

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
September 21st 2022 3:00 PM

The budget committee of the Rock Island County Board met at the above date and time in the Conference Room of the County Administration Office on the second floor of the County Office Building, 1504 Third Avenue, Rock Island Illinois. Minutes as follow:

Call to order and roll call

Chairman Moreno called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

A roll call was taken as follows:

MEMBERS PRESENT: CHAIR L. MORENO, SWANSON, DEPPE, ADAMS, BECK, BURNS, BRUNK

MEMBERS ABSENT: SIMMER

OTHERS PRESENT: J. Grafton, R. Berger, V. Bluedorn, D. Villarreal, L. Ziegenhorn, H. Khoury, E. Hughes, A. Palmer, T. Weikert , T. Vandersnick

Public Comment

Chairman Moreno made three calls for public comment. There were no requests for public comment

Discussion of the FY23 Budget

Court Services—Dir. Trent Vandersnick

Mr. Vandersnick presented the budget committee with an overtime request for \$35,000 in overtime which was an increase of \$25,000 over the previous year.

Mr. Berger presented the committee with a five year actual vs. request chart, asking for additional information to approve the request.

Mr. Vandersnick stated the office was not paid overtime, but comp. time and per contract are able to cash that time out up to four times per year. Mr. Berger stated it came from the salaries and wages line item, and recommended to keep it at zero.

Chairman Moreno stated he wanted to look at a zero based budget and move towards more accountable to the taxpayers of the County. He mentioned creating an emergency fund as well and be as transparent as possible.

Mr. Vandersnick stated he based his current budget off the previous year budget with minor fluctuations in line items.

Mr. Berger also discussed the base line of employees for the office to function to help with new laws, regulations, etc. He stated taking 2017 number of probation officers and the average baseline of 26 with two open positions.

Mr. Vandersnick stated the two open position had been opened and would not be reimbursed from the state. He stated having full staffing and being reimbursed from the state.

Chairman Moreno also mentioned how the Safe-T act would affect certain offices. Mr. Vandersnick stated it would most likely affect the pre-trial office. The two open positions would be removed.

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
September 21st 2022 3:00 PM

Chairman Brunk reiterated what would be determined either for the action item for a consensus or vote for the budget.

There was a consensus to have the comp time in the salaries and wages line item, reduce the overtime to zero and approve the raises comparing to Union Classification Grade 17.

Public Defender-- Atty H. Khoury

Mr. Khoury presented to the committee salary adjustments for 9 assistant public defenders. (ASAs).

Mr. Berger presented the years of service, current salaries and requested salaries as well as increase or decrease for the positions. He stated some of the methodology was due to comparisons to the State's Attorney's Office. He stated the way the state was set up was the public defender would received a certain percentage of the State's Attorney's salary figure. That percentage was applied down to the entire office. The public defender's office would move up at a 90% rate to the State's Attorney's Office.

Atty Khoury stated a problem in which the office would lose attorneys to the State's Attorney's Office which had a negative fiscal effect on the county due to people being in, not keeping up in cases, and retrials due to errors. He stated he appreciated the staffing and would like to implement an average salary of the State's Attorney and would have a chance at retention.

Chairman Moreno also wanted to look at the IMRF and FICA costs and a quasi-zero based budgeting process. Atty Khoury stated there was one open position for an ASA but was unable to fill it due to salary and the temporary nature of the position.

Chair Moreno stated the State Attorney's Office was union, receiving step increases and as the public defender's office was non-union.

Atty Khoury stated the average step increase for the union employees was 10.5% and stated it was not in the County's best interest to continue to lose attorneys to the States' Attorney's Office. He asked for a minimum 2.5% increase for his attorneys.

There was a consensus to move forward with the increase of \$48,571.04.

States' Attorney's Office – D. Villarreal, L. Ziegenhorn

SAO Villarreal presented an overtime request for her office. She stated having a 5-6 person management team with various years of service and management duties. She stated they did receive the same increases as their union counterparts, with compression being an issue; the supervisor was catching up to the person they supervise.

She stated having 4-5 people hitting their 25 year service marks and catching up to management. She stated having issues finding staff. Her office was given 3 ARPA atty. Positions which she was unable to fill, being at pre-covid baseline.

Mr. Berger stated the union the employee aligns with would already be built in at 2.5%, asking for a total

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
September 21st 2022 3:00 PM

of 5%. For clarification, position budgeting for nonunion positions, if the correspond union received 3%, the nonunion would receive 3% built in. Ms. Villarreal clarified the figure to 5%.

Chairman Brunk specified the nonunion positions typically have a collective bargaining agreement they align with, but it was not always clear as to which align with certain CBAs. For example, the Civil Division Chief and First Ass. State's Attorney would align with IOU 150 CBA covering the prosecuting attorneys. The office personnel would align with 2025A CBA.

The fiscal impact was \$10,862 in wages annually with \$2561 in benefits annually. Ms. Villarreal stated due to turnover, civil division chief was not always supervising with much higher salaries.

Chairman Moreno reminded everyone if it was needed, the Committee could go into Closed Session.

Mr. Berger also stated the possibility of a compensation study for triggers to move employees forward in salary. Ms. Villarreal stated union negotiations have comparables with Peoria and Tazewell Counties. Mr. Berger mentioned some positions would align with AFSCME 2025A; the Office Manager, Tech Support Specialist would receive the biggest step increases early. He urged applying the scale to those positions first to see the salaries.

The item would be revisited on the 26th budget meeting.

Ms. Villarreal said she was requesting one legal assistant to be permanent, and the IT specialist was ARPA funded at 40 hours. She wanted to request the IT request at 40 hours permanently.

With the issue in staffing, Chairman Brunk asked about the possibility of having retired area attorneys come on. Ms. Villarreal stated it had been discussed, as well as retired judges, paralegals work part time, or remote work and had been unsuccessful in filling positions.

Mr. Berger stated the paralegal was filled and funded by ARPA but not permanent. He stated there were positions that were temporary that Ms. Villarreal would like to transition to permanent.

Ms. Villarreal stated in reference to the Safe-T Act, some counties were requesting more attorneys, bailiffs etc., and she expected an immediate impact even without the final status of the bill.

Mr. Swanson asked about revenue losses; Ms. Villarreal stated the SAO's office was not affected; however, the Circuit Clerk's office would be affected.

Court Administration –V. Bluedorn

Ms. Bluedorn presented to the committee and stated she felt as though her employees were left behind. She stated requests in increases for salaries for the positions of Executive Paralegal, Legal Assistant II and Jury Coordinator and showed comparables from when the employee started to now.

Mr. Berger showed starting wages for the three positions, and if properly aligned with the union, at grades 24, 20, and 17. The total request would be at \$57,825.65.

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
September 21st 2022 3:00 PM

The recommendation showed grade 17 increase for the executive paralegal, grade 17

Chairman Brunk stated the compensation study was being discussed how to establish a system to keep pace with the union positions. He stated never having process in place to address it.

Ms. Bluedorn stated she wanted to retain staff, not have to retrain or hire new people into the office.

Mr. Berger stated looking at a possible starting point conservatively at grade 17 and noted Illinois minimum wage would be \$13 an starting on Jan. 1, 2023. He attributed it to having the employees noted hired on at far too low a wage.

Ms. Bluedorn stated her office handled many things such as murders, and other things that required a high level of confidentiality and sensitivity; she presented an old job description posting for a criminal process coordinator from 2015. She stated all her employees fell into the category.

Mr. Swanson asked for other positions that would be considered grade 17, 20 and 24. Mr. Berger stated there would also be educational requirements assigned with certain grades.

Mr. Adams asked for the difference between a legal assistant II in the court administration and a legal assistant in the states' attorney's office. Ms. Bluedorn stated the difference was ever changing due to open door policy; she stated having filed 16 orders of protections in the office and the legal assistant would help those people in difficult situations. Mr. Berger stated the positions were different in job descriptions, a compensation study would help differentiate the positions, and that job descriptions would be helpful.

Mr. Deppe asked for the job descriptions for the union and nonunion positions for comparable positions. Mr. Berger stated that was a complex request due to certain positions. For example, there was something comparable to a jury coordinator, as there was only one jury to coordinate.

The request would be revisited on the October 26th budget meeting.

Mr. Deppe asked if the collective bargaining agreements had been looked at in reference to the minimum wage increase on Jan. 1, 2023. Chairman Brunk stated it was looked at a number of years ago. Mr. Berger stated he would look at those comparisons.

He also stated the County Clerk's office was agreeable to the 4 year comparisons presented. A timeline would be looked at to look at the rest of the budget process and lay out for the committee to consider. A doodle poll would be forthcoming to schedule over the coming weeks. Chairman Brunk wanted to represent a budget to the Committee of the Whole meeting in October and lay on display at that board meeting, but wanted to take more time if necessary.

Mr. Swanson stated this was the direction many were hoping to see with the budgeting requests to shift the view of the budget to something that something is charged with viewing strategically.

Mr. Deppe asked what Court Services received the previous year FY22. Mr. Berger stated he believed it

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
September 21st 2022 3:00 PM

was 5% across the board.

Chairman Brunk stated it was only in the last few years' needs were being addressed such as squad cars being replaced. He also mentioned that in 2022, when COVID was uncertain the sheriff had offered to forego purchasing squad cars to save budget. Mr. Swanson stated wanting to start with a capital improvement plan rather than a deferred maintenance plan.

Mr. Adams stated on reduction of taxes; the lower taxes could go, the more attractive the County would look and the County would blossom. Chairman Brunk also mentioned the significant decrease in the EAV.

CLOSED SESSION

There were no items for closed session.

Adjourn

No further business, the committee adjourned at 4:36 PM

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
September 21st 2022 3:00 PM