

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

June 02, 2016

A Finance Committee meeting was held Thursday, June 02, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Quorum Court Meeting Room, Benton County Administration Building, Third Floor, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Committee Members Present: *Allen, Jones, Chiocco, Slinkard, Moore, Moehring

Others Present: JPs J. Harrison, Adams, Sandlin, Leadabrand, Meyers, County Assessor Linda Hambrick, Comptroller Brenda Guenther, Assessor-Elect Rod Grieve, JP-Elect Bob Bland, NEBCO Volunteer Fire Department-EMS Chief Rob Taylor, NEBCO VFD-EMS Board of Directors Member Kara Funk

Media: Tracy Neal – Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

In the absence of Committee Chair JP Allen, Vice Chair JP Moore called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Public Comments:

None.

Discussion:

NEBCO Update

NEBCO Volunteer Fire Department-EMS Board of Directors member Kara Funk stated that their fire district covers 84 square miles and has 1,900 households; their EMS District, which includes both their fire district and Avoca's fire district, is 115 square miles and 3,700 households. She said that they answer medical calls, motor vehicle accidents, water rescue, structure fires, brush fires, and road hazards. She thanked the JPs for their support and stated that she looks forward to working with them in the future.

NEBCO VFD-EMS Chief Rob Taylor reported that this year they have put their second ambulance into service as much as possible. He stated that they are at about 200 calls for this year and averaging 15-17 days a month of having two ambulances in service. He stated that they are also backup for Pea Ridge's ambulance service.

JP Adams asked how many calls they did last year.

Chief Taylor stated that they had about 550 calls last year. He said that they are currently running pretty close to what they did last year.

JP Meyers asked if they have any savings accounts or reserve money.

Chief Taylor stated that they are putting money into reserves to replace an ambulance in 2018. He said that most of their equipment is practically new. He said that both of their ambulances are 2014 models; one has 50,000 miles on it and one has 12,000 miles and they alternate them.

JP Moehring asked about the ratio of EMS calls versus other calls.

Chief Taylor said it is about 550 EMS calls and about 180 other calls - fire, limbs across the roads, car wrecks, etc.

JP Moehring asked about the staffing problem.

Chief Taylor stated that it is getting impossible to find volunteer firefighters. He said he is working on that every day to help the fire department keep the staffing up. He said that this is a problem with every department in both the County, state, and country. He stated that EMS are not volunteer positions; right now they are short on paramedics in the area.

JP Moehring asked about the fee structure of NEBCO.

Chief Taylor stated that it is \$100 per household for the EMS membership. For fire it is a three-tiered type depending on assessed value of property.

Kara Funk stated that it is \$40, \$70, and \$120.

* JP Allen entered the meeting and assumed the role of Chair.

JP Moehring asked about collections.

Chief Taylor stated that it has not affected them too much at this time due to the fact that it is not mandatory. The fire dues are on the tax rolls so, when the taxes are paid, there is an option to pay them.

JP Moore issued an invitation for NEBCO VFD to come and talk to his shop class at Rogers Heritage High School to help in recruitment.

Chief Taylor stated that he would love to have that opportunity once school starts in the fall.

JP Leadabrand asked if they always dispatch an ambulance with the fire trucks.

Chief Taylor said yes, unless the ambulance is out on another call, they dispatch them at the same time.

JP Leadabrand asked if they are state certified.

Chief Taylor stated that they are both nationally and state certified.

Fund Summary:

2016 through 05/31/16

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that for Road and General Fund, they are at 40.8% of budget spent on a target of 41.67%; they have spent almost 94% of the General Fund capital expenditures but the Road Department is at 59%. However, they did purchase some trucks today.

For the Personnel side, they are at 40.02% on a target of 42.31%. They have 26 payrolls so they are 42.31% of the year through on the payroll processing. For Other Funds, they are at 36.5% overall on a target of 41.67% for all activity. She stated that everything else is looking good. She said that the County Clerk cost fund is way up due to one person being charged to the wrong department; it will be corrected and moved to the County Clerk's general fund for next month.

2016 vs. 2015 Comparison through 05/31/16

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that overall they have spent a million less than a year ago at this same time. This is because of Other Services; the jail is the biggest piece of it. Overall, they have spent a little more in Personnel than last year.

JP Moehring asked why the Road Department Other Services line is \$1 million lower year to date. Brenda Guenther stated that she does not know; she will look into it and send him an email. She said that for Other Funds, they are at \$295,000 more spent than a year ago. For the jail, they paid a lot more of the medical and dental costs out of that fund last year than this year. She will discuss this when they get to the second appropriation ordinance on the agenda later in the meeting.

Monthly Reports:

Overtime & Premium Pay Analysis

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that they have spent \$312,000 through this point in time versus \$382,000 last year, so they have spent \$70,000 less in overtime. They have spent 46% of the overtime budget; she does not have a concern with that because there are savings in the salary lines. She said that they have received \$56,793 in grant fund reimbursements. She stated that, for the courthouse security for the renovation of the courthouse, some of the jail staff is being paid for that and it is being reimbursed into the Jail Operations and Maintenance fund. She said that there is a downward trend for the amount of overtime spent by month. She reported that it was at 25% March and has gone down to 14-15% in April.

JP Jones asked for clarification on the Coroner's numbers.

Brenda Guenther stated that he is budgeted for 650 calls and is currently at 480 calls. He is budgeted for a full-time position but has not filled that position; he is using the per call person to do the calls.

JP Moehring asked if the jail is currently at full staff.

Brenda Guenther stated that she does not know.

JP Allen said that they have not gotten the ten deputies they need but they are making progress.

Fuel Analysis

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported a decrease of almost 12% per gallon cost versus last year for unleaded and an almost 44% decrease on diesel. They have spent almost 15% and 21% respectively on the Sheriff/Jail and Road budgets. She said at this same time last year they were at 23% and 24% of the budget on a bigger budget.

Sales Tax Numbers

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that they are at 1% more than a year ago, and 2% more than the same month a year ago for March sales collected in May.

Jail Collections

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that they have collected \$1,063,000 versus \$914,822 a year ago. She is a little concerned on the Department of Corrections amount versus a year ago. She stated that she talked to Jeremy Guyll and the State is not keeping their prisoners here as long as in prior years.

JP Allen stated that he would like for Brenda Guenther to talk to Jeremy Guyll more about this because he fears building a shiny, new jail addition that does not get used.

JP Moehring stated that it seems like they should be able to get somebody from the State Department of Corrections to give an idea of what the trend is going to be. He said that this would be a great number for them to know ahead of time and if there is any way to get ahold of that it would be terrific.

Convenience Center Data

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that this is the first time for this report to be included. It is showing Centerton, Rogers and Siloam Springs, and shows by month the number of loads, appliances, electronics, etc. She said that, so far in 2016, it is just a little more than the average clean-up amount per year.

JP Leadabrand asked what area they should be most concerned about.

Brenda Guenther stated that they want to see an increase in number of loads.

JP Moehring said that, when looking at this report as one who was a vocal skeptic, these numbers look good. He stated that Administrator of General Services John Sudduth and the team over there are doing a really good job. He said that he was responsible for a couple of these loads; it was convenient, easy, and he enjoyed going out there and doing it.

JP Leadabrand asked where the collected items go.

JP Allen stated that some of it goes to Esco, some of it goes to recycling, and some it goes to the landfill. He said that it depends on the value of it. He said it would be good to get numbers from John Sudduth on what they collected every six months historically to compare.

Brenda Guenther stated that Siloam Springs and Rogers are new locations. She said that this report is through April; May was not yet available.

Grants Administrator Report

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that the Siloam Springs School District is starting an early childhood classroom building. Jay Stallard of NWA EDD is going to be managing this grant; they will be meeting soon. The Endeavor Grant application was submitted in April. They think they

will hear on the Spanker Creek within thirty days. The Osage Nation had asked for some information on that and it has been found that there is no cultural issue with it. They applied for an unpaid rural services grant last month and have not heard back yet. The bulletproof vest grant did go out. The FASTLANE grant was denied. The STEP grant provided \$10,000 more dollars to apply toward the seat belt project.

JP Jones asked, if they are not using it to supplement the FASTLANE grant, what the likelihood of getting the TIGER grant is.

Brenda Guenther stated that only 6% are funded so she thinks the chances are small.

Resolution Requests:

None.

Ordinance Requests:

FY 2015 Unappropriated Rev/Exp Transfer to Capital Projects Fund - Appropriation

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that this is an appropriation request for \$2,809,825 from County General to Capital Projects. In December, a resolution was passed that any of the unexpended expenditures be moved over to help fund future capital projects. The ordinance had never been done so she went ahead and did it so they can transfer the funds. The first few months of the year were kind of tight on money anyway because of capital purchases on the General side. Now that they are getting their property tax payments in, they have the funds available so they can transfer the money over to the Capital Projects fund. She stated that, on the second page, she shows how they came up to the \$2.8 million. Revenues last year were short by \$1.3 million but expenditures were not spent by \$4.15 million; that comes to a \$2,809,822.40 so she rounded it up to \$2,809,825.

JP Jones made a motion to send this appropriation request to the June 14, 2016 Committee of the Whole meeting, seconded by JP Moehring.

JP Slinkard asked why it says “Jail Operations & Maint” on the data sheet.

Brenda Guenther stated that the title is wrong and it should be “Capital Projects” as fund 4000 is the Capital Projects fund.

Jail Operations & Maintenance

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that this was brought up in April. She feels that there is going to be a shortfall based on the current set up of the budget and how they have been spending. They started out the beginning of the year with the Jail Operations fund a little less than they anticipated it be when she was doing the projections. She stated that what she would really like to do is spend the money out of the General Fund first and then come back and see how they are going to be, and make sure they just do not overspend. This problem is mostly in the medical/dental/hospital fund.

JP Slinkard made a motion to table this appropriation ordinance request until a future Finance Committee meeting, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Other Business:

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that the County auction is next Saturday, June 11, 2016.

JP Moehring asked when the needs assessment study report will be available.

JP Jones stated that they sent him a digital file, and he is verifying with them that this is the one to be sent out. Once he gets verification of that, he will send it to Quorum Court Coordinator Stefanie Laputz to send out. The hard copies were supposed to have been in by June 2nd but they did not arrive. Once they do, he will have Stefanie send out an email to all the JPs that they can come by and pick one up.

JP Moehring stated that this is a little later than he had hoped. He asked if they will get a soft copy.

JP Jones stated that, as soon as he gets word that it can go out publicly, Stefanie will send it out and hopefully get it on the County webpage somewhere so the JPs can download it.

JP Moehring asked if JP Adams has set a Transportation Committee meeting.

JP Adams stated that he is tentatively looking at July 11, 2016 before Committee of the Whole on July 12, 2016.

JP Chiocco announced a Grievance hearing on Monday, June 06, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

JP Jones announced a Public Safety Committee meeting on Tuesday, June 07, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. He stated that they will have a presentation from Perkowitz+Ruth/Cromwell/Dewberry about the needs assessment study for the justice facility.

JP Adams announced the Sheriff's Department Appreciation day on Saturday, June 04, 2016 starting at 11:00 a.m. at the pond area just west of the Sheriff's Office.

JP Leadabrand asked if they can attend the Grievance hearing.

JP Chiocco said that anyone can attend but they cannot participate.

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that, in regards to JP Moehring's earlier question about the Road Department, they had a ton of road damages that they paid at the beginning of the new year. It is the road damages that kind of bumps that up for the first five months.

JP Allen stated that, in September, the Finance meeting falls on September 01, 2016. He said that he would like to move that to September 08, 2016 because the Committee of the Whole will not be until September 13, 2016. After a brief discussion, he announced that they would go ahead and schedule the September Finance meeting for September 08, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

JP Moore stated that he will not be at the July 07, 2016 Finance Committee meeting as he will be on vacation.

JP Allen declared the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.