

**MINUTES FOR THE
JACKSON COUNTY BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

April 15, 2021

The Jackson County Budget Committee meeting was reconvened by Chair Craig Morris on April 15, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. by videoconference. Roll call was taken.

Present: Craig Morris, Chair; April Sevcik, Budget Committee Member; John Rachor, Budget Committee Member; Rick Dyer, Commissioner; Dave Dotterer, Commissioner; and Colleen Roberts, Commissioner.

Staff: Danny Jordan, County Administrator; Harvey Bragg, Senior Deputy County Administrator; Traci Carrier, Budget Analyst; Jennifer Drake, Recording Secretary.

Members of the Public and Press

Public Comment

Chair Morris opened the public comment period at 9:01 a.m. No one wished to speak. Chair Morris closed the public comment period at 9:01 a.m.

Roads and Parks

Mr. John Vial, Roads and Parks Director, reviewed the Roads and Parks recommended budget for fiscal year 2021-2022 (*Submission No. 11*). Mr. Vial began by presenting the budget for the Parks and Recreation Programs. The financial stability continues to be good, but was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The budget includes a large debt service payment for the Southern Oregon RV (SORV) Park. He stated that the County parks would be affected by this year's expected low water levels. He stated that some of the losses to be experienced by other parks will be covered by the newest addition to the Program of the Joseph Stewart County Park. He explained the Program's operating fund is 70 percent user fee based and is provided no General Fund support. Taking over Joseph Stewart Park from the State will have a positive effect on the Parks and Recreation Program as it is a good source of revenue to enhance the Program. Upon taking over the Park this year the store was refurbished. He noted that Howard Prairie and Emigrant Lakes are empty; and shared a diagram showing Emigrant at 25 percent full and Howard Prairie at 9 percent full, which are the lowest water levels in recorded history for the two facilities. He updated the Budget Committee on plans to seek funding to rebuild the marina at Howard Prairie Lake, as it is currently located in the shallowest part of the lake. This is a good time to build because it will be less expensive to do so while it is dry. He explained that the SORV Park revenue is strengthening the Parks and Recreation Program, it is currently at 100 percent capacity to house fire survivors. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of Oregon, Department of Human Services, are paying the Park for use of the facilities. Emigrant

Lake is also in use, currently, to house survivors. The Bear Creek Greenway is a challenge as it is a constant threat for fire and has a need for vegetation management.

In continuing his presentation, Mr. Vial said that people drove less during the COVID-19 pandemic, which decreased gas tax revenues. He stated FTEs would remain the same, with the exception of increasing 1.00 full-time equivalent (FTE) for the Parks and Recreation Program. The total General Road Fund budget is \$43,283,200. He explained that reserves were spent down on some projects. He shared the highlights for the year in regards to pavement maintenance and bridges. The Department goal is to keep pavement in good condition with maintenance. He reviewed projects in progress and those to come.

Chair Morris asked for clarification on how projects were selected. Mr. Vial explained the Transportation System Plan, and how it is utilized through a tier process based on which projects provide the biggest benefit to the citizens of Jackson County. Mr. Jordan asked Mr. Vial to explain the 10-year capital plan and system development charges. There was discussion about Joseph Stewart County Park and if the County would benefit from Federally directed spending, which would be reinstated by the current administration. Commissioner Roberts thanked Mr. Vial for all of his hard work and thanked him for being such an asset to the County during the past year's emergency response. She also asked about the expenditures for Joseph Stewart County Park and if additional staffing would be necessary. Mr. Vial explained that, due to the lack of water at other parks, the Park would be able to run with current staff, and the addition of 1.00 FTE. He explained that the State actuals were used to budget accordingly for the Park this year and it looks to be a park that may bring in additional revenue. Chair Morris thanked Mr. Vial for his continued service in the capacity of Interim Emergency Manager.

Board of Commissioners

Mr. Bragg presented the Board of Commissioners' (BoC) recommended budget for fiscal year 2021-2022 (*Submission No. 12*). Mr. Bragg explained a decrease in the budget due to actuarial adjustments, and bringing on Commissioner Dotterer at a Step 1 salary. He explained that the FTE positions have remained at 5.50 over the years. He reviewed the cost allocation formula and the impact to the General Fund of \$66,609. He reviewed how BoC are positions created and directed by the Home Rule Charter of Jackson County to be the executive, quasi-judicial, and legislative governing body of the County. He shared the BoC accomplishments for the prior year, and objectives for the next year. There were no questions from the Budget Committee.

County Counsel

Mr. Joel Benton, County Counsel, explained the responsibilities of County Counsel serving as in-house advocates and advisors to the County's Elected and Appointed Officials, and County departments (*Submission No. 13*). County Counsel represents the County in all litigation matters, administrative hearings, and in labor relations. He explained a case in which the County used outside counsel and how, in that instance, it was more cost-effective. The goal is to always act in the manner which is most cost-effective for the entire County. He stated that all positions are filled, with five attorneys and two administrative professionals. He reviewed the revenue sources with the majority of revenue coming from transfers for services provided to other departments, which are based on the percentage of use by a department. He reviewed performance measures for his Department, which were instituted in fiscal year 2018-2019, and which include a client satisfaction survey, having contracts reviewed within three days, and County-related litigation

being handled in-house. The Department has successfully achieved the performance measures with 90 percent satisfaction.

Chair Morris reiterated the value of the legal department, and Mr. Jordan explained that County Counsel had also been instrumental in the past year's emergency response.

Commissioner Roberts also shared her appreciation to Mr. Benton for his assistance in preparing correspondence for the BoC.

Assessor

Mr. Dave Arrasmith, Assessor, presented the recommended budget for the Assessor's Office. He began by reviewing the goals of the Office and gave general information on the number of accounts handled by the Office. He described the programs and the tools used to efficiently conduct business. He explained the County Assessment Function Funding Assistance (CAFFA) Grant program, which provides funding to his Office from fees assessed on most recorded documents, and a percentage of the interest collected on delinquent property taxes. He explained the various ways the Office aided in property tax proration for fire victims. He stated that most expenditures are related to Personnel, and Materials and Services.

Mr. Jordan provided background information about how staffing was cut in the Assessor's Office many years ago based on a more efficient reorganization. This was not a reduction in staff due to budgeting issues but was due to, and for, proper efficiencies being instituted. He also explained the importance of the Assessor's Office staff to the tax proration process for fire victims; the fires have caused a significant workload increase for the Office. Mr. Jordan explained that the budget includes a contract for Geographic Information System updates, and following the County Administrator review there was additional discussion with Information Technology (IT) on how to best accomplish these updates. The State of Oregon, Department of Revenue, recommended waiting on the updates until such time that program kinks were worked out.

Chair Morris stated that Mr. Jordan is an extremely capable County Administrator and can see processes through a bigger picture design. He strongly encouraged the Assessor to work with Mr. Jordan and IT to ensure the proper processes are in place, not only for the GIS system, but for the assessment of the fire properties as well.

Mr. Jordan provided additional information about the software conversion and upgrade. He said that the County is missing a huge opportunity to enable additional layering of GIS data that the general public could benefit from by it being displayed against multiple County forums. Every department integrates with other departments and this is necessary in this situation as well. Mr. Jordan also pointed out that processes needed to be reviewed as there is an estimated 6,000 hours of additional time needed to assess properties recovering from the fires. He noted that the Assessor has not been open to reorganization of resources, and IT will be taking the lead role in the GIS system updates because there is a larger need than only in the Assessor's Office. Mr. Arrasmith explained that he has been addressing the needs of fire damaged properties and took on all of the Board of Property Tax Appeals cases this year. He has a firm belief that his staff can meet the goals; he will be working with Mr. Jordan and IT on the GIS system updates. Chair Morris strongly encouraged Mr. Arrasmith to work with Mr. Jordan to ascertain the best plans for each of these projects moving forward.

Surveyor

Mr. Scott Fein, Surveyor, explained the U.S. Public Land Survey System which supports legal descriptions. He reviewed the different programs within the Surveyor's Office and how that ties the legal location with the physical location of land. He explained the two programs for his Office, and that they are self-supporting and based completely on fees. He reviewed the staffing of the Office and noted that the City of Ashland no longer has their own Surveyor's Office, which has caused an increase in workload. He reviewed the rest of the achievable objectives of his Office and stated that wildfires have caused the loss of monuments, which increases the workload to restore these as they are found. He reviewed revenues, expenditures, and the percentage of Personnel, Materials and Services, and Capital Outlay. He described the Corner Restoration Fund Personnel expenditures. The Surveyor is responsible for the monuments that tie legal ownership and physical land; these records help citizens receive more cost-effective surveys overall. Due to the fires last year, there are approximately eight to 10 years of work to be done if all corners are to be restored; FEMA funding may allow for contracts and extra help to accomplish this large task. He stated that he is grateful for the resources provided by the Budget Committee and thanked County staff for supporting the Program. There were no questions from the Budget Committee.

Human Service Agencies/Special Requests

Ms. Stacy Brubaker, Mental Health Division Manager, Health and Human Services (HHS), presented the Human Service Agency grants, and noted that she has heard from these organizations and how appreciative they are for the funding; there are nine agencies and 14 different programs. She stated that there are no changes to the service grant award amounts for fiscal year 2021-2022.

Commissioner Dyer inquired as to the process for a new community partner to apply, and how the evaluation is performed. Mr. Jordan explained the process for ascertaining which agencies would be funded. Ms. Brubaker stated that these agencies originally applied through a Request for Proposals process, and that all of the current providers are grateful for the consistency as they can utilize these funds to leverage other requests. Commissioner Dyer stated he was not questioning the funding and was interested in the process.

Health and Human Services

Ms. Malisa Dodd, Deputy Director, HHS presented the recommended budget for Health and Human Services (*Submission No. 14*). She reviewed the highlights of each program and noted that Public Health has seen extreme increases in services due to COVID-19. She explained the Department's response to the pandemic and the reorganization of staff to support the various needs associated with the pandemic.

Commissioner Dyer noted that this was the first time hearing the actual numbers of restaurant inspections with 58 percent not being inspected. Ms. Dodd explained that many of the facilities were closed and the Department was not able to go and inspect. She explained that staff provided support on guidance to reopen safely; it was not a traditional inspection year but support was provided. Mr. Jordan explained that the numbers reported are for inspection fees paid in 2020, prior to business closures. Ms. Dodd also explained that staff supported other agencies, such as

schools and long-term care facilities, throughout the pandemic. Mr. Jordan explained that new billings for fees just went out, but it is difficult to ascertain how many restaurants are still in business.

Mr. Rachor stated that the need for a new animal shelter has been talked about for many years and inquired on what would be done, and if this item would be brought to the Board of Commissioners for consideration. Mr. Jordan stated that he is preparing conceptual costs to bring to the Board, but there is not currently a funding option available.

Elected Officials' Salary Committee Report

Chair Morris commented, for the benefit of the public, that the Elected Officials' Salary Committee established policies and procedures many years ago to be consistent in how the Elected Officials' salaries are determined.

Mr. Jordan began by reviewing the process for affixing the salaries of Elected Officials in compliance with Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 204.112(3). He read the statute into the record, making clarification on the use of the term Office not Officers. He also explained the required considerations of the Elected Officials' Salary Committee. Mr. Jordan stated that the Human Resources Office prepared a recommendation for the Salary Committee to consider, which includes assigning classifications based on equivalent, non-represented positions and various compensation studies. He also reviewed the qualifications for each non-represented position and how they accounted for education and experience. Two exceptions to this classification are the District Attorney, who is an employee of the State of Oregon and receives a stipend from the County; and the Sheriff who, by ORS, must be the highest paid position in his Office. He also explained that the salary for an appointed position is to be the same as the person whose position they are being appointed to. The Justice of the Peace was appointed this year and, pursuant to the Oregon Constitution, his salary must be the same as his predecessor. He said he was not aware of this previously, but it is in the Oregon Constitution so Judge Damian Idiart will be paid retroactively and his salary cannot be changed until the beginning of a new term in January 2023. Mr. Jordan recommends following what the Constitution requires and any decision by Judge Idiart to accept Step 1 is at his discretion. He also recommended to offer a cost of living adjustment (COLA) so it stays in line with the compensation plan.

Mr. Jordan continued by reading a draft of an Order that the Elected Officials' Salary Committee unanimously voted to approve, which includes information on how the salaries are determined. He reviewed the COLA for the Elected Officials of 1.99 percent, which is consistent with the COLA that Jackson County non-represented management and confidential employees will receive, and does include a COLA increase for the Justice of the Peace.

Public Comment

Chair Morris opened the public comment period at 11:55 a.m. No one wished to speak. Chair Morris closed the public comment period at 11:55 a.m.

Chair Morris called for a recess at 11:56 a.m.

Chair Morris reconvened the meeting at 12:05 a.m.

Deliberations

Chair Morris asked each member if there were any items they wished to deliberate. Commissioner Roberts offered to deliberate on the Elected Officials' Salary Committee's recommendation. Mr. Rachor said he would like to address the situation in the Assessor's Office.

Commissioner Roberts said that she listened to the Elected Officials' Salary Committee meeting, and thanked the Salary Committee for its hard work and very generous recommendations. She stated that she knows there is an option to not take a full salary, but the economic condition has not improved and she is not in favor of the COLA for Elected Officials. She stated that she hears from the public of general losses and harm imposed by the State intervention due to the pandemic, and she represents those businesses and those families. As their elected representative, she feels that she is different than an employee, director, or manager, and will not take the COLA until all businesses and families are freed of the oppression by the State.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve Order No. 56-21 without the COLA for Elected Officials. There was no second to this motion.

Mr. Rachor stated his concern with the direction of the Assessor's Office as there is not enough preparation for the workload increase caused by the fire recovery effort. He wanted to know if something is not done, will the Commissioners/County as a whole will be punished for the lack of the Assessor not fulfilling the obligations of his Office. He asked for clarification on the procedure to make this an appointed position. Mr. Jordan explained that it would need to be referred to the voters for an amendment to the County Charter. Mr. Jordan stated that he could put together more information if the Board was interested in pursuing this option. Chair Morris also stated his concerns. Mr. Jordan said he believes that the Assessor's Office has a very capable staff that will work tirelessly to not fail the citizens, but it is a lot of work and is not right that they should have to. There was additional discussion on what little could be done to assist the Assessor's Office staff with the future workload. Commissioners Roberts and Dyer requested regular updates to the Board and monitoring of the situation. This discussion continued with no resolution, but Mr. Jordan agreed to keep reviewing the situation.

Chair Morris confirmed that there were no further items for deliberation.

Mr. Rachor made a motion to approve Order No. 56-21 in the matter of adopting the fiscal year 2021-2022 Elected Officials' salaries for Jackson County, Oregon, as recommended by the Elected Officials' Salary Committee. Mrs. Sevcik seconded the motion. Those who voted aye: Mrs. Sevcik, Mr. Rachor, Commissioner Dyer, Commissioner Dotterrer, and Chair Morris. Those who voted nay: Commissioner Roberts. Motion passed.

Following the motion and roll call vote, Mrs. Sevcik, Mr. Rachor, Commissioner Dyer, Commissioner Dotterrer, and Chair Morris each authorized the use of their electronic signatures on Order No. 56-21, pursuant to Order No. 49-21; Commissioner Roberts did not.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve Order No. 57-21 in the matter of approving the fiscal year 2021-2022 budget for Jackson County, Oregon, as recommended by the County Administrator. Commissioner Dyer seconded the motion. Those who voted aye: Commissioner Roberts, Commissioner Dyer, Mrs. Sevcik, Mr. Rachor, Commissioner Dotterrer, and Chair Morris. Motion passed.

Following the motion and roll call vote, Mrs. Sevcik, Mr. Rachor, Commissioner Dyer, Commissioner Strosser, Commissioner Roberts, and Chair Morris each authorized the use of their electronic signatures on Order No. 57-21, pursuant to Order No. 49-21.

There being no further business, Chair Morris adjourned the Budget Committee meeting at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Craig Morris
Craig Morris, Presiding Officer/Chair

/s/ Jennifer Drake
Jennifer Drake, Recording Secretary

Approved on: 11/18/2021

Due to the existing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the need to promote physical distancing, the Jackson County Budget Committee is conducting meetings through electronic and telephonic means. On April 6, 2021, the Jackson County Budget Committee approved Order No. 49-21 authorizing the use of their electronic signatures on Orders and other documents. Following the motion and roll call vote, Chair Morris authorized the use of his electronic signature on these minutes of April 15, 2021.