

ST. MARY'S COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BUDGET WORK SESSION

February 24, 2003

Present: Board of County Commissioners
 Elaine Kramer, Director of Finance
 Jeannett Cudmore, Deputy Director Finance
 Al Lacer, County Administrator
 George Erichsen, Director DPW&T
 John Savich, Director DECD
 George Forrest, Deputy County Administrator

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Overall objective is a balanced budget. Anticipate increase in health insurance premiums – built in a 20% increase. Tax allotment for County is an unknown. Budget amendments will be necessary to reflect the FY03 carryover of County funds (\$2,781,486). The items programmed in balancing FY04 will be done in FY04 (\$735,973) not FY03 (including Lex Park Library Renovation, Streetscape, ADA transition SMCPS).

*Action items: Finance to prepare the budget amendments for projects totaling \$2,781,486. Prepare an explanation letter to the Board of Ed for BOCC signature.
 Lex Park Library renovation, Streetscape improvements, and ADA transition will be started in FY2004 not FY2003.*

Ms. Kramer presented budget amendments 2003-85, 86, 87 covering realignment of compensation accounts and 2 budget amendments for snow related costs (DPW&T and Rec & Parks). These realignments yield \$248,366 that will be added to the Commissioners reserve. That account will total \$282,591 and snow would utilize \$158,007 leaving a balance of \$124,584 in the Commissioners reserve. Board approval will be anticipated at their meeting of 2/25/03.

Prioritize, specify, and balance. Continue retiree insurance? Lock non-county agencies to FY03 budget amount. Consider consolidation of departments, keep agencies at flat growth. Investigate bidding out workman's comp separate from IWIF (current "pooled" coverage).

SMC Ambulance Association additional cost will be \$165,000 and needs to be added into budget.

George Jarboe evaluates all departmental requests for vehicles, prioritizes these requests, and makes recommendations. Bob Kelly can make a similar evaluation on telephone/computer requests.

Total grants is \$7,474,563 for 04 vs \$6,930,493 for 03. Will break out the grant activity from the total for clarification or show total budget request minus external grant funds and county match. If there is a 100% increase in a department's budget and it's all grant funds, that's an OK thing.

HR reviews all FTE positions requests. State's Attorney's request for salary increases are under HR review and HR will make recommendations.

Commissioner McKay gave attendees a handout that suggested that correction begin in FY02 holding increases to 5% growth per year. Non-County agencies: 48.6% is the 04 reqstd increase over 2001 and it's a 42.7% increase over 03 approved. The \$143.7M requested increase over 03 is 13.3% above last year but it is 28.9% above 2001. Had the County been maintaining a 5% increase in 01, 02 and 03, then our budget request would be \$129,0979,277 vs \$143,785,882. Using this formula, an increase of 1.7% is reasonable for FY04. Each department should be at 15.8% increase from 2001. We are adjusting to 5% over the past few years. Population growth is at 1.2% per year so we need to live within our means.

Departments

- Sheriff's Office 04 request is 48% over 2001. Hold flat. Court security helpful but are they necessary?
- OOA's Northern Senior Center could be a public/private partnership, faith-based, or volunteer project. Keep operations at bare minimum.

- EMA could merge Wible and Cooper departments which is not favored in the fire and rescue community. Look closely at equipment. 32% admin increase?
- CSM is asking 7.5% increase over 03. Scrutinize requests.
- Board of Elections has a primary next spring and received state mandated voting machines. Since 2001, budget increased 102%.
- Lex Park Revitalization Plan staff could be part of DECD or privatized (like Patuxent Partnership).
- Building Services' 95% increase over three years is for equipment, repairs, and maintenance.
- IT is at 56% increase over three years which included 1 partial year position and a new telephone system. Many US companies are selling because they cannot keep up with IT technology.
- Animal control wants a new person and vehicle. Hard to support.
- Support ALS increase.
- Mailroom/Messenger asking for 24% over last year which is a reallocation of salaries (paid by grants).

Commissioner Jarboe moved, seconded by Commissioner Dement, to adjourn the meeting at 5:23 p.m. Motion carried. Commissioner McKay reconvened the meeting at 5:24 p.m.

Jason Babcock, reporter from *The Enterprise* stated that litigious people are thinking about bringing a new lawsuit against the Board of County Commissioner re open meeting laws and the creation of a department called Land Use and Growth Management. Their contention is that was a policy decision made behind closed doors while the capping of Mr. Grimm's term was a personnel issue. Their lawsuit will say that the policy decision of creating and merging the department of Land Use and Growth Management should have been done at the table during a Board meeting. They are aware the former commissioners had discussed this issue but even so, it should have been a public matter.

Commissioner McKay stated there was a resolution adopted at the table and it was done publicly.

Mr. Babcock said he was presenting their view only.

Commissioner Jarboe stated a transition team was not created but that the five members did meet but only two were current commissioners at that time.

Mr. McKay stated this Board has made every effort possible to maintain strict adherence with the open meetings law and to give the public adequate and informative notice of public meetings. The Board states the reasons for going into executive sessions.

The meeting ended at 5:30 p.m.