

**SEPTEMBER 3, 2019 SESSION  
OF THE  
WALWORTH COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

The Walworth County Board Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Chair Russell at 2:30 p.m. at the Government Center, 100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin.

**Roll Call**

Roll Call was conducted and the following Supervisors were present: Tim Brellenthin, Vice-Chair Jerry A. Grant, Kathy Ingersoll, Daniel G. Kilkenny, Kenneth H. Monroe, William Norem, Susan M. Pruessing, Rick Stacey, Charlene Staples, David A. Weber, and Chair Nancy Russell. A quorum was established.

o **Presentation of County Administrator's proposed 2020 budget and budget workshop**

Administrator Bretl presented an overview of the 2020 Administrator's Budget, a copy of which was distributed to those present. The presentation also encompassed his annual State of the County Report.

Bretl stated this budget proposes a 1.39% increase in the overall levy and utilizes the entire cap under State law, which is based upon net new construction. Bretl explained the tax bill and stated the numbers may differ, since not all tax levies are uniform and also dependent on the equalized value of the individual's taxing jurisdiction. He then referenced the five sidebar articles highlighting the Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee, Health & Human Services (HHS) Re-Design, Lakeland School, Transportation, and Volunteers.

Bretl began to give a brief overview of the 2020 Budget Themes:

**Impact of the Levy Cap** – Bretl indicated there was a 1.59% increase to the net new construction and remarked that it has taken 10 years for the County to restore the equalized value after the recession and banking crisis that existed in 2009.

**Change** – Bretl stated the changes set forth in this budget fall into two categories; procedural and substantive.

- **Budget Process (Procedural):**

- **Departmental Targets** – Bretl spoke briefly regarding the various departments and their level of cooperation throughout the budget process. He stated the Sheriff's Office and the Health and Human Services (HHS) Department were asked to limit the growth of the levy increases of their budgets to 1.75%.
- **Alternative Choices** – Bretl explained the newly created Appendix E entitled "Last Out" and Frequently Asked Expenditures, located on page 42. The "Last Out" expenditures were deemed important to the County Administrator, but are not funded in the Administrator's Budget. The "Frequently Asked" (FAQ) expenditures are included in the County Administrator's Budget, which have been the subject of Supervisors' interest in the past. Bretl recommended this appendix be amended periodically and used by the Board when making budget amendments.
- **Salary Savings** – Bretl stated for a number of years, larger departments have been allowed to include a line for "salary savings" in their departmental budgets, since vacancies will inevitably occur within a department of 150 to 200 employees. This budget assumes salary savings at HHS of \$200,000 and \$223,000 at the Sheriff's Office. While Bretl recommends those amounts, he also suggested formalizing the budget process and setting a limit of 1.5%, or less, of the entire department's payroll budget. An Ordinance amendment will be presented at the September Finance Committee meeting.

- Mid-Year Additions – Bretl indicated there are three issues that need to be kept in mind when a change is made during the course of the year: 1) Mid-year requests have no policy alternatives to which they can compare to; 2) Even if there is existing funding, mid-year expenditures will be part of the levy the next year, and maybe, each year thereafter; and 3) Off-budget decision-making limits flexibility in future budgets. He then provided and gave a brief overview of three illustrations.

- Budget Process (Substantive):

- Medical Examiner – Bretl gave a brief overview of the Medical Examiner position and stated this budget recommends appointment of Gina Carver as Medical Examiner and allocates 25% of an Administration position to provide administrative support. A 0.60 Full Time Employee (FTE) Chief Deputy Medical Examiner position has also been included in this budget. Lastly, he said the autopsy services would be obtained from Milwaukee County under this budget, but they would not be responsible for Walworth County’s administration or records. These recommendations would result in an overall savings of \$104,171.
- County Administration/Corporation Counsel – Bretl announced his retirement in 2020 and gave a brief overview of the duties and responsibilities of the County Administrator and Corporation Counsel offices. He said this budget proposes that the offices be separated for two reasons: 1) The workload is no longer realistic; and 2) The separation will allow for smoother transition of leadership in the future. Bretl discussed the following proposed changes:
  1. Michael Cotter promoted to LURM Director/Corporation Counsel.
  2. Creation of a full-time Deputy Corporation Counsel.
  3. Creation of a 0.50 FTE Legal Assistant position.
  4. Transfer of 0.50 FTE Administrative Assistant.
- Public Works – Bretl proposed and gave a brief overview of the following organizational changes to the Public Works Department: 1) Creation of an Associate County Engineer position to assist the County Engineer, which would be funded through capital projects; 2) Creation of 3 hourly Assistant Superintendent positions to provide on-site supervision of the County’s night-time FTE highway positions and to provide support to the Highway Superintendents.

**Lakeland Health Care Center** – Bretl proposed the appropriation of an additional \$355,000 from the County contingency fund to continue operations throughout this year. He then gave a brief history of several news publications from the first seven months of this year, regarding issues concerning skilled nursing facilities in our state and country. This budget is being offset with \$1.45 million of use of fund balance. Fund balance may only appropriately be used to restructure the current operation or find different long-term funding, i.e. an increase in our levy cap. He said either a fundamental change to the program needs to be made or the way in which the program is funded or operated.

Bretl stated if the Board approves this budget, they are committing to one of two courses of action listed below:

1. Continuing to operate a 120-bed skilled nursing facility and placing the question of exceeding our levy cap to the voters on the 2020 fall ballot.
2. Committing to downsize to a 90-bed skilled nursing facility during the course of 2020. While this may seem like a shock considering we have 120 beds, keep in mind that our censuses have been at 103 bed. It is also possible, that if we were to downsize, we could utilize the vacated space to provide other services to seniors including respite, CBRF, assisted living apartments or other needed services to seniors in our community.

He concluded by saying it would be necessary to cut \$1.145 million of expenses in the County budget if the Board does not choose to commit to either of the two alternatives and wishes to continue operating a 120-bed facility.

### **Emergency Services**

- **Consolidated Dispatch** – Bretl announced he was unable to accommodate the county-wide Fire/EMS Study Committee and Executive Committee’s request for funds to study an independent consolidated dispatch. Their request has been included on Appendix E. Bretl stated the proposed budget includes the purchase of ProPhoenix software to aid in the dispatch of the County's fire and EMS services.
- **County-wide Communications Infrastructure Upgrade** – Bretl gave a brief overview of the county-wide emergency communications infrastructure and stated the optimal solution, according to a consultant hired by the County, is a \$25.1 million system. He explained how the proposed budget will move the capital project out one more year. That is, the expenses are reflected in the 2021-2024 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He also said this budget will reduce the 2024 project cost from \$4.7 million to \$1.9 million to reflect the fact that town and municipal agencies will be responsible for the purchase of their own radios.
- **Workflow Study/Delavan** – Bretl stated the City of Delavan may be taking over a portion of that community’s dispatching. He also reported a new advisory committee has been created to advise the Sheriff on dispatch protocol.

**Efficiencies Save Tax Dollars** – Bretl commended the various department heads for their initiative to pursue efficiencies, allowing the redirection of tax levy dollars from support functions to public services and highlighted the following:

- Voice Over Internet - Long Distance Service – An approximate \$42,000 Savings for 2020.
- Energy Efficiency – An approximate \$112,000 Decrease in 2020.
- Courier Service – An approximate \$42,000 Savings for 2020.
- Reuse of Health and Human Services Furniture – A value of approximately \$252,000 in surplus furniture will be utilized.
- Copiers - \$40,000 has been included in the budget to study the issue of copiers county-wide.
- Health and Human Services Fleet – The 2020 budget funds two replacement vehicles to help cut the use of mileage reimbursement for personal vehicles.
- Space Utilization – The 2020 budget includes \$100,000 to produce a campus-wide master plan to make the most efficient decisions in the future.

### **Areas of Board Interest**

Bretl reiterated there is an increase of 1.39% in overall County levy and proceeded to briefly explain other Areas of Board Interests.

- **Community Initiatives** – Bretl referred to Figure 5 of the budget book, which outlines the funds the County has given to area organizations over the years, and gave an overview of his 2020 recommendations.
- **Health Insurance** – Bretl recommended a rate increase to the self-funded employee health plan and announced this budget is premised on a 2% increase to the Tier I program and a 4% increase to the Tier II program. He said the County pays 93% of the health premium rates for most employees. He then spoke briefly regarding Figure 6, which indicates the historic rate over time, and Figure 7, which shows we are utilizing the insurance fund balance to subsidize the rates.
- **Parks** – Bretl stated Appendix E includes items that were not included in this budget for funding and indicated the tax levy for parks has more than tripled since 2016.
- **Real Property Lister** – Bretl briefly explained his proposal to move the County’s Property Lister from the Register of Deeds Office to the Office of the Treasurer, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Bretl spoke briefly regarding Appendices A, B, C, D and E and encouraged the Supervisors to review the Capital Improvement Plan on page 48.

Bretl concluded by thanking the department heads and elected officials for their efforts and assistance in preparing the budget and commended the Administration staff and Finance Department.

**Adjournment**

On motion by Supervisor Weber, seconded by Supervisor Monroe, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Prepared By: Patricia Sommers, Administrative Assistant

Submitted By: Kimberly S. Bushey, County Clerk

STATE OF WISCONSIN     )  
  ) SS  
COUNTY OF WALWORTH )

I, Kimberly S. Bushey, County Clerk in and for the County aforesaid, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings of the County Board of Supervisors for the September 3, 2019 Committee of the Whole Meeting.