

Minutes of the Budget Public Hearing of the Board of Ward County Commissioners

September 23, 2021

The Budget Public Hearing of the Ward County Commission was called to order by Chairman Fjeldahl at 7:00 PM with Commissioners, Anderson, Pietsch, Rostad, and Wepler present. Also present were department heads Jason Blowers, Jennifer Wiechmann, Kerriane Boetcher, Marisa Haman, Noreen Barton, Robert Roed, and Tammy Terras.

Auditor/Treasurer Marisa Haman appeared and gave a brief update on what has changed since the initial preliminary budget as well as comparison from this year to last year. Total budget decrease from August was \$1,891,090; cash reserve down \$812,450; cash on hand down \$811,003; other income down \$96,197; levy total down \$1,795,121; mills down 5.32.

Ms. Haman continued with the changes from 2021 to 2022: Value of a mill up \$3,659; levy up 4.71; cash on hand up \$3,340,961; cash reserve up \$5,992,658; other income up \$1,706,112; dollars levied \$1,506,259. These totals equate to an increase on an average assessed home of \$200,000 to be \$32.39 and average value of an assessed acre an increase of \$26.73.

Moved by Comm. Rostad, seconded by Comm. Wepler to open a public hearing on the 2022 Ward County Budget at 7:06 PM. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Jim Degenstein appeared and spoke about reduction of line items and outsourcing to reduce increases to budget.

Discussion on new positions being added which include three new positions, two moving from part-time to full-time, and one reclassification for a total cost of \$300,009.22.

Travis Zablotney of Minot appeared and spoke about reducing the tax load for taxpayers.

Kathy Monti of Berthold appeared and inquired if there is any way to figure what the total of lost tax income from tax exempt nonprofits/charitable organizations.

Dan Drovdal of Minot appeared and expressed concern on his proposed tax estimate increase of just over 17% on his taxes.

Moved by Comm. Pietsch, seconded by Comm. Wepler to close the public hearing at 7:35 PM. Roll call; all voted yes; motion carried.

Human Resource Director Tammy Terras appeared to present three BCBS counterproposal plans recently drawn up for Ward County. A discussion was held. At this time Ward County will stay with NDPERS as previously selected.

A discussion was held on the overall budget. One area discussed were the three new positions totaling \$252,404, the reclassification position and part-time to full-time of two employees totaling \$47,605.22, and the cost share for the horticulture agent going to fulltime is \$13,667.

Moved by Comm. Pietsch, seconded by Comm. Rostad to give every department head a chance to reevaluate their budgets and see how they can further reduce their departments so that cuts do not need to be made in other areas. Roll call; Pietsch, Rostad, Wepler, and Anderson voted yes; Fjeldahl voted no; motion carried.

A Budget meeting has been set for Thursday, September 30, 2021, at 10:00 AM.

At 8:11 PM with no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

ACCEPTED AND APPROVED THIS 6TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2021

Chairman, Ward County Commission

ATTEST:
