

The Joint Public Hearing of the Dundy County Commissioners was held on September 18th, 2023 in the Dundy County Court Room. The notice of this meeting was published in the September 13th, 2023 issue of the county paper.

Present: Commissioners Scott Olson, Tom Richard, Aaron Keiser, Clerk Miles Preston, County Treasurer Penny Denny, County Assessor Tish Burrell, County Attorney Arlan Wine, Karen Baker, Paul Higgins, Lester Beall, Lauren Jensen, Ray Stute, Mary Deyle, Tally Case, Elmer Case, Gene Sargent, Larry Sargent, Amanda Hansen, Jennifer Hansen, Dory Hansen, Brady Hansen Terri Yrkoski, Tim Yrkoski, Bob Stamm, Susan Glasco

Chairman Olson called the hearing to order at 6:00 P.M.

Chairman Olson explained the procedures for conducting the Joint Public Hearing on Proposed Property Tax Increases. Olson will explain the budget process and deliver a presentation breaking down the requested expenditures, then the public will be allowed to ask questions briefly, then individuals will be allowed to speak for 4 minutes each, then there will be another round of questions, before conclusion of the hearing. Valuation is not to be discussed at this meeting, and no other agenda item will be discussed besides property tax asking for the Political Subdivision intending to exceed allowable growth percentage: Dundy County. Olson explained the expenditures from each fund and function within the County Budget and stated the amounts being requested.

Olson opened the hearing for public questions:

Bob Stamm asked if the tax comes from just the land tax or if it comes from the whole county.

Ray Stute asked how many new employees Dundy County has hired for the roads department: No new positions, but we are budgeting for a working highway superintendent.

Public asked how much new equipment the county is purchasing for roads department. Replaced the totaled grader, purchased a new grader on payments over 5 years, and have a payment for the excavator.

Lester Beall asked if we are going to continue raising taxes or address wasteful spending. The sheriff purchased new shotguns just a few years ago, and the new sheriff purchased new firearms this year. Also the dodge pickup was purchased, but the Ford was supposed to be in rotation for a while longer still. – Keiser: there are several firearms that are listed to be surplus and sold. COVID put a bottleneck on obtaining new vehicles, so the sheriff's office was behind schedule on rotating their vehicles to the County Road Department. County Board will also now be making purchase decisions for all county vehicles.

Ray Stute asked why the maintainers aren't located near the job sites like they used to be, instead of driving them back to and from their road shops. – Olson stated that there is some difficulty getting logistics worked out for transporting road workers.

Dory Hansen asked about the increases of ~\$12,000.00 in the Clerk's office, as well as ~\$38,000.00 in the County Attorney's office. – Kaiser: addressed the county attorney's office increases; Full Time for County Attorney and Assistant, as well as deputy County Attorney part time labor. County Attorney's office is accounting for overtime, as well as programs that other counties used to provide but are no longer doing.

Jennifer Hansen asked if it is possible to better manage fuel and utilities costs at county buildings. - Olson: that is typically managed by shop supervisors, but we will look into that possibility. 5% of fuel savings would add up to a large reduction.

Brady Hansen asked what the county plans on doing when the average person's wages are not going up to meet inflation levels. Taxes keep going up, but they don't go back down. Can we extend out our equipment replacement schedules, or put off buying a new pickup every year? – Keiser: Labor expenses for equipment has more than doubled over the last several years. - Gene Sargent: Would it be cheaper to lease? – Olson: we are leasing a skid steer for bridge and culvert maintenance, going to try that for a year.

Dory Hansen asked how many road graders did we have when you were first a commissioner? – Olson: we've gotten rid of one. Each department has 3, and we had one spare, but we realized it was getting too expensive.

Tim Yrkoski said he's been on plenty of county boards: You almost have to take a small increase, just to cover your own costs increasing. If you don't then eventually you'll have to increase them at some point. That being said, I'm not for increasing taxes either, but get on a county board and you'll understand that it has to be done.

With no further requests for comment or questions, Chairman Olson closed the Joint Public Hearing at 7:14 P.M. The next meeting of the Dundy County Commissioners will be held on September 21st, 2023 at 3:30 P.M.

These minutes are not the official record and may be corrected. A copy of the approved minutes is available to The Public in the Dundy County Clerk's Office. Any resolutions contained herein are available for viewing at the Dundy County Clerk's Office.

/s/ Miles Preston

County Clerk

/s/ Scott Olson

Chairman