we don't budget for them anymore.

Public Safety

Sheriff – Administration

Sheriff Henriod spoke on the new CDC guideline that came out today: if you had a vaccine, you don't have to wear a mask or socially distance, and you can visit your grandparents in a care center or home. The Sheriff was asking for a couple of increases to keep up with expenses under medical exams that went up, and travel and training to \$1,500 due to the current budget not allowing him to attend vital meetings and trainings.

Sheriff – Detective

Medical exams were increased to cover increases for older detectives and more exams being needed. Operating supplies increased for shelving to move items out of connex boxes into new the facility. An increase in training was noted for recertifications coming up. Commissioner Bybee asked if there was money to make modifications to existing cells and the Sheriff explained what maintenance is willing to do that is included in the budget, which is capping water, knocking down walls, and painting.

Sheriff – Patrol

The Sheriff advised of an increase in ammunition and noted insane price increases there recently. Commissioners Godon and Bybee felt it should be increased to \$6,000. Under equipment over \$5,000, he asked for two patrol vehicles and reported that he's having two being built in St. George currently.

Sheriff – Dispatch/Jail

The Sheriff was asking for more in travel and training to get a new dispatcher trained and certified to certify and train other dispatchers. He further asked for the Sierra radio contract to be put back in for fire and roads to cover potential expenses. An adjustment for medical expenses on physicals was included. The operating expense and supplies were adjusted for the shelving previously discussed. Director Frances noted that should be in equipment under \$5,000. Commissioner Bybee asked if we will sell the connex boxes after the move to offset the increases and the Finance Director responded that the county will use them for a shortage of storage for other departments. Director Frances spoke to electricity for new the jail: the numbers are based on estimates received for operational costs which was a three quarter increase for the jail expansion. She reminded the Board that she dedicated the electrical franchise fee increases to offset electrical costs. VINE, RIMS, and Accent are police contracts and we may end up paying another facility to incarcerate the person accused of murder and that estimate was included in the budget. Finance Director Frances reminded the Board of a resolution passed this year for \$90,000 to pay for that incarceration, but she had not seen invoices and asked Captain Swetich to check on that. The new jail is believed to be done in July per the Sheriff, with the dispatch center and public safety renovations being completed in August.

Sheriff – Coroner

No change.

Sheriff – Narcotics Task Force

No change, but these numbers may be adjusted later.

Fire Commission Fire Protection

The Finance Director reminded the Board that the Fire Protection District and fire fund is contained in fund 296 and a portion is transferred from the county to the White Pine County Fire Protection District in here following fund 296. She further reminded the Board that they are in negotiations with the city so numbers may change based on that. There were

no projected changes in salaries and benefits. Revenues are estimated and this does not receive ad valorem tax.

Fire Chief Brett North was working out a deal to lease a repeater site on Squaw Peak to 5D Networks that could bring in revenue. He needed to budget for new SCVA's (air packs for going into fires) as that company is going out of business; they might have another year or two left and they cost \$6,700/each. Chief North was trying to get grants as a funding source for those. Postage was reduced. Fire district expenses increased for PPR, helmets, and radios. An increase for ongoing maintenance on trucks was noted. He removed phones from volunteer stations due to everyone having cellphones and added internet at the stations and at Lackawana for training and reporting. Facility repairs, updating old lights and heating equipment to reduce heating expenses were reported as being needed.

Commissioner Bybee inquired about capital improvement needs in other stations. It was noted that the question of who owns the Cold Creek Stations needed to be worked out. Eureka uses it, but it sits on mine property. Commissioner Bybee noted that the county needs to work with the mine to obtain a property lease to make improvements. Commissioner Godon suggested Chief North talk to Public Works Director Calderwood to work with the mine to model an agreement after the Silver Lions agreement. Commissioner Bybee stressed the importance to start working on improvements for other stations. Chief North requested signage for volunteer stations and Commissioner Godon asked him to get information to the Finance Director for the next meeting.

Director Frances asked about the interlocal agreement with the National Department of Forestry; she was concerned about an invoice from NDF that noted it will expire 6/30/2021 and asked if we have we started negotiations to extend that or if it will change? Chief North stated that we should negotiate and see if that agreement was needed; it's an insurance policy with a cost per acre to help cover fires on county property. Director Frances directed Chief North to work on that with NDF.

Emergency Management

Fire Chief North advised the Board that he got EMS billing straightened out to increase revenues. No changes were requested for this fund.

Emergency Medical Services

Chief North advised of an increase in medical supplies to stock volunteer stations. They've been getting stuff from the city and were working on getting supplies to the stations for more convenience. Commissioner Carson wanted to ensure they are implementing an inventory tracking system. Chief North noted the COVID expense line item was left in case it was needed. The EMS fund comes in and gets transferred to the fire protection district to provide EMS services; what comes in goes out and numbers will be updated March 25th.

Elected Officials

County Commissioners

Director Frances advised that this fund is staying status quo. Dues and publications with Nevada NACO are not going up, but she will have an update on the 24th.

Clerk

The Finance Director advised the Board that the Clerk had requested an increase in the jury commissioner stipend, which is a negotiated item under the Union and cautioned them to not discuss the merits of this in a public meeting. She further advised that a request for 240 hours of labor was included to assist in helping the Clerk move her files to the Justice Center when that time comes. County Clerk Nichole Baldwin briefly explained that the request for an increase in the jury commissioner's stipend was either/or, allowing for Justice Court, and maybe Muni Court to, instead, obtain a license for JuryMark to pull and manage their own juries as opposed to paying for the additional stipend. The Clerk advised the Board that she was asking for an increase in overtime to \$3,000 for jury trials and to move the records to the Justice Center. She requested for an increase for the county code to cover increased costs. She noted that she failed to include a request for a micro fiche reader and attached PC to read microfiche at the new Justice Center and she will get the Finance Director a quote for that. She advised that she will be taking most of her records with her to the Justice Center that will open up storage up the hill. She asked for an increase in travel to attend in person meetings for NACCEO and CFA this year in the amount of \$750.

Recorder

The Finance Director explained the Recorder has 2 special revenue funds that are under her control. Recorder Martha Rivera Sindelar wanted to leave everything the way it is in the general fund, but wanted to reinstate the amounts proposed last year, which means the 14% cut to be brought back. Her tech funds can be left the same. The mining map fund includes a contract with Basin Engineering who takes the maps to plot them. She wanted to fire proof the back room for maps for \$25,000. The Chairman wanted to include this request in the inspection for renovation of the historic courthouse and Commissioner Godon suggested it be included in the capital improvement budget for renovations. Commissioner Carson advised that Public Works Director Calderwood needed to know this and the Board was advised that the study was still on going for those renovations. The Recorder added that her map machine died last week and will need \$8-10,000 to replace that and she has funding to cover that.

Assessor

At 10:35 am, Finance Director Frances advised that the Assessor had 2 budgets; one in the general fund and one in the assessor's tech fund. She cautioned the Commission that the requests for changes in grades for 2 positions are negotiated with the Union and she did not support the Board discussing those outside of negotiations. Assessor Burton Hilton provided a handout to show comparisons across the state for positions in his office. The second page showed snapshots in-time to show the assessor's budget has gone down 33% since FY 15-16. He felt his office has been good stewards by doing more with less and added that his office has taken the biggest cut in services and supplies. He talked to the Union representative regarding his requests for grade changes in his office. He was not trying to promote anyone to a chief deputy, which presented a cost savings. He further explained the grade change to senior appraiser which mitigated changes to the pay scale. He asked for the 14% cut to be restored to his budget in all line items. By law, he has until June 30th to present the budget for his tech fund. He explained the tech fund pays for a lot of things for his office

and other offices. He was looking for more in his budget and explained a line he's drawing in the sand. The truck he's been using that is 12 years old was approved to go to Juvenile Probation and the Fire District Jeep was to become his. Juvenile Probation didn't want the truck so he suggested the Jeep to become a fleet vehicle, move the old Expedition to Social Services, and sell Social Service's current Expedition at auction. The truck stopped starting a couple of weeks ago and the Road Department could not fix it. He asked for solutions to this problem and mentioned that he found a Chevy Silverado for \$37,000 that he could really use for his office. Chairman Howe asked Public Works Director Calderwood to leave the truck in the boneyard and it has only 60,000 miles on it. Discussions were had on fixing the truck instead of buying a new one. The resolution was for the Assessor to find a local mechanic to try to fix the truck. Finance Director Frances will do a resolution on the 24th for the Assessor's auto repair and maintenance account to get the truck fixed and the Assessor will put something on the agenda to move the Jeep to be a fleet vehicle as he did not like using it for his purpose.

Treasurer

Treasurer Catherine Bakaric had asked for miscellaneous tax title charges to be increased due to prices going up and the current budget not being sufficient. Operating supplies and expenses need to be increased due to earnings credits no longer covering banking fees thanks to low interest rates. She was asking for a budget for bank fees and the Finance Director will work with the Treasurer to line out the bank management fees line item. The Treasurer requested an increase for tax bills due to changes and having to mail out tax bills out of her office. Live meetings are being held this year resulting in an increase in travel, for CFOA and for investment officers meetings. Commissioner Carson inquired in regards to storage; the Treasurer wanted to keep records where she is and asked for room in the courthouse for records currently stored in connex from the 1970s thru the 1990s. She suggested the office space behind her office that the DA will be moving out of. The Finance Director felt space needed to be looked at to accommodate offices moving from the admin building.

Elections

County Clerk Nichole Baldwin notified the Board that there are many bills in legislature that will most likely increase election expenses are pending this year. She asked for an increase in overtime for her staff for next year's elections and an increase in postage. She asked for operating expenses, contract services, and software maintenance to remain the same with no decreases. She asked for \$750 in travel to attend in-person election meetings with the Secretary of State for various reasons. The Finance Director advised the Board that she has responded, with the Clerk's help, to a number of fiscal note requests to the legislature for bills that could pose a large increase in election costs in the upcoming year. Commissioner Godon expressed his opinion that this county should go against any requirement to mail out ballots and not fund those changes to go against the Secretary of State's demands to do things that are, in his opinion, in violation of what is right for voters. The Clerk appreciated his opinion, but stated she could not do certain things that are in opposition to mandates set forth by the Secretary of State.

***B. Discussion/For Possible Action: Approval to give direction to the Finance Director Regarding Items Heard During the Budget Workshop**

Commissioner Carson desired to add natural resources to the list for discussion and the \$100,000 to legal services. The Finance Director included the Sheriff's ammunition budget to \$6,000, she needed to get with Chief North in regards to the lease for a radio tower for revenues, and she was to get with the Clerk for a micro fiche reader. Commissioner Godon noted the Cold Creek fire station for improvements, and the Treasurer needed to get information regarding tax title searches.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Godon moved to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Bybee made the second. The meeting adjourned at 11:33 am.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


WHITE PINE COUNTY
STATE OF NEVADA

BY:



CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:



WPC CLERK OF THE BOARD