

A meeting of the Fayette County Board of Commissioners was held at 10 a.m. on Friday, February 12, 2016 at the Public Safety Building, Uniontown PA.

In attendance-

Commissioner Chairman Vincent A. Vicites
Commissioner Dave Lohr
Commissioner Angela M. Zimmerlink
Chief Clerk Amy Revak
Solicitor Sheryl Heid

A silent prayer was observed. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public comment on agenda items

None

A motion was made by Commissioner Lohr and seconded by Commissioner Zimmerlink to set the 2016 real estate tax millage rate at

General fund- .	.00518448
Debt Service fund-	.00033000
Total millage	.00551448

Commissioner Lohr yes
Commissioner Vicites yes
Commissioner Zimmerlink yes

Motion passed unanimously

A motion was made by Commissioner Zimmerlink and seconded by Commissioner Lohr to **approve the 2016 adopted amended Fayette County general fund budget** with revenue at \$32,598,753.00 and expenditures of \$32,598,753.00, which includes a 1 mill tax increase.

Commissioner Lohr yes
Commissioner Vicites yes
Commissioner Zimmerlink yes

Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Vicites spoke about what a monumental task completing the budget was. He spoke about the need to alter the revenue amount by more than \$3 million to make it realistic. He spoke about Act 13 monies, debt service and insurance funds and how they need to be allocated. Commissioner Vicites spoke about other revenues that needed corrected, as well as expenditures. He said \$1.5 million in expenditures were cut in line items and there was a challenge to how to balance the budget. He said they

had to cut more, and had to do some layoffs and cut positions before they were filled. He said they cut 21 positions for more than \$700,000. He said there were 12 people that were eliminated through layoffs for more than \$500,000 for a total of \$1.3 million. He said the layoffs were at the prison, adding those positions were never in the 2016 budget and they made a position as a board to not put them in. He said the positions will be filled with part time positions. He said there were three SEIU positions and one non-union positions. He said with the 21 that were eliminated and the 12 and four part time positions, for a total of 35 positions with four part time being included in there. He said actually, it is 37 positions. He said after doing that, they still needed to balance the budget, and they had no other options but to do a one mill tax increase. He said they inherited the problem and they addressed the financial disaster, adding that they went into the hole \$2.4 million in one year. He said the salary board held in December cost more than \$300,000 alone. He said they have straightened it out and are accurate and will move forward. He said fiscal responsibility is important to him and the spending plan will be monitored all year. He said the taxpayers deserve commissioners that will be conservative and look out for their tax dollars.

Commissioner Vicites spoke about how upset he was with the spending by the prior board. He said the tax increase was a last resort but they had no choice. Commissioner Lohr said the tax increase was decided after 8 p.m. the night before. He said they didn't want to do it but it was needed. He said it has been a learning experience. He said fiscal responsibility is important and they don't want to raise taxes again. He said to all the vendors that haven't received checks, they apologized to them, because it shouldn't be happening. Commissioner Zimmerlink said 2015 began with a balanced budget. She said if increases hadn't been made by the former commissioners, salary board and prison board, they wouldn't have been in the red. She said she has been labeled as the no commissioner, adding that she stands by every no vote. She said you can't enter into contracts without having the revenue. She said you leave the county in a situation with new commissioners and dealing with unfunded expenses. She said the budget was balanced but there were figures that shouldn't have been used as revenues. She said some decisions have been reversed and some they have agreed they will work on. She said they will look at vendor contracts to modify them. Regarding expenses, the annual retirement contribution needs to be made for the pension fund. She said although \$500,000 was set aside last year, it was spent on other items. She said for 2016, \$600,000 was set aside in that line item.

Commissioner Zimmerlink said for changes in staff compliment, "obviously no one wants to do that," but they must balance revenue and expenses and operate county government in the most cost effective way. She said some positions have been unfunded and they removed the 3 ½ percent raise for non-union. She said there were reclassifications in 2015, so some raises were given out. She said raises were given retroactively to the beginning of 2015 and that wasn't right. She said the three of them understanding the impact of not funding positions. A discussion ensued about the cuts that were made. Commissioner Zimmerlink said they will share one administrative assistant. She also talked about Act 13 allocations, and what they have been spent on. She said everybody knows what the money is to be allocated for. She said capital projects will be done in the future. Commissioner Vicites said there are major issues

that need corrected, such as leaky roofs. A discussion then ensued about the need to make improvements to county buildings. Commissioner Zimmerlink said they own other buildings that need repairs. She spoke about Act 13 money allocations. Commissioner Vicites said they need to evaluate jobs as they become open. He said they must provide mandated services as well. Commissioner Zimmerlink spoke about how they delayed sending out the tax bills. She said they would have a meeting with all the department heads to explain the budget, adding that all department heads are responsible for their own budgets.

Commissioner Zimmerlink said they have to make immediate, necessary repairs for the jail. She said there is no excuse for duct tape. She asked where the list of repairs is so they can address them. Commissioner Vicites said they need to do that in the short term and they have to be maintained properly. She said they have to inform the individuals and departments that are not funded and need to follow the appropriate steps.

Public Comment

Michael Cavanagh spoke about the budget process and was critical of the former commissioners. He commended the commissioners on their work on the budget. He said he commended the commissioners for their work on the budget. Commissioner Zimmerlink said just because you disagree, it doesn't mean you don't want to get along. She said they have now stated that their goal is to be fiscally responsible. Commissioner Vicites said he has sat on different boards, and although they disagreed, they listened to each other's opinions and got a better figure. Commissioner Zimmerlink said unfortunately they had to call back a consultant because staff needs to be doing this, old saying garbage in, garbage out. She said it is accurate based on prior history, the New World system that cost \$500,000 and everything else. Commissioner Vicites said the history of what was spent, if they can tighten the belt further, there were a lot of things they looked at to get a final number. He said they looked at the numbers numerous times. Mr. Cavanagh said he has attended meetings for more than 20 years and he is encouraged by how they have worked together. He blamed former Commissioner Ambrosini for the tax increase. Commissioner Zimmerlink spoke about how the public did what they needed to do.

Jared Billy said he represents Local 668, SEIU, and they have three union members that were laid off. He said there was only one non-union, and he asked what departments for the union. Commissioner Zimmerlink said they want to talk to each of the department heads first. Mr. Billy asked if the decision had been made yet. Commissioner Zimmerlink said they wanted to talk to the department heads. Mr. Billy went over the numbers. Commissioner Zimmerlink said it isn't a secret, it is in the budget and they wanted to inform department heads. Commissioner Vicites said there were eight corrections offices, those hired at the end of last year. Commissioner Zimmerlink said obviously the proper procedure will be followed. Commissioner Vicites said the union cuts were in Human Resources, Tax Assessment and Court Security. Mr. Billy asked how many people are in court security. Commissioner Zimmerlink said it is courthouse security, that position has been moved from full time. Mr. Billy said attrition

is troubling to him, adding that it is a union buster. He said with the jobs being cut, have they looked at cutting their wages? Commissioner Vicites said it was set by resolution five years ago. Commissioner Zimmerlink said check the vote on that. Mr. Billy said he looked at the budget. He said what money is saved by part time and entry level positions. He said an option would be non-union that make more money. A discussion ensued about what the cuts were about. Mr. Billy said it is about union and non-union, then outlined what the positions that were cut were. Commissioner Vicites said the positions were not filled. He said four were about to be filled but then they weren't. Mr. Billy asked if it was final, and was told that it is.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Zimmerlink and seconded by Commissioner Lohr to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Lohr yes
Commissioner Vicites yes
Commissioner Zimmerlink yes

Motion passed unanimously