

**RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET MEETINGS
JULY 23, 2024**

The Richland County Board of Commissioners met on July 23, 2024 with Commissioners Nathan Berseth, Tim Campbell, Rollie Ehlert, Terry Goerger and Perry Miller. Others included Administration Personnel Fossum and South.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Kayla Carlson and Kenzy Kahler were present. Carlson distributed a recap of the 2023 Budget and a breakdown of the Health Department's Funding Sources.

Carlson stated that the Health Department has three grants that are ending: DFC, Immunizations, and COVID.

Berseth asked Carlson how much of the Health Department's funding comes from the county. Carlson stated that about 1/3 of the departments budget is funded by Richland County.

Carlson stated that she budgets for what she knows is coming in, some grants come after, so they are not included in the preliminary budget.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Sedler highlighted the following areas of his proposed budget:

- Salaries - down as Highway Dept is not fully staffed
- Office Expense - increasing for new printers
- Travel Expense – No change
- Telephone – increasing GPS expenses
- Capital Expense - decreasing, shop is complete
- OT – No change
- Culverts – No change
- Gravel Crushing – increasing, need to crush next year

Sedler stated that the Highway Department will scale back if Prairie Dog funds come in lower than projected.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

Sheriff Ruhl stated that he would like to add 2 deputies in 2025 due to growth and calls for service in Richland County. He highlighted the following in his preliminary budget:

- Maintenance – decreasing \$5000 (vehicle update)
- Capital Expense – increasing \$285,000 (printer, MDT's outfit, vehicles, & in car cameras)
- Ammo – about the same, slight increase
- Travel Expense – No change
- Overtime – increasing (wage adjustment)
- Uniforms – increasing by \$800
- Equipment - decreasing

Ruhl stated that there has been a 10% increase in calls for service since last year. He does not want his deputies responding to domestic calls or to the casino alone.

CORRECTIONS

Steve Gjerdevig stated that the medical budget for 2024 was set at \$85,000. As of June 30th, we have already exceeded that amount by \$2963.78. He projects spending \$180,000 on medical expenses by the end of this year. He stated that is number is high because we are federally mandated to provide health care for inmates while in custody. His preliminary budget for 2025 reflects these increases.

Gjerdevig stated that he would like two more employees for the jail as numbers are high and CO's have many duties. Gjerdevig would like to see salary increases to help with employee retention.

Miller asked if Gjerdevig included the additional employees in his preliminary budget. Gjerdevig stated that he did not.

Fossum estimated that salaries, benefits, and health for two new jailers would be \$137,500.

The Board asked Gjerdevig if he could get by with one additional employee, he stated that he could make that work.

COMMUNICATIONS

Jill Breuer discussed wages across the state and stated that she feels we need to offer a more competitive wage to have less turnover in the department. She would like to get wages comparable to Wilkin County so that we don't lose staff that we provided paid training for. Breuer requested an additional staff member as overtime is always an issue in the department.

A lengthy discussion about starting wages and steps within the department occurred.

The Board asked Breuer if she could make current staffing work if they approved raises for the department. Breuer stated that she could make that work.

Ehlert and Berseth both voiced that they would like to see the Jail and Dispatch positions combined in the future.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Fossum gave a brief overview of the preliminary budget:

- Repairs – no change
- Supplies – decreasing
- Utilities – decreasing substantially (new HVAC system)
- Capital for LEC – decreasing
- Most of the rest of the budget has stayed the same

MISCELLANEOUS BUDGET

Berseth asked when the preliminary budget needs to be approved by.

Fossum stated that it must be approved by the first meeting in August. After that, the budget can not be increased, but it can be decreased.

Berseth asked what Fossum had budgeted for salary increases.

Fossum stated that 6% plus 1 step on the scale was built into the budget for salary increases.

Berseth asked Fossum if 2 mills would be enough to account for the additional staffing requests. Fossum stated that she did not think it would be enough.

Goerger asked how much a mill is.

Fossum stated that a mill went from \$117,700 to what she is estimating to be \$122,900 from centrally assessed value changes.

The Board asked Fossum to work with Dispatch, Corrections, and the Sheriff Department to make sure their additional staffing requests are worked into the preliminary budget. They asked Fossum to use the 6% she built in plus the 2 mills to determine increases for current employees and account for additional staffing requests.

The meeting adjourned at 3:41 P.M.

ATTEST: _____
Sandy Fossum
Auditor/Administrator

_____ CHAIRPERSON
Perry Miller
Board of Richland County Commissioners