

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
Special Meeting – Budget Hearing #6
September 23, 2014
5:15 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith Ashby, Chair
Jay Dunn, Vice Chair
Kevin Greenfield
Linda Little
Tim Dudley
Patty Cox

MEMBERS ABSENT

Susanna Zimmerman

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Lois Durbin, Circuit Clerk
Jay Scott, State's Attorney
Nichole Kronke, State's Attorney's Office
Mike Baggett, State's Attorney's Office
Jean Moore, CAC
Carol Reed, Auditor

Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Chair Keith Ashby at the Macon County Office Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes of the prior meeting on 9/22 was made by Kevin Greenfield, seconded by Jay Dunn and motion carried 5-0 with Mrs. Cox voting present.

Budget Proposals

Circuit Clerk

Lois Durbin presented her budget line by line

4350 Clerk 4D Grant was reduced by \$9,174 by the State. That is now \$30,398

5001 was set by Resolution

5455 was per union contract @ 3%

Hospitalization was set by the Auditor's office

Telephone has been raised because of increased faxing for the 4D Grant. There has been an increase in the workload. They also did this last year. Then on July 1st, they took some of the responsibility away, but gave us more different responsibilities to do.

Legal Advertising is mainly for publication of juvenile cases which is court ordered. For this year, the budgeted amount has been exceeded, but Lois said she has been able to move from line to line to cover it at the present time. She said she was not sure if \$5,000 would be enough for next year. It depends on what the court orders to be published.

Postage has been left the same. Postage has been taken out of another fund in the back.

Jury fees, meals & parking remain the same

Supplies have been reduced from \$25,000 down to \$18,000 and some supplies have also been moved back to another fund.

Dues & Travel have been taken out and put into another fund

Lois explained that the ones that have been left in such as telephone & legal advertising did not fit into any other funds. Postage is the same except for the \$36 notices that are sent out in the Child Support Maintenance. That was taken from Restricted Cash because that is what that fund is to be used for. Some postage is taken from the jury fee line because postcards are sent out for the questionnaires.

Automation Fund

The fees have been raised. Originally Lois said she thought this might bring in \$100,000 extra, but the filings have gone down. Reports have been run and the filings are down. Mr. Dudley asked if the projections are that there will not be \$100,000 in revenue. Lois said "extra". Mr. Dudley said there is no way to make that up then. Ms. Durbin said she would be making more than the \$250,000 if it was just \$15, but the fees were raised to \$25, so there is an extra \$10 per case filed. She said she does not see it hitting an extra \$100,000 unless there is a rush on filings. This fee is on entries of appearance, new cases, etc... Right now there are a lot of filings being waived. The people are filing applications to sue or defend as an indigent person which means the fees are waived, so we are losing that. There is also the City Municipal Courts and when they go through their process there, if they do not collect, they come and file it in the Circuit Court which means there is no filing fees for them because they are another government entity. In the Clerks of the Court Act, we do not charge other government entities. That's \$251 per case that is not collected when they file these.

Jay Dunn reminded Lois that at Justice Committee, she had said she anticipated getting \$100,000 for the increase in fees and at Finance Committee, she had said that she conservatively estimated \$100,000. He asked what was making her back off of that. Lois explained that she had run reports and discovered the filings are down due to fewer new cases and the fees being waived. Chair Ashby asked if the filing fee had gone up 67%, from \$15 to \$25, and the revenue has gone up about half that much. Lois explained that for this year she had \$250,000 and when the report was run the other day, it was at \$180,000 which means another \$70,000 has to come in during the next 2 ½ months and that is going to be a stretch even with the fee being raised. Chair Ashby asked when considering the increase in the filing fee, \$416,000 should be brought in. Lois said she didn't have a calculator to figure it at the moment. Linda Little asked if she was going to have problems hitting the \$250,000 even with the increase. Lois said it would be a stretch. She said she has talked with other counties and they are going through the same thing. Some are getting ready to raise to \$25 and some already have. Kevin Greenfield asked what would cause the slow-down. Lois said it's because a lot more are filing as indigent people. They go into court with their Entry of Appearance, the judge will have them sign it and will tell them to go pay the filing fee. They tell the judge they can't afford it, so they waive them. Jay asked how much was in the fund. Lois said \$164,000 and said she is looking at the Disaster Relief Computer that is 8 years old. It is outdated. To update is \$90,000. That will come out of the \$164,000. Lois said she is also working on the e-filing because the Supreme Court has mandated it. That is around another \$20,000 according to the vender. She said she is looking at other vendors hoping to reduce it some. Linda Little asked if Lois was planning to buy another computer before the end of the year. Lois said upgrade, not purchase. To purchase would be \$200,000 which she does not have. She said she does hope to upgrade by the end of the year because if the computer system goes down, the Courts, Probation, everybody goes down. There is a total of 7 departments using the computer system. Patty Cox asked if all 7 departments share the costs. Lois said no. Patty asked why. Lois did not know, but said she had brought it up in the past. Chair Ashby said they had talked about this last year too. Patty said she thought it was something that needed to be looked at so everyone using it shares in the cost of fringes, hospitalization, everything. Lois said she had done the resolutions to raise the fees so the upgrades could be done and so she could do what the Supreme Court has asked.

Lois said that with the changes, the fringes should be \$28,680.61 and hospitalization will be added in the amount of \$16,812. That will bring the expenditures to \$344,116.73. The revenue expense will be \$24,116.73. Jay asked about the hospitalization and whether it was in some other budget. Lois said she didn't think so.

Document Storage

Lois said she put \$320,000 for revenue.
Social Security was not correct. It should be \$30,248.88
That brings the subtotal to \$55,466.88
The revenue is \$11,575.58
The balance in the Document Storage is currently \$72,000

Restricted Cash

This is the \$36 annual fee that is collected
There is \$45,000 as the Admin Fee because they are finally caught up. Most of them pay every year now.
Postage of \$10,000 is used for the mailing of those notices
Linda Little asked if the Admin Fee comes in chunks because at the halfway mark, it was only at \$10,000. Lois explained that it takes about 3 months to get them all out.
The balance in Restricted Cash is around \$44,000. The auditor said it is sitting at a negative balance right now. Lois explained that it is turned in quarterly, so the Auditor's office doesn't have it yet.

Clerk Ops

Lois said her best guess is \$32,000
Travel has been changed to \$3,000
An EDP line has been added to help pay for some of the upgrades
Of \$20,000 training is \$5,000 and dues has been moved here. There are also supplies and office equipment also.
Chair Ashby asked where the \$3,000 for travel would go. Lois explained that it is for training on the computer system. There are two trainings a year. One is in Carbondale and is a 2 night stay that 4 to 5 employees go to. The other one is in Bloomington and they drive every day. That is also for conferences. Mr. Ashby asked what the plans were for office expenses. Lois said this is for the upgrading of the computer, the e-filing and she said she has been working with e-citations. She & the Sheriff have demonstrations from a vender coming up.
The balance is currently about \$104,000. Lois said this is very restrictive as to what this can be used for. Mr. Dudley asked what the main thing it is used for. Lois said it is for the collection of the fees for the state. Mr. Dunn asked what fees come in to fund this. Lois said it is a bunch. It is 5% of one fee, 10% of another and maybe 0.1% of another. It is all over the board. Lois gave the example that if you collect a fee for the state, they'll say you get like 10% and it might turn out to be a dime. Mr. Dunn said that if they restrict how you can spend it, if a balance is built up, would fees be cut. Lois said you don't cut these fees because it is in the Statute that for collecting their fee, they give us administrative for doing it. This is something the fees do not get cut on. Mr. Dunn asked if the fees can't be cut, it can only be spent on certain things, and a fund balance is being built, what is the fund balance used for? Lois said it would probably eventually be used to help pay for the e-citation. The e-citation fund only has \$34,000, but to get it going, which is to equip the squad cars, we're looking at close to \$100,000. This will be a part of it. Mr. Dunn asked what the difference was between

53 and 54. Lois explained that 54 is the e-citation which was passed in 2011. It is a fund to build up so that when the e-citation happens, there is money for it. It doesn't grow very fast because of the way the Legislators worded it. There is legislation being worked on to reword it so more money will come in and e-citation will happen faster. Mr. Dunn asked if that was the same e-citation stuff being talked about in 53. Lois said yes, 54 is e-citation only. If it is not used, it has to be turned back over to the state. Jay asked when it was anticipated that they would go to the e-citation. Lois said there is a vender from Digit Tickets coming next week to do a demonstration. They just got approved by the Conference of Judges on Monday to use their tickets. Jay asked if once the program is instituted, if manpower would be reduced in any way. Lois said she thought it would make the stops go quicker when an officer pulls someone over.

Jury Fund

Chair Ashby asked what happened to the \$66,500. Lois said that is the same as last year. Carol Reed said it gets added in as her office does the revenue. It's just not there yet. So Revenue minus expenses is zero. Carol said that 54 is the same way.

Kevin Greenfield asked how close to 1% reduction the budget is. Lois said that before the changes today Last year it was at \$1,335,428 and this year \$1,225,453. Jay Dunn asked if that was consolidated. Lois said it was all but the Jury & E-Citation funds. It went down \$110,000 from last year's. Mr. Dunn said, unfortunately, it went up in the General Fund. Lois said by \$41,000. Mr. Greenfield asked if any more could be squeezed out of the fees. Lois said no.

Patty Cox made a motion to forward the proposed budget on to display. Linda Little seconded it as long as the Court Technology Administrative position and how it is funded is reviewed, seconded by Patty Cox. Motion carried with Little, Cox, Ashby & Greenfield voting in favor. Dudley and Dunn voted no.

Jay Dunn said that he had met with Matt Sorenson, the Chairman of McLean County, who is also involved with Bellweather that did the fee study. They just did a study for Champaign County on the IT stuff. He is going to send some information on that study and the costs. Jay said he felt the County's IT stuff and who does what and how it gets paid for. Kevin Greenfield asked if he was suggesting the IT costs would be split among whoever uses it. Jay said that would be a good possibility because Lois pays Melanie Milliman's full salary even though she works for 7 departments. Jay said that the State's Attorney's Office has their investigator doing a lot of their IT. The Sheriff has his own IT person. The Highway Department hires someone. The County Building is with Decatur Computers. He said he thought we need to look at the whole picture and have a back-up plan.

State's Attorney

Jay Scott reported that since the last meeting, they had sat down and made some more cuts. Mr. Baggett will go over those line by line, but he wanted to address some things first. There was a question about the investigators in the State's Attorney's Office. Currently there are 3. Since 2006, for the past 8 years, there have been three investigators. For about 2 years prior to that, there were 4. From 2000 to 2004 there were 3. From 1989 to 2000, there were 2. Going back 25 years to 1964 when the first investigator was hired, during that timeframe there were one or two. In 1964, when the first investigator was hired, there were only 3 attorneys. Now there are

16 attorneys. That is the same number of attorneys that there was in 1988 when Mr. Scott started in the office. The cases have gotten a lot more complicated, but in 1988 there were 885 felonies were filed. Last year there were 1595 filed. That is almost double and that is where the bulk of the work is that is done by the attorneys and investigators. This came up because the Buffett Foundation gave a grant for a full time Elderly Crime Victims Investigator which amounted to \$360,000 over 4 years for salary and vehicle. Jay said that one of the first things he did was setup the Elderly Crime Victims Unit and has gotten help from the Sheriff and the community. The Elder Fraud Hotline has been set up. Through that a lot of people have been helped from losing lots of money. Many times the scams are found out about after the money has been lost. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are being lost in Macon County through scams each year. Jason VanAlstine volunteered to take on the elderly crime investigations when it was started and it is becoming a full time position for him. The Elderly Victims Task Force that involves all of the local law enforcement, a banker, medical professionals, and business people to try to put together a coordinated effort to try to stop these crimes on the elderly. Week after next there is a meeting with the media to try to get a quick response when they find out about the scams in getting the word out to the public. The question was raised about what other counties have as far as investigators. It is difficult to compare because all the counties do things differently. Macon County is pretty aggressive on violent crimes and has been pretty successful. Mr. Scott listed cases and pointed out that they could not do this without the help of the investigators finding witnesses and putting cases together. The investigators conduct outside investigations if the sheriff has a conflict. We've had other agencies that have requested this as well. The Chief Investigator also does a lot of the IT stuff. The other counties have different demographics and different philosophies. Our philosophy is to be aggressive and go after domestic violence and try to get felony convictions where some of the other counties pass them off as misdemeanors. To compare Sangamon County, which has one of the highest crime rates in the US, according to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, their violent crime rate in 2012 was 56% higher than Macon County's. They have one investigator, 30 attorneys vs our 16 and last year they filed 1,234 felonies vs our 1,595. They don't have to have an investigator go out and find people. Their police department has a liaison that goes out and helps them find people. Champaign County's violent crime rate is also higher than ours. They only have one investigator, but they have 22 attorneys and they also get help from the police department in tracking down witnesses. Mr. Scott said they are not asking for more attorneys, and the investigators typically cost less than attorneys and they help get the job done. One concern about cutting a position was the intent of the grant. He saw what was being done and liked it and wanted to give an additional investigator. Jay said he asked the question if they were to have to cut an investigator, would that be contrary to what the intent was of the grant and was told that the intent was to do something nice for the elderly in the community. Mr. Scott said he had been informed that the condition of the grant for a full time elderly service investigator may be in jeopardy as it was made clear that the funds must support a new full time position for an investigator that is 100% dedicated to fraud which is committed against our senior citizens. If the office cuts an existing position, this will violate the agreement and the \$360,000 will have to be paid back. Linda Little asked if at the end of the 4 years all of our elderly crimes would be solved or if a contingency plan to continue the program is in the works. Jay said they will be working on it, but there is no guarantee after that. Linda said it's not going to just float into the general fund. Mr. Scott confirmed.

Mike Baggett presented the budget line by line. Based on the committee's request at the last meeting substantial cuts were made.

Keith Ashby asked why revenue line 4318 for 708 Board donations was taken out. Mr. Baggett explained that it was moved to a new fund, A092 SA Grant for 708 Board because the donation from the 708 Board is specifically designated for the payment of an attorney's salary. This will help facilitate record keeping. The money will go in and then it can be reported exactly where the money is coming from for payroll.

The hospitalization line had an error which has been corrected. It is still more than it was last year because of the way the employees were allocated last year.

Line 7115 – Reduced by \$3,800. Some of the costs for telephone services have been shifted. Some of them went to the Child Support Division and some to the Teen Court Division. These are two divisions within in the office that have their own separate of revenue streams and they will start carrying their own weight on certain services. That is a 17% decrease from the last request and 17% from last year.

Training, Library, & Travel remained the same.

Line 7150 – Quite a bit of the postage has been shifted from the general fund to the 4D and Teen Court. It has been lowered by about \$2,600 or 38% from the last request. That is a 15% reduction from last year's budget amount.

The copy machine line includes service, paper & toner. Some of those costs have been shifted to Child Support and Teen Court. General Fund had been subsidizing those due to lack of inclusion in the Child Support grant in prior years. This has been added back into their budget. This was lowered \$2,500 from the last budget hearing. It is a 28% reduction from the last request and a 47% reduction from last year. At halfway through the year, it was not at 50%, so was a little over budgeted. This should be closer to what is needed and better allocated.

Appellate Services is a \$4,000 increase. This is a fee that the State Appellate Prosecutor charges and the office does not have choice in the amount. This is the first increase since 2000.

Investigations has been lowered by \$1,700 which is a 22% reduction from the first request. At the halfway mark, it was over the 50%, but they will try to stay within the budget.

The sexually dangerous and sexually violent exams line has been lowered to zero based on the current practice where they wait for the expenses to arise and then come in with a special appropriation request.

Court Costs & Appeals remains the same as first requested. At the halfway point of the year, expenses were at 70%. These are costs that are unpredictable, but it is known that they will be pretty high.

Supplies was lowered by \$250 or 8% from the previous request. At the halfway mark this year, nearly the entire budget had been spent. The automation fund, grant funds, and other departments are relied upon to provide some of the supplies that are needed.

Equipment was lowered initially and has been lowered again by about \$7,700 or a 64% reduction from the first request and a 77% reduction from last year. Half of the budgeted amount had not been spent at the halfway point.

All total, 1% was cut from the budget with the exception of salaries. It is a 2% increase over last year with a 3% increase in the salary lines. More is being done with fewer attorneys. A cost of living increase of 3% is being requested. This has not been requested in several years. An effort is being made to hire good people and keep good people on staff. Non-compensation lines are being cut pretty dramatically in order to facilitate that knowing that the board wants to see tightening of the belts as much as possible.

Jay Dunn said he appreciated them going over it and cutting what they did and made a motion to approve passing the proposed budget on to display, seconded by Kevin Greenfield.

Chair Ashby asked about the addition of \$6,300 for postage, copier, telephone & court costs on page 2 of 20 and asked where they were before. Mike explained that they did not exist before. They were transferred over from the general fund to Child Support. The 4D program is the Child Support Division. It is a grant from the State Attorney General's Office. The grant is allocated for salaries and fringes only. Mike said they are going to seek a budget amendment from them to take the funds they've already given, but reallocate \$6,370 for postage, copy machine & telephone. The office is going to stop subsidizing some of their office supplies.

Motion carried 6-0.

Jean Moore, CAC, addressed the committee stating that they had received word of a donation that would fill the gap and allow them to show a fund balance at the end of the year. She said she had also contacted the Piatt County Board regarding an increase in fines & fees. This number shows a decrease based on what has been coming in recently, but they are studying the issue and will take that before their board. They are also exploring giving \$5,000 general revenue. Their board meets again on 10/8. With this donation, the budget hole has been filled and will be able to show a revenue balance of \$27,026.

Jay Dunn asked if the donation was going straight to CAC or through the County. Jean said the check has been deposited through the State's Attorney's Office in the misc 4900 line. Mike Baggett confirmed that the check has already been given to and deposited with the County. Next month a resolution will be done seeking to have that appropriation made to make the equipment line work through this fiscal year and the additional will cover the budget hold for FY15 and probably leave a fund balance. Jean added that she did not include equipment money in this budget because the money needs to be spent out of this fiscal year and not FY15. So not all the money is reflected, just what would be for the next fiscal year.

Chair Ashby asked if the line 4900 revenue had gone from \$25,000 to \$52,881 and where did that money come from. Ms. Moore confirmed and stated that it was a private donation. Ms. Cox asked the total amount of the donation. Ms. Moore said \$64,000. Some of the money needs to be spent immediately for emergency equipment need and the rest will be reflected in FY15.

Linda Little asked if a separate motion was needed to approve this budget or if it was included in the State's Attorney's. Mr. Baggett advised that this has already been approved and a separate vote was not necessary, but they felt it was important to have it presented to the committee because they are changes from the last meeting. Linda Little thanked Ms. Moore for going after the private donation and approaching Piatt County about increasing their contributions.

CITIZEN REMARKS – PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

CLOSED SESSION

None

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, October 8th @ 5:15 p.m. to prepare for Display Budget

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Tim Dudley, seconded by Patty Cox, motion carried 6-0, and meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham
Macon County Board Office