

Friday, January 30, 2004

A meeting of the Fayette County Board of Commissioners was held on January 30, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. in the Public Service Building, First Floor, Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

PRESENT: **Commissioner Angela M. Zimmerlink, Chairwoman**
 Commissioner Joseph A. Hardy III, Vice-Chairman
 Commissioner Vincent A. Vicites, Secretary
 Judith M. Bodkin, Chief Clerk
 Warren Hughes, County Manager
 Tabitha Gallis, Administrative Assistant

Silent Prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Moved by Commissioner Hardy, seconded by Commissioner Vicites to propose the amended budget for calendar year 2004.

On roll call the vote was:

Mrs. Zimmerlink yes
Mr. Hardy yes
Mr. Vicites yes

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

Moved by Commissioner Hardy, seconded by Commissioner Vicites to impose a \$40.00 per parcel fee against delinquent taxpayers for the calendar year 2003 and forward.

On roll call the vote was:

Mrs. Zimmerlink yes
Mr. Hardy yes
Mr. Vicites yes

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Zimmerlink explained proposed budget, in case of any questions later, that the Board of Commissioners inherited this budget from the former Commissioners and had less than 30 days to review it, given that time frame the 3 Commissioners did everything they could to get their questions adequately answered. She questioned the revenue side of the budget and was informed it was accurate. Regarding revenue and expenses, after meeting with various departments, Commissioner Zimmerlink stated the following changes in the proposed budget; increase in the 2002 audit of \$6,000, that was unexpected and to prevent it in the future the County is going to make records more readily available to the auditors, so the audits may be completed in a more timely fashion. Unpaid bills were \$200,000, not \$250,000, the new Commissioners put tools in effect that should prevent this from happening next year, a P.O. system is going into effect instead of the previous voucher system. The election bureau was dropped from \$6,000 to \$2,000. The tax assessment office informed the Commissioners yesterday that they will

have an additional \$10,000, while the assessment appeals board will go from \$6,000 to \$2,000, because of the Commissioners deciding to sit on that board themselves. The tax collection commission was raised \$10,000 for the line item to include the tax claim commissions. The EMA line item changed to reflect half of the director's salary being cut out because it is reimbursed. The Veterans line item, though it doesn't reflect it, are considering providing the transportation as a direct service, which the Commissioners feel would be more cost effective and better servicing to the Veterans. Finally, the Penn State Cooperative Office got an additional \$5,000, because history showed they were in need of it from past years. Commissioner Zimmerlink explained that the Veterans Office and the Penn State Cooperative office are still concerns of hers and that they are in need of some further examination. The Commissioners are going to be reviewing the budget information monthly, which should help eliminate some of these problems in the future. Commissioner Zimmerlink then explained the \$40.00 per parcel tax fee by stating that at the end of each year unpaid taxes are returned to the county from each municipality, Approximately 12,000 parcels are returned each year, causing a burden to the county. This fee will help relieve this burden and hopefully help get people to pay on time. Another thing the Commissioners are looking into is eliminating the per capita tax and transferring it to the real estate tax. Commissioner Zimmerlink concluded by saying that the Commissioners will be reviewing all budget matters monthly and quarterly and that will help eliminate future problems.

Commissioner Vicites added that all of the changes Commissioner Zimmerlink highlighted had came up after the passing of the former budget and it was good they could be taken care of. He explained that is why the budget has an un-appropriated balance to cover these unforeseen expenses. He stated that he felt this would help the budget in the long run. He explained that the County is going to change to the Gasby34 compliance, which is an accounting system to eliminate unpaid bills at the end of the year should greatly help next years budget. It will give us a more accurate accounting system. Commissioner Vicites then mentioned the veterans office taken over the transportation portion of their services, he stated that the Veterans requested this system and it will be beneficial to them to have one system in place, as well as their own van, which is budgeted. Lastly, he mentioned the tax claim fee, he said that the price of the postage and property postings have escalated in past years and are now well over \$100,000, he explained this is becoming a burden to the taxpayers who have paid their taxes on time, now it will be a more balanced scale of revenue and the cost to run the office. He concluded by saying this budget is a very lean and conservative budget that he is very happy with.

Commissioner Zimmerlink added that there are still some items that have not been resolved, such as the Union healthcare and the unpaid Cole Layer Trumble bill. Next she stated that the unpaid bills line item has accelerated in the past years, doubling from \$100,000 to \$200,000 this year, she said that the Commissioners are going to work very hard to try to eliminate that line item in the future, as much as possible.

Commissioner Vicites added that he is very happy that the Commissioners are going to be more involved in monthly monitoring of budget items and that they will be able to tighten spending with this method. He said the Commissioners would do everything they could to be fiscally responsible.

Commissioner Zimmerlink adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Judith M. Bodkin, Chief Clerk