

Board of County Commissioners of Lincoln County
September 21, 2020

The Board will begin conducting reviews regarding preliminary 2021 budget requests. The following departments are scheduled to discuss their requests as follows:

- 9:00 Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance
- 9:00 Jim Covington – County Treasurer’s Budget
- 9:15 Jeremiah Higgins – County Assessor’s Budget
- 9:30 Tom Nestor – Sheriff’s Operations, Jail and Victim Assistance Budgets
- 10:00 Ken Stroud – Office of Emergency Management Budget
- 10:30 Fred Lundy – Land Use Budget
- 10:45 Robin Halley – Extension Office Budget
- 11:00 Jobeth Mills – Public Health Budget
- 11:30 Andy Lorensen – County Coroner’s Budget
- 1:00 Rick Ashcraft, Chris Monks and Bruce Walters – Road and Bridge Budgets
- 1:45 Pat Phillips – Department of Human Services Budget
- 2:15 Patrick Leonard – Weed Control Budget

Other budget requests that will be reviewed during the day as time allows include the following:

- Commissioners
- Administrator
- County Clerk and Recorder and Elections
- Administrative
- Maintenance of Buildings/Plant
- Land Surveyor
- Health Inspector
- Fairgrounds
- Veterans Office
- Library Fund
- Contingent Fund
- Conservation Trust Fund
- Capital Projects
- Landfill Fund
- Lodging Tax/Tourism Fund
- East Central Council of Local Governments
- Fire Control
- District Attorney
- Ambulance Service
- Emergency Medical Service
- E.M.S. Subsidy
- Developmentally Disabled
- Community Development Block Grant
- Transportation Enhancement Grant

The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. on September 21, 2020, for the annual budget hearings. Those attending were: Chairman Steve Burgess, Commissioners Ed E. Schiffers and Doug Stone, County Administrator Jacob Piper, and Clerk to the Board Corinne M. Lengel.

Chairman Burgess called the meeting to order and asked County Treasurer Jim Covington to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Throughout the day, most department heads reported that the most significant increase in their budgets was due to raises. Mr. Burgess let everyone know that the commissioners were leaning toward two-step increases for employees rather than one-step raises. Mr. Piper said that salaries would add about \$140,000 to the total budget with the former option. Mr. Burgess also informed each department head that adjustments might have to occur in 2021 when they discussed the 2022 budget, but for now, the county was in good shape. Mr. Covington commented that department heads have always been mindful of their spending.

At 9:15 a.m., the Board discussed the Assessor's budget; however, County Assessor Jeremiah Higgins did not attend the meeting.

The Board discussed the Commissioner, Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation, and Administrator's budgets between appointments. Mr. Piper said the LCEDC budget figures weren't based on the 2020 Census, so the numbers might change when the Census results come in. The organization was asking Lincoln County for \$44,880. Mr. Piper also commented that he'd moved the funds in his Capital Outlay to the Office Supplies line item since the auditor wanted only expenses over \$5,000 to be considered Capital Outlay.

Mrs. Lengel said that most of her Clerk and Recorder budget increase was salary adjustments, but her five-year recording system maintenance contract would also go up in 2021. The recording system vendor had not raised the price in over ten years.

At 9:30 a.m., Sheriff Tom Nestor and Jail Captain Michael Yowell met with the Board to present the Sheriff's, Jail, and Victim Assistance budgets. The sheriff had several increases to line items due to continually rising costs. He also pointed out that he'd added a line item for the K-9 program so he could keep better track of food and vet bills.

Mr. Burgess asked if the county could use any of the CARES Act money for anything the sheriff had purchased, but Sheriff Nestor responded that they'd only spent around \$500 on Zoom equipment, masks and other PPE.

Most line items in the Jail budget also went up for 2021, and Captain Yowell explained that they'd added a JBBS/Mental Health line item as well. Sheriff Nestor stated that since the county broke off from the ten-county region, Lincoln County had gotten over \$95,000 back. Captain Yowell said that since it was a legislative mandate, everything would be reimbursed.

Sheriff Nestor presented the Victim Assistance budget, most of which the VALE grant covers. He'd added slight increases to the Supplies and Utilities line items, which the county pays for, as well as the Repairs and Maintenance line item. They would like to replace the floor in the Victim Assistance building with vinyl flooring. The sheriff also informed the Board that they'd received a VOCA grant that pays for volunteer call-out, also reflected in the budget.

Captain Yowell explained the personnel staff change request, and Sheriff Nestor added that he would possibly be losing two road deputies to other agencies. One had already turned in his resignation, and the other was in the final vetting stages. Since one of the correctional officers is currently working on his POST certification, he would be the next logical choice for the road. In the interim, Captain Yowell suggested that a promotion from Correctional Officer I to Deputy I would be in order. Sheriff Nestor asked the Board to thank the Adams County Commissioners if they got the chance. Adams County offers a twenty-two-week academy that they charge \$3,400 to attend, including room and board. Most academies can cost the attendee around \$10,000 or more. The sheriff said he'd like to speak with the county attorney about the prospect of requiring three-year contracts if the county paid to send employees to the Adams County academy.

The sheriff requested another position, an Administrative Assistant, contingent upon the E911 Authority Board's decision regarding the new 911 rate increase. The rate would go from \$.70 per line to \$1.72 per line, and the revenue would cover the cost of the staff member and benefits and still leave funds in reserves. Sheriff Nestor said that the passage of Senate Bill 217 created an influx of mandated reporting and paperwork, which officers would need help with. Hiring an assistant would give his deputies more time to perform patrol duties.

Lastly, the sheriff requested \$160,000 in his Capital Outlay line item to replace three vehicles, including equipment.

At 10:00 a.m., Ken Stroud met with the Board to present the Office of Emergency Management budget. While he'd increased a couple of line items slightly, most remained the same. Mr. Schifferns asked him about possibly getting 800 MHz radios from the Limon fire department, and Mr. Stroud told him that they might obtain ten-to-fifteen units.

Mr. Stroud left, and Mrs. Lengel presented the Elections budget, explaining that most line items were lower due to one election in 2021, instead of three. She informed the Board that her department was approved for over \$5,000 in CARES Act grant reimbursements, which they should receive soon.

The Board discussed the Administrative budget, which Mr. Piper said was inaccurate because of the health insurance and new HSA. He had prepared the budget with all employees choosing to remain on Plan A or all employees choosing the high deductible/HSA option. Mr. Piper said they'd know more after the open enrollment took place in November, but he used the figures to obtain the "worst-case scenario." Also, he said the CARES Act funding wouldn't show up until the county spent the money.

The Maintenance of Building/Plant, Surveyor, Health Inspector, Fairgrounds, Veterans Office, Library, and Contingent Fund budgets were all reviewed. Mr. Piper noted that Katie Zipperer did not include the used bookmobile in her budget, as he'd reported she had at the meeting on September 17. She had requested funding to remove the decals on the current bookmobile. He also explained that although they planned to dissolve the Contingent Fund, it would continue to appear in the budget for a couple of years until everything was cleared out.

Land Use Administrator Fred Lundy met with the Board at 10:35 a.m. to present his budget requests. He'd included money to pay someone to help with gravel pits but learned that hiring an outside source was far more expensive than he'd imagined, anywhere from \$6,000 to \$18,000. Mr. Burgess asked if they needed to purchase a new copier for the office since he and Mr. Piper have had so many problems with theirs. Mr. Lundy said they'd appreciate it.

At 10:45 a.m., Extension Director Robin Halley met with the Board to present his department's budget. He'd made slight increases to the Phone, Postage, and Fair Expense line items. Mr. Halley then discussed the other proposed budget items, including the poultry and rabbit cages and judges and superintendents.

Public Health Director Jobeth Mills met with the commissioners at 11:00 a.m. to present her budget. Mr. Piper said they were still trying to decrease the fund balance, which was challenging. He felt leaving the required mill levy at .25 was sufficient.

Mrs. Mills left, and Mr. Piper said that he'd learned the county could not give Conservation Trust funds to the two conservation districts that requested money during the last Board meeting. Conservation Trust funds must be spent on improvements to government parks, fairgrounds buildings, etc.

During the Capital Projects budget discussion, Mr. Burgess said they'd been planning to replace the courthouse parking lot for at least eight years. Mrs. Lengel reminded them that they'd agreed to replace carpet or flooring in one office in the courthouse each year as well. She said that the Assessor's office was probably next on the list, so the group agreed to add \$25,000 to the Capital Projects budget for flooring. Office painting expenses would come from the Grounds and Buildings budget.

Mr. Burgess brought up the landfill rates, stating that they should discuss charging a flat rate, such as \$20 per ton. The Board also reviewed the Lodging Tax/Tourism Fund budget and agreed not to make any changes.

At 11:30 a.m., County Coroner Andy Lorensen met with the Board to present the Coroner's budget request. The only thing he'd increased was the Repairs and Maintenance line item since he might need new tires on the coroner vehicle.

After reviewing the ECCOG, Fire Control, District Attorney, Ambulance Service, Emergency Medical Service, E.M.S. Subsidy, Developmentally Disabled, Community Development Block Grant, and Transportation Enhancement Grant budgets, the group took a lunch break.

At 1:00 p.m., Chris Monks, Bruce Walters, and Rick Ashcraft met with the Board to discuss the Road and Bridge budgets. Mr. Ashcraft said he needed to buy pipe to replace some bridges and wanted to know if he should do it now or wait. He wasn't sure he'd have time to tear them out this year, but he'd been told that delivery on the pipe was forty days out. The commissioners told him to go ahead and order it. Mr. Ashcraft said they have four bridges to replace and that it would cost between \$35,000 and \$40,000.

Mr. Piper told the foremen they'd decided to add the new medical and life insurance and HSA expenses to each budget where it affected employees, and he would make that change.

Mr. Monks asked if the commissioners planned to replace the courthouse parking lot as he'd noticed some bad areas on the west side. They also discussed what it would take to raise County Road 109 east of the courthouse. Mr. Burgess said they could coordinate with the town of Hugo, thus possibly increasing the chances to obtain DOLA funding for the project.

Concerning the payments due to municipalities, Mr. Piper addressed that the Town of Genoa's assessed valuation had decreased, which would reduce their amount due from Lincoln County for 2021. The county has always made the towns whole based on an amount from a prior budget year, but in 2020 Genoa's payment went up due to an increase in the assessed valuation. Mr. Piper asked the commissioners if they wanted to make Genoa whole from the amount paid in 2020, which was \$5,108 or use the amount established prior to their assessed valuation increasing in 2019 to determine their 2021 payment. The Board agreed to pay Genoa \$5,100 based off of their 2020 payment.

Department of Human Services Director Patricia Phillips and Sherri Hansen met with the Board at 1:45 p.m. to present the DHS budget.

At 2:15 p.m., Patrick Leonard met with the commissioners to discuss the Weed Control budget and other items, such as storing the weed truck for the winter, Mr. Leonard's spraying licenses, and the December conference, which will be held virtually.

Once Mr. Leonard had gone, the group discussed general budget topics, and then Mr. Burgess adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m. The next meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. on September 30, 2020.

Corinne M. Lengel, Clerk to the Board

Steve Burgess, Chairman