

WALDO COUNTY FY 2008 BUDGET COMMITTEE
2nd MEETING OCTOBER 18, 2007

PRESENT: Budget Committee Members Bill Sneed, James Bennett, Richard McLaughlin, Tim Biggs, Roger Lee, Harry Dean Potter and Richard Desmarais; County Commissioners John Hyk and Amy Fowler; Deputy Treasurer Karen Trussell, Deputy County Clerk Veronica Stover and County Clerk Barbara Arseneau. Also present were members of the press and various employees.

B. Sneed opened the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

B. Sneed: I spent all of Tuesday and most of Wednesday talking to as many selectmen as I could find in this county. I asked them one question, "How do you feel about a 25% County Budget increase?" Some of the answers are not fit for public comment.

Suggestions on how to deal with the county budget range from:

- Eliminating the Sheriff's patrol completely, cutting it in half
- Getting rid of the commissioners and hiring a professional manager
- Withholding county taxes until the commissioners did their job

People cannot live with this and you are going to hear from them. A couple of bits of procedural things, the town manager of Stockton Springs and the selectmen would like to have a copy of the management letter from the 2007 audit. At least one selectman whose name I have forgotten, wanted to know why there is no public notices for bids on goods and services in this county for things over \$2,500.00 as the law requires. I don't know anything about that process. Someone wanted to know what the LD1 number was for 2007. One of the more "sensible" suggestions was to fund most of the departments at the 2007 level with the following exceptions the Jail, Audit, Debt Services, Grant Matching and Extension. Even if we did that the budget would still be up 9.8% over last year. I did these five times and got the same answer four times. Hopefully someone will check my numbers. Thank you.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (1015) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the discussion was District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau and Deputy District Attorney Leane Zainea.

G. Rushlau: (He introduced himself and L. Zainea for the "first timers.") The District Attorney's office is composed of an attorney and state employees, like myself. The bulk of our budget is for the three county employees. We had while preparing the budget, taking into consideration the requests by the commissioners as to any pay increases for any of the county employees. The front page of the budget, the middle portion includes the "Personnel Services Detail" and I will get back to that in a minute. There are other ones, Capital Outlay, Commodities and Contractual Services. The Contractual Services part of the budget, we have asked for an increase which is focused in two parts of the budget. First of all line 4015 Consulting, which is a line that I asked for a \$2,000.00 increase. This has been at the recommendation of the consultant that works with seven other counties and is out of Augusta. He has told us that we can in 2008 anticipate an increase because the State is trying to create a system whereby the various participants in

the criminal justice process can share information electronically. The courts, corrections and District Attorney's office's, they have tried this before and when they have done it before they have done it without much participation from the Prosecutor and they have essentially left us out. We now want to be an active participant and we need to participate by having Consultant Services who are involved every step of the way. That is why I have asked for an increase in line 4015 (Consulting). The other increase is a new line 4945 (Postage Lease) \$628.00. We asked for that because we are mindful of the need to be more precise about the postage we put on the thousands of documents we are required to mail out every year. We leased a postage meter and we asked for increase in the postage line (4835) to reflect that there is a postage rate increase. Between the postage increase and the cost of the meter, there is an increase there. The Capital Outlay was initially less than last year but after submitting my budget to the Commissioners and before the meeting with the Commissioners our consultant told us that we needed to replace one of our two servers next year. These are located in Rockland and manage information for all four counties in the district. So when we replace one each county pays ¼ of the cost. That is added to the proposal. We have also asked for open shelf filing system and Leane can explain that if necessary. They will be more efficient for us to gain access to the files. We are using filing cabinets which are about 30 years old. Those are the details of the increases in our budget. We tried very hard to keep our increases limited in our budget. The one thing that I explained to the commissioners when going over my budget, I think it is invisible in this budget but it deserves an explanation. There is a line under Personnel Services Detail, Part Time Child Advocate. A ¼ employee that works here on a regular basis is not actually a Waldo County employee. Her name is Lynn Talbot; she is the child victim witness advocate and is actually a Knox county employee who shares her time between Knox and Waldo County. The bulk of her pay and benefits, all of which are set by Knox County because she is their employee are offset by a grant. That grant has been flat funded the whole time I have been District Attorney for 14 years and probably before that. Over time in years any costs above what the grant provides are shared equally between the two counties. In the 2007 budget, it was budgeted \$12,500.00 and we have asked for the 2008 budget \$13,000.00. What I would like to do, instead of continuing to share this person between the two counties because they are too far apart and it is very inefficient for a single person to cover both places. It would be good to set up a part time child advocate position exclusively in Waldo County, 25 hours per week and have the position in Knox County become full time for them. The case load is larger there and they have far more court months throughout the year in Superior Court, so the need there is great. In converting from a shared employee to a part time employee in Waldo County, I anticipate there would not be an increase of cost for Waldo County and I think Waldo County would benefit considerably by having more services for the same or less money. There is an impact here and an impact to Knox County. Knox County will have a part time employee converted to a full time employee with all the benefits that go with that. It will have a larger impact on their budget. I wanted to explain all of that to you because I think that it is important that you understand what I am trying to accomplish. If this works it will represent an improvement in services to people here in Waldo County but it requires a big expenditure by Knox County and that may not happen. I would be happy to answer any questions that any of you have about the budget.

R. Desmarais: I want to talk about this new position that you are talking about. This Knox County employee and Waldo County employee, Waldo gets about 20 hours out of that person and now you are asking for 30 hours?

G. Rushlau: No, 25 hours.

R. Desmarais: No benefits attached to this, correct?

G. Rushlau: That is correct.

R. Desmarais: I want to go over the figures that you were given \$12,500.00 last year and you have only spent 30% of that. You have only spent \$3,800.00. Are you aware of the percentages?

G. Rushlau: I just asked a couple of weeks ago the Knox County employee why they have not been submitting invoices to Waldo County for payment. I don't know why they haven't. I have been gone and I have not had a chance to follow up. The last time I checked, the expenditures are right on track.

K. Trussell: You bill quarterly, don't you?

G. Rushlau: Yes it is supposed to be quarterly. I think the second quarter invoice was sent out in mid July and I am not sure why it is not showing, maybe it did not come in.

R. Desmarais: If you went quarterly then I would assume your percentages would run 25%, 50%, 75% and 100%. Now you are sitting at 30%.

G. Rushlau: I think what we have is because of the need to get the invoices in at the end of each fiscal year to the county before Knox County has really had a chance to settle their budget. We have an estimated invoice paid. Earlier this year what I recall happening is that we did pay about six or seven hundred dollars extra because it included a 2007 health insurance premium. The number that you have here, I believe, is the first quarter invoice including some expenditure.

R. Desmarais: I have a question on the Witness Fees (4925). You are at 34%. I don't see 100% unless you know something I don't know. I don't see you going towards 100% on this. I can see a cut back on that.

L. Zainea: If I may, we haven't had as much Superior Court time this year as we have had in the past. We were only scheduled four times for superior court jury times. The witness line is how we pay for our witnesses out of Superior court. We didn't have court in April. When we were supposed to have court, it didn't happen. We have actually only had three superior court sessions this year.

R. Lee: How long is a session?

G. Rushlau: This is something that is a major source of frustration. It is supposed to be a month but the judge is supposed to be here for a month. What in practice happens is the judges are here for half the month because Maine has a very poorly funded court system. It is a State function; it is funded by the legislature. That is why April ended up not being a court month because the judge was going to be here for so few days, it became absolutely futile to even have court. In 2008, I think we are scheduled for five months of court. That is a more standard situation. The short answer is this is an unusual year for limited number of court sessions. The October one is the last one for 2007, however the one thing that is important to know is next Monday, Leane is going to be trying a child abuse case. The victim lives out of state and will have to be brought here to testify and that will be a significant expense for that case. Superior Court tries so many serious cases and year to year those expenditures will fluctuate a great deal. One thing that is a frustration for us is we are responsible for paying for witnesses and homicide cases even though it is the Attorney General's office that prosecutes those cases. In Lincoln County last year, the homicide case, all the witnesses just about were from out of state so we ended up paying \$5,000.00 for witnesses in just one case, over which we had no control of. That has not happened in Waldo County but sometimes there are numerous witness fees. There is a lot of fluctuation.

R. Desmarais: You say the judge did not show up in April, what happened to those people sitting in jail waiting to see this judge? Are we boarding people out at \$90.00 a day while the State settles this?

L. Zainea: The judge was here for four days. We did resolve cases during that term while she was here. We did get rid of cases.

G. Rushlau: There may have been people who should have been tried earlier than they were. One in particular that we know about is going to be sentenced tomorrow morning.

R. Desmarais: Has anything changed as far as prisoners sitting over there waiting to get into court – 24-25 day wait? I am very upset of the doubling of the boarding out budget. It is like a runaway freight train. It has gone from \$550,000.00 last year to \$1.1 million this year. If we could cut down on those days it seems to me that someone waiting could be replaced with someone down in York County and we would save \$90 a day on every prisoner that we could pull back here if there was bed space for them. What has been done to close that gap? Last year the average time was a 24 to 25 day wait.

B. Sneed: This means that some poor soul is sitting over there for 40-50 days.

R. Desmarais: It is costing us \$90.00 a day to ship them down to York County and this is driving our budget. This is a big part of the 25% increase in the budget.

L. Zainea: I can tell you that we use Volunteers of America for pre-trial release.

R. Desmarais: We have that in there and it is not correcting the rest of it. There is a breakdown somewhere. Something is really out of whack. I think that if the State had

the whole package and they wanted to save money, take the jail over and everything, they are going to have to take a harder look because there is a good place to save there by getting this bump condensed.

G. Rushlau: I am not sure if this is the right time to respond to this particular question. During the District Attorney conference this week we did discuss this proposal. Our response to it is right now we have not seen enough details about it as to whether we can support it or not. We are not against it, skeptical because we question the numbers we have been provided, but we are waiting to see the details of how it is going to work. One thing as practitioners in the system, we can recognize a state taking over a system, would likely leave the counties with costs that they don't now have, including potentially setting up a lock up where the local police could bring someone who's been arrested and staffing that lock up on a regular basis, the transport costs of bringing people to much more distant jails. As I understand it the Governor's proposal is starting with the notion that the counties will be flat; they would have to continue to absorb all the cost they now have.

R. Desmarais: It scares me to think that if they are going to absorb next year's costs with 100% increase, which is wrong. It is too much to absorb with a 100% increase in one budget.

G. Rushlau: We do as much as we can to try to get cases resolved in an expeditious manner. Next year there will be a lot of court time. I would hope to think that some of those people who are now spending longer periods of time will spend shorter periods of time. All four of the counties have active diversion programs in place. They try very hard to keep people out of jail. What happens over and over again is they don't comply with the conditions that were set for them. One of our local judges in the Rockland area has been known to say in open court, "I came on the bench determined to (looking at the people in the orange suits), see if there is a way to get you out of jail and you won't let me. You keep messing up. When it is the fourth or fifth time you violated your bail, what am I supposed to do?" We are doing what we can to keep people from going to jail and they won't let us.

R. Lee: I would like to know a little bit more about why Waldo County has so few court sessions. I am brand new at this, but if you only had three you said this year, why should we believe that there will be six next year?

G. Rushlau: The schedule is put together by the Chief Justice of the Superior Court in the fall. That is based on the information that he gets from the local Clerk of Courts and the administrative office of the courts about the nature of the backlog and the nature of the need compared to the other fifteen counties in Maine.

R. Lee: Is it the same judge who sits on all of those sessions? Or does it vary?

G. Rushlau: It varies. One thing that has happened for 2008 is that we are going to have the same judge every session. (He further explained the new judge and some background information.)

R. Lee: It seems completely whacky to me. Waldo County has a huge burden to house prisoners who can't get to trial. They can't get to trial because the State does not have enough judges. Its nuts!! Is there any attention being paid at the State level?

G. Rushlau: They did just increase the size this year by four judges. Only one was added to Superior Court and the other three were added to the District court.

R. Lee: How many judges sit in District Court?

G. Rushlau: Not sure where they just added some.

B. Sneed: It is getting time to move on. We have a schedule to sort of keep to.

R. Lee: I am not prepared to vote on this. I don't have enough information. So if you want to move on, fine.

B. Sneed: We have no choice Mr. Lee, we have an agenda and we sort of have to stick to it.

R. Lee: I just want to make a very quick point. To spend \$600.00 to lease a postage meter for a postal budget that is \$2,000.00, that doesn't make sense to me. Your total budget for postage is \$2,000.00 but you are going to spend \$600.00 a year for a meter. I don't get that. The reason couldn't possibly be to save money on postage. You are increasing the cost of postage by 30%.

L. Zainea: Last year when we did our postage rate it was based upon the then postage rate, which I think was 39¢, and it is now up to 41¢. Last year we went over our postage and we increased it in anticipation simply because we are sending out a lot of papers. Before we were weighing on a scale to determine and then putting stamps on it. We were putting way too much postage on a package that we were mailing out. In order to get a more accurate reflection of what that package weighed it was determined that the postage meter was much more appropriate. We are following in line with the other county offices that have gone to postage meters in order to reduce those costs. I would say that amount of material that we are sending out has increased as well.

T. Biggs: You have already expended \$2,771.00 this year in postage. But you are only asking for \$2,200.00.

G. Rushlau: I think the reason for that, in part, is because we anticipate the use of the meter will reduce our cost below what they would have gone to.

R. McLaughlin: On the ¼ share of the server in Rockland, you didn't ask for any money, but the County commissioners added \$750.00. Can you explain that?

G. Rushlau: When I put the budget in we hadn't been told by our consultant that we needed to replace it. So I didn't include it in my budget but when I presented the budget to them that night, I told them that we had just been told that we need to have this and would you please add it to my budget.

B. Sneed: Any motion on this budget?

****J. Bennett moved, T. Biggs seconded to fund the District Attorney (1015) Budget at last year's rate \$149,355.**

Discussion:

R. McLaughlin: On the Personnel Services, is that a 3% increase exactly?

G. Rushlau: The only thing that might change that is the legal secretary is scheduled for a step increase.

Motion passed with 5 in favor. (R. McLaughlin opposed, R. Lee abstained.)

R. Lee: I just want to comment that I think that a system that devotes as little time as we just devoted to something as important as this is broken. That is my impression. You guys may know this stuff cold but for somebody new at it I think it is way inadequate time to look at the budget.

B. Sneed: You will have between now and December to get your head wrapped around these departments.

GRANT MATCHING (2055) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the review was E.M.A. Director Dale Rowley.

D. Rowley: Basically what this is all about, at least my portion of this grant matching. The State is receiving \$7.5 million Communication Grant. It's an 80-20 match. The State would pay 80% and we pay 20%. It is for major communications improvement. What we have now is a situation on Aborn Hill. We have a great site but we have a tower that, in a good wind storm, will come down. The foundation; the concrete is rotting and is falling apart. I don't know how many more years this is going to go to keep that tower up there. This would be an excellent opportunity to get the Feds to pay 80% of the cost of a new and improved tower that would last another 50 years. I have also talked with the State Emergency Management Director and that is the agency that is going to be managing this grant. It is going to be sometime next spring when they release the applications. Maybe doing a collaborative work with them, where it would be our tower but they would have some space to put their antennas and then we would split the 20%. Then we would only have to come up with 10%. I have gone to several different places around the State including Hancock and he has touted this proposal as an ideal type of project. I cannot guarantee that we will get the grant because I am not on the grant

committee but if the guy who decides where the money goes is touting it as a good example, then it is probably in the ballpark.

R. Lee: Where is the existing tower?

D. Rowley: It is in the town of Knox on top of Aborn Hill. It is a sixty foot tower and what this actually proposes is to put up a 200 foot tower. Basically 90% of that would get paid. If we don't get the grant then we don't get the match. It would last us a long time and it would greatly improve the radio communication for fire and police. O. Smith was saying that we might not have to rent some of the space at the other towers that we are looking at if we can get that one tower higher.

B. Sneed: You are probably the wrong person to ask for this. But if the grant doesn't come through, if we approve this department at \$40,000.00 and if none comes through, this money is not going to go to unencumbered surplus.

B. Arseneau: It goes to undesignated funds.

R. McLaughlin: Has anyone gone through the permitting of this tower to make sure that it can be erected at 200 feet?

D. Rowley: All we have right now is a proposal; we have no money to hire a consultant to come up with any of those figures.

R. McLaughlin: Have you checked into the rules of where Aborn Hill is located as to whether you could have it there in the first place at that height?

D. Rowley: If we couldn't then we could go with a 100 foot tower which would be less expensive, although not more economical. The optimal is to get it as high as we could go.

B. Sneed: Do you know what stage these grants are at, at the moment?

D. Rowley: Right now the State has to put together a communications plan of how they want to use the \$7.5 million. They have to send it back to the Feds by the end of December and then March is when they are talking about coming out with the applications. Now because of the fact there needs to be engineering and materials purchased, this is probably a project that is going to go into 2009 if we were to be approved for it. So it is probably a 2-3 year process before this tower is up.

B. Sneed: Should this money go into a Capital Reserve account?

J. Hyk: It could if that is the way you prefer to do it.

B. Sneed: Well, you guys were the ones that set up the accounts.

J. Hyk: What we felt was that we had to do something or nothing would happen. Here it is. If we have major grants come in and we have to match them then we can do it one of two ways, you can do it this way or you can put it into a Capital Reserve account.

D. Rowley: Going through the applications, if you have some seed money than you have a better chance of getting the grant in my experience. For example we went for the grant for the new fire station in Thorndike because we already had the match in place that really added a lot of points in our package for having that.

B. Sneed: If you guys designated a Capital Reserve fund specifically and solely for matching, that seems to me would satisfy anybody's need.

J. Hyk: If it makes more sense to you, that is fine. I do not have a problem with it either way. We have the same situation with the grant that Eastern ME Development is working on for handicap issues that need to be addressed. So we can create a Capital Reserve account and put it in there.

B. Sneed: I would be more inclined to not fund a department number but I would fund another Capital Reserve account at this rate.

R. Lee: I think that is an excellent idea.

J. Hyk: What we will do is we will amend the Capital Reserve account line for grant matching.

R. McLaughlin: Do we need to go \$40,000.00 assuming they don't get one, maybe go \$30,000.00?

B. Sneed: Dick's question was, should we assume you are not going to get one and only fund \$30,000.00?

D. Rowley: I think we have a better than 50% chance. I think that maybe along the lines of 75% for the communications grant.

B. Arseneau: Eastern Maine Development is working on that. If you wouldn't mind my explaining it a little bit, that is a match for a grant that EMDC is trying to put through that would allow for a study, not building a building, but a study to look at the possibility of records management or archive system that may not house just the county records but also the towns. Whether or not it would be a revenue generating proposition, it is money to study that.

B. Sneed: We will know something in two months.

A. Fowler: How much have you brought in for grants, Dale?

D. Rowley: About \$300,000.00.

****B. Sneed moved, R. McLaughlin seconded to have Grant Matching (2055) go into a Capital Reserve account in the amount of \$40,000.00. Unanimous.**

E.M.A. (1010) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the review was E.M.A. Director Dale Rowley.

D. Rowley: My overall budget is up 2.9% and that is including the personnel 3%. If you look at it, my budget went down \$31.00.

R. Lee: I was looking at the Revenue. Is there Federal money that supports some of it?

D. Rowley: Yes, there is. As a matter of fact, my actual budget under the Emergency Management Performance Grant, the County gets 50% of that back. Now it doesn't come back to me, it comes back to the County. We get reimbursed 50% from there. I also get money from HAZMAT operations and most of that ends up going to the towns. For example, if anybody needs any hazardous materials, training in the county (fire, police or EMS), we set up that training for them. We get grants for that to pay the instructors to do that. We get a lot of Homeland Security grant money, this year so far, \$120,000.00.

R. Lee: That is cool. So you got \$120,000.00.

R. Desmarais: I think that you made an error under Contractual Services line 4315 – Telephone; it went from \$3,800.00 to \$6,800.00.

D. Rowley: No, it is not an error. That is a pager for each of the municipal emergency management directors. We got 26 pagers, one for each town. We got the pagers on a grant and the first year of service and this year we have to pay the service if we want to keep them. It is \$11.00 a month per pager. What this has done for us for example during the last two major disasters that was the way I was able to contact them. I would page them and then we would go into a conference call. Actually the conference call was paid for by the State. 50% ends up coming to the Emergency Management Performance Grant. For example, the Searsport Director had his own pager being paid for by the Town of Searsport. That is no longer being paid by the town. It is an easy way to get in touch with the director and it works whether you are in Waldo County or Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

R. Desmarais: On Training and Education (4940) you have asked for \$500.00. With all that is going on right now, I am a believer in training; is that enough?

D. Rowley: Yes, because basically that is “seed money” for me. I can get grant money for exercises and training. As a matter of fact, I got \$60,000.00 this year for exercises. We did the big four day exercises but it doesn't pay for some things like providing food at planning meetings and renting space at the Hutchinson Center. A lot of times we rent the auditorium. So it is basically “seed” money.

****J. Bennett moved, R. Desmarais seconded to fund the EMA (1010) Budget at \$92,172.00.**

Discussion:

R. Lee: Where is the 50% of funding for you budget come from?

D. Rowley: Federal. If the county was not NIMS compliant that would get shut off. As a matter of fact, Franklin County is going through that right now. They might loose their 50% matching because they are not NIMS compliant.

J. Hyk: I just wanted to say that on the good news side of things, because Dale is in the basement of the Jail, the federal government is actually picking up a disproportionate percentage of heat, electric, water and all of that. So if they close the jail, it creates a problem of what we are going to do with Dale. That is the one downside of the State taking over the jail is we will have to find E.M.A. a place to live that is where he is close to the communications center.

R. Lee: Who wears the pager in Belfast?

D. Rowley: Right now we are going to be advertising for a new director. It was Mr. Rumney, if you know of anyone that would like to be a city EMA director.

R. Lee: Is it a paid position?

D. Rowley: It is a volunteer position but it is getting a \$2,000.00 stipend, which is pretty good for Waldo County. Also besides this, \$90,000.00 that is getting matched by the 50-50 and we actually get about \$50,000.00 back out of about \$100,000.00.

B. Sneed: Any more questions?

Motion passed with 5 in favor and 2 opposed. (B. Sneed and T. Biggs.)

COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (1076) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the review was Communications Director Owen Smith.

B. Sneed: Somebody asked how many calls you handle a month or a year.

O. Smith: We handle about 37,0000 calls a year for calls for service. Along with that we handle a good many telephone calls that are not calls for service. I didn't bring all of the statistics with me tonight. It is a staggering amount of transactions.

B. Sneed: So about 5,000 calls a month?

O. Smith: You can almost look year to year and see how they start building in May and they start going down in October. The only thing that has grown the most over the years has been the ambulance calls.

T. Biggs: Do you have seasonal employees?

O. Smith: No, we have relied in the past on part timers who work a lot. That is becoming not the reason to go for a couple of reasons. One, it is difficult to find them and keep them. It takes a long time to train and certify them. It doesn't matter if you are full time or part time, the State mandates them. It is good because everybody ought to be trained at the same level.

R. Desmarais: How many persons are on during a shift?

O. Smith: The overnight shift; we have two people on and everything else we have three people on. From 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. we cut back to two people. If we do an Emergency Medical Dispatch call, then one of those people is tied up on that. We have never had anyone alone in the building since the summer of 2001.

R. Desmarais: So, in the daytime you have 3 people in the room and I understand that you are in the office. So that is four people on during the day.

O. Smith: Right.

R. Desmarais: Is this list accurate of employees? Is Jenny still working for you?

O. Smith: Jenny is gone and we have replaced Jenny with one of our part timers that we have moved up that had been with us for 3 ½ years, Melissa Pooler.

B. Sneed: Our Personnel Detail shows two folks gone, Davis and Pike. Four new ones, Cardinale, White and two new dispatchers unnamed. Is that right?

O. Smith: Cardinale and White replaced Davis and Pike. So they were not in last year's budget and the only way that you can truly reflect the bottom line is to leave it as it is.

B. Sneed: There is still two new employees, right?

O. Smith: Two new dispatchers are the ones that we put together for the budget this year in order to partly get rid of the 1 to 11 shift. One other reason is to make the float people a flexible float instead of a fixed float, which means you can move them around to cover overtime which is kicked off by vacations, comp time, sick time, etc. Not only that, but we believe that it is going to cut out a lot of the overtime. We rely very heavily on part timers and it is getting difficult to maintain them. We can actually add two people because of the structure that we have and save money than if we continue to go the way we are going now with paying massive overtime and part time.

B. Sneed: The Personnel line shows part time down by about 80%, from \$68,508.00 to \$14,000.00 and the overtime basically unchanged.

O. Smith: My contract full timers get first refusal on overtime and comp time and that is what runs up the overtime account. You have seen that increase this last year, I think it is because of the economy. If we had 35-40 shifts open a month full timers would have 32 of those shifts not leaving much for part time but it is expensive.

B. Sneed: Am I the only one confused? You are adding two new people and yet you are still going to have a lot of overtime. Why is that?

O. Smith: This is the first year we are trying it. We don't anticipate getting rid of all of it. Although I will have seven people floating at any one time, two of those will be coming off a shift or going onto a shift, so that won't be a problem. I use the example, if I have a person going on vacation, instead of filling those people's four shifts at overtime I could fill them with one of these floating persons. This schedule was originally thought up by Belfast back in 1998 on the basis that floaters would be flexible and available to work shifts as needed, rather than pay overtime or part timers. It has worked successfully for them. Right now they work four on and four off, five on, three off because every other month they have to work for five on to three off to get their time. You have 80 hours in a pay period. If we continue the way we are going, we are going to need to raise more money for overtime and part time than we are if we go this way. We can no longer continue to under fund overtime and part time as we have tried to do in the past. We are over now and we have heavy holiday time coming in and we are just going to continue to be over and over. To where we end up at the end of the year I don't know. This is one way to stop that.

T. Biggs: Adding two new employees at \$30,000.00 a piece plus the benefit package which works out to somewhere around \$14,000.00 a year per employee. So you are actually adding somewhere around \$90,000.00 to the budget. You budgeted \$68,000.00 for overtime.

O. Smith: Our cost to that is \$31,000.00 and the benefits come out of the commissioner's budget. We recognize that when we talk about that. We can show a stab at the savings and we believe that we can do better but we can't risk it with personnel. It is the biggest part of your budget, when you are over on that it could throw everything else out really quick.

R. Desmarais: You say it gets rolled over into the Commissioner's budget and then it comes out of the tax payer's pocket.

O. Smith: That is correct. The board asked me how to get rid of the 1:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. shift, to tell you the truth we cannot attract people from outside of the center for that shift. You cannot do it. People are not going to give up working 4:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. in the evening to work 1:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. So we have a hard time attracting people to that. The other thing you want to do is what we can do to save on overtime and part time? By doing this with a flexible float we can use those people to fill in. When there is no one on vacation and we have a supervisor on duty, the supervisor is going to be able to act as a true supervisor. They have other duties as well as working at the desk. Plus

when it gets crazy, they will be able to step in and help. Three people are better at the console at all times.

B. Sneed: I ask you this ever year, why are we still paying \$3,000.00 for a teletype machine?

O. Smith: It is not a machine anymore. It is a computer linked into the State. All of our consoles are linked into the State. They just put in a new T1 line so they can get more information faster. They installed the lines; we have to pay for it.

B. Sneed: If you change that wording next year, I promise I won't ask about the teletype.

R. Lee: So what is the \$3,000.00 for again?

O. Smith: We will call it NCIC Metro. Most of it is licensing. We were paying \$85.00 a month for the line going to the State and now we are going to be paying a hundred and something a month. It increased to \$178.75 a month. Then we have to license the four consoles every year with Data Maxx. It amounts to what we have to pay the State and what we have to do to license the product. There is no other charge to it. We license all four consoles. For a long time they only allowed one machine to be a teletype machine. Over the years they allowed it to be put into all of the other machines. So now instead of someone getting up and going over and going to the machine we can do everything at the console except for entries. I will change that next year. That is how we run plates, run names, run criminal history for the state and federal. NCIC is run by the F.B.I. and we have direct access to that.

T. Biggs: Tower Sites Operations (4620). Does that involve Aborn Hill?

O. Smith: Yes, it does.

T. Biggs: So if Dale gets his tower, we won't have to rent?

O. Smith: The County owns that. Aborn is the cheapest site that we have. We rent space in South Liberty, Mt. Ephraim and we hope to rent space in Northport. We have increased our exposure in both South Liberty and Mt. Ephraim. We have added repeaters and microwaves. So next year it is going to cost us more for each one of those sites.

R. Lee: You communicate with deputies with those towers?

O. Smith: Deputies, fire departments, ambulance squads. We are the main communication center for the entire emergency services for the County.

B. Sneed: Is Liberty happy these days?

O. Smith: I have heard no complaints. Our next big challenge is Palermo.

R. Lee: Since some towns have police departments, is there any distribution of this burden of this budget or is it just added onto the County budget?

O. Smith: The 911 communications center is part of the County budget. The towns pay for that service through their county tax. There is no assessment beyond that to the towns.

R. McLaughlin: I think that we have a couple of things here. First of all, sometimes it is unfortunate to see employee benefits in another line because you could decide that you don't want to hire these two new dispatchers and cut the budget accordingly. But they could still put the two new dispatchers in anyway and the benefit will come in the other package that we have no control over in this budget.

T. Biggs: We do vote on the employee benefits don't we?

R. McLaughlin: Yes, but you can't single out who gets them and who doesn't.

J. Hyk: It has always been that way.

R. McLaughlin: Back years ago you used to have the whole budget. Employee Benefits was in each department, 20 years ago. The only thing that we can do is cut the bottom line and hope they take our recommendation. I have a problem with two new dispatchers because that is two more benefits. When you add employees, you don't get rid of them.

R. Desmarais: Listening to Owen talk it appears his people are willing to take overtime. Overtime is not an employee with a benefit package.

O. Smith: I must caution you that if you don't do this, then we are going to have to have to change the budget and add to the over time and part time. It will cost more money.

R. Lee: What is the average for the benefits package per person? I heard someone say \$14,000.00 a minute ago.

T. Biggs: I kind of roughly figured it out and I divided by 60 (the total employees of county). It is very rough.

R. McLaughlin: I think that if we went with \$660,000.00 we would still have money in there for part time.

B. Sneed: Do you make it a motion?

****R. McLaughlin moved, B. Sneed seconded to fund the Communications (1076) Budget at \$660,000.00.**

Discussion:

J. Bennett: That is not taking away the two new people they want to hire.

R. McLaughlin: That would be in a sense it could, but like I said it is not going to guarantee it.

O. Smith: If you don't hire the two new people I have to have more money for part time and full time.

R. McLaughlin: My proposal, I think, adds \$8,000.00 to that.

B. Sneed: So the bottom line for 2008 would be \$660.00 even.

J. Bennett: It is not cutting it enough. I think that you could cut it to \$601,429.60.

O. Smith: You gentlemen can do what you want; I am telling you that you cannot do that. You cannot cut that budget like that. We either are going to pay it in part time or over time or we are going to hire these two people.

J. Bennett: We have heard that before. They only took \$1,000.00 off the over time and they are adding two new people. If you take those two people off and then there was \$10,000.00 taken off budget.

O. Smith: You really need to look at it. It is either or.

R. Lee: It does seem that if benefits cost \$13-\$14,000.00 per person that you cut \$55,000.00 out of part time and overtime but you have added \$86,000.00. It seems like in the end it is going to cost the County more. I am a little confused as to over time and part time. It seems as if you have really cut the part time.

O. Smith: Part time budget has been cut down and I am not sure if about the over time. With two new people, we have a good shot of getting rid of a fair amount of overtime.

R. Lee: You can't expect the tax payer to pay more because you think you might need the money for overtime. If you are going to hire those people then you need to be confident that you can cut something so the tax payer pays as little as possible. It just seems like you are cutting it but you want to keep a good chunk of money in there for overtime just because you might need it. That doesn't seem like a way that the budget process would be in the City of Belfast.

T. Biggs: Do you have less people on during the day perhaps? Do you have four people on every day?

O. Smith: We have three people on from six o'clock in the morning to 2 o'clock in the morning plus me.

T. Biggs: You couldn't do it with two people?

O. Smith: Very rarely. They have been on dispatch calls for as much as an hour. They stay on the line keeping the person doing what they should be doing while waiting for rescue or waiting for someone to arrive. With EMD there is a whole different dynamics. You take one person out of the loop. You get a really bad fire or accident with multiple injuries; you have several police departments converging on that. I have someone taking care of them plus you have all of the other business going on. The phone rings constantly. The radio sounds constantly. One call generates radio traffic. You have to respond to them, it is a very busy situation. You cannot take one or two people out of the mix.

R. Desmarais: Do you have a call in system when multiple departments are being deployed for more help?

O. Smith: What we do is we bring an extra person in when we have bad weather coming in. When we are able to we will bring in extra people in at the sheriff department. We are paying for it in either over time or part time.

R. Desmarais: Have you ever looked over your 24 hour periods and found your traffic flow to be adjusted in attempt to reduce overtime?

O. Smith: Traffic flow is pretty constant. With our CAD system gives us day of the week, month and hour of the call. It is a pretty constant number of calls. Waldo County is growing and the emergency demands are growing. It is a very busy center. My part time budget every year is spent on training part timers.

R. Desmarais: There is a plus to that, if someone terminates a part timer could become a full timer and become fully trained.

O. Smith: It is good/bad because people that go to full time from part time are the people are available and are good at what they do. So now you lose them to promotion, which they deserve it because they should be promoted. But now you have lost one or two key part timers. I am having a hard time tracking quality people for part time and then I am having a hard time retaining them because they move on. I had one full time person go to Knox County looking for part time work and was hired as a full timer. They are paying part timers more than we are.

T. Biggs: Are your shift supervisors on the phone all day or do they sit in the office?

O. Smith: Shift supervisors are basically working operators. There is a great majority of the shifts they don't do supervisory things. Along with that they have other supervisory duties that we have to bring them in for to get the duties taken care of.

R. McLaughlin: I will withdraw my motion.

B. Sneed: I will withdraw my second.

****R. McLaughlin moved, B. Sneed seconded to fund the Communications (1076) Budget at \$650,000.00. Motion passed with 6 in favor and 1 opposed J. Bennett.**

NEXT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING:

Thursday, October 25, 2007 at 6:00 p.m.

The following budgets will be reviewed:

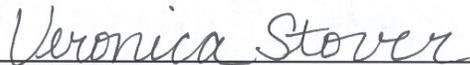
- Facilities (1030)
- Probate (1070)
- Grant Writing (2050)
- Records Preservation (2040)
- Advertising and Promotion (1080)

The following budgets are left:

- Sheriff (1075)
- Jail (1050)
- Reserves (2045)
- Employee Benefits (2025)
- Commissioners (1020)
- Technology (1020 -7000,7001,7002)

****R. McLaughlin moved, B. Sneed seconded to adjourn the budget meeting at 7:50 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by



Veronica Stover, Deputy County Clerk