

AITKIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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Aitkin County Courthouse
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TO: Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Patrick Wussow, Aitkin County Administrator

RE: Proposed 2014 Courthouse Budget

DATE: August 14, 2013

The proposed 2014 Courthouse Budget presentation will follow the format that was introduced several years ago. The process combines fifteen smaller budgets into one presentation. These fifteen budgets have a proposed total expenditure of approximately \$6 million dollars, which is comparable to the Sheriff's Dept. approximate \$4 million dollar budget, Road and Bridge \$10 million dollar budget, and Health and Human Services \$6 million dollar budget.

The fifteen budgets include:

Attorney's Office	Environmental Services	Assessor's
Administration	Auditor	IT
Courthouse Maintenance	Recorder	Commissioners
Treasurer's Office	Extension	Economic development
SWCD\AG\Water Shed	Library	Miscellaneous

We are also including the appropriate AS400 worksheets that support the attached budget summary sheets.

Department Operations

Department Heads and Elected Officials continue to run lean operations. We have been saying this for so many years it could be considered part of the County's mission statement, but it continues to be true. For the 2014 budget, staff has held additional meetings as a Budget committee since January of this year. Committee discussions included reviewing legislative action, possible expenditure reductions, and other cost savings alternatives. We also discussed the changes affecting our different workloads as compared to twenty years ago. For example technology changes for office staff, equipment changes for all employees and how to properly plan for additional changes in the work place.

Reductions in staffing levels for the 2014 Courthouse proposed budget include the continued unfilled positions:

Zoning Inspector
Central Service Secretary
Extension Secretary
Extension contracted AFE position
Appraiser position
Maintenance Custodian

The following is a brief review of the fifteen department budgets.

Commissioners: Commissioner Account 01. Commissioners froze salaries for 2014.

Auditor: Auditor Account 40, Int Audit Account 41, Elect Account 60. An election for 2014 results in a \$50,000 expense. Previous Board direction allows \$50,000.00 to be budgeted in off "election" years to offset election year expenses

Treasurer's Office: Treasurer Account 42. Proposing no staff changes in 2014.

Assessor's Office: Assessor Account 43. Appraiser position not filled in 2009 and remains unfilled through 2014. Budgeting for future replacement vehicles.

Information and Technology (formerly MIS): IT Account 49. The County Board increased staff levels in May of 2010. Added expense due to new equipment offset by revenue from Recorders Technology Fund.

Administration: Admin Account 52, Vets Account 120, Motor Pool Account 45, a portion of Central Service Staff Account 44. Since 2011 Administrative clerical staff have been assisting Extension. Budgeting \$25,000 for possible expenses relating to job description study (these \$\$\$ would be for all departments).

Attorney's Office: Includes Attorney Account 90 and Crime Victim Grant Account 255. No new or additional staff positions planned for 2014.

Recorder's Office: Recorder Account 100. Additional funding thru Technology Fund Revenue.

Courthouse Maintenance: CH Maintenance Account 110. Currently operating with three full-time and several part-time staff. This is a reduction from six full-time staff back in 2010.

Environmental Services: P&Z Account 122, Env. Health Account 390, Solid Waste Account 391, Water Wells Account 392. Building permit numbers are steady, a Zoning Inspector position was not filled in 2009 and is not planned to be filled in 2014, but is being monitored.

East Central Regional Library: Appropriation amount requested is \$232,137. This is an increase of \$1,895.

SWCD, AG & Watershed: S&W Account 600. Slight increase in budget due to clarifying AG inspections during 2013.

Extension Office: Ext Account 601. Expenses have been reduced because the extension office was moved into the Courthouse. Concerns still remain that this is not adequate space for current staff and it does not allow for an opportunity to expand. Support staffing remains an issue.

Economic Development: Econ Dev Account 711. No significant changes.

Miscellaneous:

The revenue summary worksheet does not include all of the revenue numbers listed under Central Services (this is typical as it is the levy number determined by the Board). Staff expects to have those dollars for the September 10th meeting. Importantly, no substantial fee increases are projected or planned for 2014.

For the Board review, staff has attached calendars for the months of August and September. The preliminary levy is proposed to be adopted at the September 10th Board meeting, at that meeting staff will present the levy alternatives. State law requires the County to adopt a preliminary levy prior to September 15th. The Board has one other scheduled meeting on August 27th. Because of timing staff probably will not have enough time to incorporate Board comments from the August 20th meeting into the packet for August 27th.

Staff has budgeted for a general adjustment of \$0.45 per hour for all employees, as adopted by the County Board on April 9th. Additionally, staff budgeted for scheduled step increase (steps vary from six month, one year, two years and, four years depending on experience) and a 1.5% merit increase for S & P and other non-step employees (up to the positions maximum salary). Finally, staff budgeted flat dollar amounts for health insurance (at this time not all agreements are signed) based upon three alternatives for BC/BS members, and composite rates for Teamster and 49er's health insurance.

We only estimated Property and Workman's Compensation insurance numbers. Final numbers are received in late August or early September. We are expecting a rate increase due to MCIT's recent newsletter which identified Workers Compensation aggregate rate increase of 3.6% and Property insurance aggregate increase of 6.7%.

At Tuesday's Board meeting staff will present the budget in more detail. If after reviewing the information you have questions, please try to contact me prior to Monday at noon to provide staff with adequate time to respond.