**WALWORTH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

The Walworth County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session on July 28, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. at the County Courthouse. Commissioners Houck, Holgard, Mohr, Schilling and Jungwirth were all present. Also present was Auditor Debbie Kahl.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Houck.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Commissioner Mohr moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Jungwirth seconded. All in favor: Aye – 0; Nay – 0. Motion carried.

**BUDGET**

The first subject for discussion was a salary discussion with department heads. Auditor Kahl pointed out 2 articles concerning inflation and cost of living that were brought by Treasurer Cindy Geier. Treasurer Geier pointed out that the employees had received a raise amounting to more than 9% in April. She is suggesting that elected officials and department heads should receive the same raise. She explained that the 3% CPI (Consumer Price Index) that has prescribed by the state has fallen behind the current CPI which is over 9% due to inflation. She explained that even if we were to give the employees an additional 3% raise it would still fall far below the inflation that is happening in our country right now. Commissioner Holgard asked Treasurer Geier what she was asking for. She explained that the reason we are in this meeting now is to do wage and salary negotiations for the upcoming year. Commissioner Holgard said he would firs have to know how much money we have to spend. Treasurer Geier reminded him that we also have our ARPA funds that have been earmarked for salaries. Treasurer Geier said she was asking for a 9.4% raise for elected and appointed officials and 3% for employees. Commissioner Holgard asked if that 3% was on top of the $1.50 they just got. Treasurer Geier said it was. Treasurer Geier said that with her requests we are still going in the hole in light of the facts she had just given the commission to read. Commissioner Holgard asked her “where do we stop the bleed?” He asked if we’ve got $100 and everybody wants $200 where do we come up with the extra money. Commissioner Schilling asked Auditor Kahl about the ARPA funds. She said it was approved in June but at this time the money had not been transferred from that account yet. The ARPA money is approximately $1,000,000. Register of Deeds Brenda DeToy said she liked the direction that the Treasurer was taken and felt that she had the facts to substantiate her arguments. She feels that at the very least it should be 3% across the board. She does feel that the elected and appointed officials should also receive the $1.50 that employees received earlier in the year. She feels that is a fair request because as an elected or appointed official you hold all the responsibility for everything that happens in or from your office and she feels that deserves a little compensation also. Register DeToy said the employees have gone for 2 or 3 years without a raise. Commissioner Holgard said it’s been 5 years for them. Commissioner Houck would rather give the raises in a flat amount rather than a percent. The $1.50 raise for the elected and appointed officials would have an approximate total cost of $28000. Auditor Kahl told the commission that a 3% for an employee making $17.45 would be about $0.18 per hour. (Auditor Kahl later realized that this was incorrect information, which she corrected at the next meeting. The actual number is $0.52 per hour. She would like to apologize for this error!!!) Commissioner Schilling pointed out that the transport officers had received 2 raises in 2022. One at the beginning of the year and then the $1.50 that all employees received. Auditor Kahl said she has been here quite a number of years. We have not always gotten a raise but for the bulk of the years we did receive a raise, usually in a percentage amount normally following CPI. In her memory historically it’s always been either everyone got the raise, or no one got a raise. Treasurer Geier said we really have to look at what is fair in just in our world right now. The commission is paying over $900 a month for employee health premiums now, plus 6-9% retirement, and matching social security. This is all part of the “loaded” costs of an employees wage. The commission would like all full-time employees to realize that the hourly wage you receive does not take into count what the commission pays and what amounts they match. Chairman Houck discussed giving the elected and appointed officials $1.50 per hour raise and the rest of the employees a 3% raise. Auditor Kahl explained that with the dollar amount raises we have now reached a point where the pay ratio between an employee and an elected or appointed official are coming very close together on an hourly basis. Chairman Houck then asked about the possibility of giving the elected and appointed officials $1.50 per hour and everyone else $0.18 per hour. (Remember, this erroneous number was stated to the commission with the mistake by the Auditor). Auditor Kahl pointed out, as someone mentioned, the landfill has received 2 raises this year, and last year the guys at the Landfill got a very substantial raise. So maybe just the people at the courthouse itself and the highway department should get the raise. Register Brenda Detoy said she agreed with some of what Auditor Kahl said. Commissioner Mohr said concerning the Landfill that the employees there are very happy with the raise they got and he doesn’t believe they would complain if they didn’t get one now. Commissioner Schilling that he is in agreement with what Auditor Kahl said at this point. Chairman Houck asked Sheriff Boll is he would be comfortable with the raise being discussed and not having the bonus discussed at the last meeting. He also asked the Sheriff about the 90 day waiting period for health insurance. The Sheriff said he has had complaints about that. The Sheriff believes the bonus will be better and more enticing to attract applicants than a small raise. Chairman Houck asked if he would be comfortable going forward with the bonus and not a raise for his employees. Sheriff Boll said the current employees would not be getting a bonus. Chairman Houck said he would propose the $1.50 raise for elected and appointed officials and smaller raise for everyone else including the elected and appointed officials that would get that amount added to the $1.50. Commissioner Holgard asked if the Landfill and transport would be left out. The decision was made to give the raise to all. We will discuss this more at budget hearings at a later date. Sheriff Boll reminded the commission that his department is a whole different situation than any other is the county. Commissioner Schilling stated that all sheriff’s offices are 24 hours a day. Commissioner Mohr pointed out the difference in wages between Campbell County and Walworth County and then to think about the work load difference. He said it is not always a fair comparison between counties. He also pointed out that many counties have more employees to divide the hours between but here with just two it is more of a problem. Commissioner Mohr also said there are many calls that require more than one person to respond, for the sake of safety.

The commission studied and discussed the individual account budgets. Commissioner Holgard asked if the commission was going to take a salary increase. The consensus was that they were not. There was discussion as to what some of the various line items contained. There was discussion concerning how many legal newspapers the county was required to have. Auditor Kahl reminded the commission to remember that the budget and where the numbers really stand is a work in progress. We are finding and correcting things as we find errors. The commission continued to go through the budgets one account at a time and reviewing the requests as turned in by the department heads. The department heads were available to answer any questions that the commission had concerning their requests. Auditor Kahl reminded the commission that we would need to add to every budget the amount that the cyber security coverage would cost. There was discussion about the future needs for the States Attorney’s Office. It is undecided at this time whether we will need a full-time and a part-time States Attorney. Discussion was held concerning where poor liens would be handled. Register DeToy explained to the commission about the updated lien software from Connecting Point and explained that it could be handled through the Register of Deeds Office as she is already connected to the server. There was discussion about the state’s attorney and where to put poor relief. Register DeToy explained about some new software to handle poor liens that is being installed in her system because she is connected to the server. Court appointed attorney’s and child defense budgets were increased due to the amount spent already in 2022. The Director of Equalization budget and the Planning and Zoning Budget were combined into the Director of Equalization budget as all the work is being done in that office. The Sheriff’s budget was discussed with Sheriff Boll in depth. Sheriff Boll explained that the Sheriff and Jail Budgets have been combined.

2nd session

**ADJOURNMENT**

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**JIM HOUCK, CHAIRPERSON**

**ATTEST:**

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**DEBBIE KAHL, AUDITOR**

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