

Board of County Commissioners of Lincoln County
September 21, 2023

The Board will begin conducting reviews regarding preliminary 2024 budget requests. The following departments are scheduled to discuss their requests as follows:

- 9:00 Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance
- 9:00 Tom Nestor – Sheriff’s Operations, Jail and Victim Assistance Budgets
- 9:30 Ken Stroud – Office of Emergency Management Budget and E911 Budget
- 10:00 Jim Covington – County Treasurer’s Budget
- 10:15 Jeremiah Higgins – County Assessor’s Budget
- 10:30 Ty Stogsdill – Land Use Budget
- 11:00 James Martin – Information Technology Budget
- 11:30 Patrick Leonard–Weed Control Budget
- 1:00 Chris Monks, Bruce Walters, and Judd Kravig – Road and Bridge Budgets

Other budget requests that will be reviewed during the day as time allows include the following:

- Commissioners
- Administrator
- County Clerk and Recorder and Elections
- Administrative
- Maintenance of Buildings/Plant
- Land Surveyor
- Health Inspector
- Veterans Office
- Library Fund
- Conservation Trust Fund
- Capital Projects
- Landfill Fund
- Lodging Tax/Tourism Fund
- East Central Council of Local Governments
- Fire Control
- District Attorney
- Ambulance Service
- Emergency Medical Service
- E.M.S. Subsidy
- Developmentally Disabled
- Community Development Block Grant
- Rural Economic Development Initiative Grant
- Lincoln Community Hospital

Other meetings unrelated to budget requests are scheduled as follows:

- 2:00 Executive Session pursuant to C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(f)(I) for personnel matters

The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. on September 21, 2023, to hear the 2024 preliminary budget requests. Chairman Doug Stone, Commissioners Steve Burgess and Wayne Ewing, County Administrator Jacob Piper, and Clerk to the Board Corinne M. Lengel attended.

Chairman Stone called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Sheriff Tom Nestor and Captain Michael Yowell presented the Sheriff Operations, Jail Operations, and Victims Assistance budget requests. Sheriff Nestor noted his department anticipated returning slightly more than a quarter of a million dollars to the budget at the end of 2023. The sheriff said he'd increased many line items, primarily due to rising costs, resulting in slightly less than a \$75,000 increase from the adopted 2023 budget. Sheriff Nestor commented that keeping officers was getting more difficult because they left for more money and a better retirement package, which they could find elsewhere.

Captain Yowell presented the Jail Operations budget, and the sheriff commented he wanted to move the captain to the Sheriff Operations budget in 2025, which would put him in line with other administrative pay. Salaries were the most considerable increase overall, and Captain Yowell said they had raised the janitor's hourly rate to equal the new annex janitor's: \$20 per hour. He stated the jail budget requests increased considerably for the same reasons as the sheriff's: rising costs. The Medical Supplies line item goes up 3.5% annually, reflecting the \$10,000 increase. The captain said the JBBS/Mental Health line item went up \$25,000 but was a dollar-for-dollar pass-through account. Every dollar they spent came back. The overall increase for the Jail Operations budget from the 2023 adopted budget was roughly \$82,000.

Emergency Manager Ken Stroud arrived at 9:20 a.m. for his 9:30 appointment.

Other than the salary increase, Sheriff Nestor said he'd only added \$300 to the Victims Assistance budget request.

The officers discussed their Capital Projects requests: a \$15,000 car-lift station for the Limon substation that they would share with other local law enforcement agencies, replacing three vehicles, and diagnosis and potential repairs of the jail intercom system. The captain explained the lift station would help search vehicles for narcotics and perform VIN inspections for confidential VINs. They want to start a program to place tracking numbers on catalytic converters for when thefts occur, which the lift station would also allow them to do.

The department planned to trade their 2019, 2020, and 2021 Chevy Tahoes through the state bidding process; however, Vince's Chevrolet quoted trade-in values of \$17,000, \$20,000, and \$35,000, respectively. The estimate for three new vehicles, including upfitting, was \$195,000.

The final Capital Projects request was to diagnose problems with the jail intercom system. Captain Yowell said they'd spent approximately three years replacing parts and troubleshooting issues before finding a skilled contractor specializing in their type of communication system.

The requested \$33,000 would be a one-time expense: \$22,855 for identifying problems and \$10,000 for detected repairs.

Emergency Manager Ken Stroud presented his 2024 budget requests at 9:50 a.m., starting with the E911 fund. He noted that integrating the new eFORCE Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) software and VIPER system would produce the most significant changes and biggest overhaul of the communications center they'd ever seen. Captain Yowell commented that it was past time for the project; the money was there or would replenish itself within eighteen months or less. The county wouldn't own the equipment but would pay an annual contract price for remote hosting, monitoring, and system maintenance. Mr. Stroud noted that the state raised the E911 cap to \$1.91 per cell phone line but that the county currently charges \$1.72. Sheriff Nestor said it might be worth considering raising it in 2025.

Chief Deputy Treasurer LaRay Patton, Deputy Treasurer Ashley Erwin, and Deputy Assessor Renita Thelen arrived at 10:00 a.m., and the sheriff and captain left.

Mr. Stroud presented the Emergency Manager's budget request, stating he'd slightly raised his Repairs & Maintenance, Travel & Transportation, and Emergency Program line items in addition to the salary increase. He'd also added \$4,000 for building utilities since he'd moved his equipment to the two-bay garage at the Limon substation and felt it only fair to share the cost. Mr. Stroud provided a justification sheet for a \$25,000 Capital Outlay request to upgrade the substation by securing windows, installing a walk-through door, and purchasing a standby generator. Mr. Burgess told him District 2 had an extra generator if needed, and Mr. Stroud admitted he might have estimated a bit high on the costs.

Mr. Stroud left, and Mrs. Patton and Mrs. Erwin presented the Treasurer's 2024 budget requests. Mrs. Patton pointed out that Mr. Covington had incorrectly listed her adopted 2023 salary when he submitted his budget sheets to Mr. Piper and provided the correct number. Mr. Covington had raised his Telephone, Dues & Meetings, Copier, and Postage Meter line items, an overall \$1,250 increase. Mrs. Patton thought Mr. Covington had discussed creating a Postage Meter line item in the Administration budget since several departments use the machine. Mr. Piper said they had, indeed, done so.

Mrs. Patton told the Board that due to Mr. Covington's retirement next October, he wanted to allow their part-time clerk to move to full-time beginning in January. She voiced her full support of Mrs. Erwin as the next county treasurer and did not want the position. They didn't plan to fill the deputy position (Mrs. Erwin's) when Mr. Covington retired if the commissioners appointed Mrs. Erwin upon his recommendation.

Mr. Burgess asked why the part-time person needed to be full-time as early as January if Mr. Covington wasn't leaving until the first of November. Mrs. Patton said the treasurer needed to train Mrs. Erwin more on the Public Trustee side of his position, but neither deputy felt full-time was necessary until later in the year. Mr. Ewing asked if the part-time person might quit if she didn't get to move to full-time in January, but Mrs. Erwin said they'd discussed the possibility

with the employee, who appeared okay with it. She currently works seventeen hours a week at \$17.50/hour. The commissioners agreed to discuss it further.

Mr. Burgess had noticed the Other – Bogus Sales line item in the budget and asked what it was. Mrs. Patton explained that the computer periodically assigns one tax sale certificate number to two buyers, which she doesn't find until the parcel goes to a Treasurer's Deed. It can also occur with an incorrect legal description. When she finds them, Mrs. Patton said she has to void the sale or consider it bogus, refund the purchasers' interest payments, and start the process over. Those interest payments would come from that line item.

The Treasurer's office employees stayed while Mrs. Thelen presented the Assessor's 2024 budget requests. Mr. Burgess asked why Mr. Higgins had \$5,000 in the part-time line item, and Mrs. Thelen said it was likely an oversight since they were fully staffed and hadn't needed it for a couple of years. Mr. Higgins had decreased his Office Supplies and Tyler Computer System line items but increased the Postage Meter expense in Capital Outlay.

The commissioners had no other questions, so Mrs. Thelen, Mrs. Patton, and Mrs. Erwin left, and Land Use Administrator Ty Stogsdill presented his budget requests at 10:30 a.m. James Martin arrived at that time for his 11:00 appointment. The only increases to Mr. Stogsdill's budget were in the Salaries, Social Security, Telephone, and Dues & Meetings line items. He was already over his 2023 budget in Dues & Meetings, which was the primary reason for raising it. He said he pays the Land Use board members' mileage from the line item, but since they'd had problems getting a quorum at meetings, some members thought they should consider meeting quarterly. Mr. Burgess asked if they could do Zoom meetings, and Mr. Stogsdill said it might be an option. Mr. Stone asked if the pickup still worked for Mr. Stogsdill or if he would prefer the car that Human Services wanted to replace. Mr. Stogsdill felt a pickup was better for some rural areas he had to visit.

Mr. Piper and James Martin presented the new Information Technology Department 2024 budget requests. Several line items already existed within other departments or inside the Administrative budgets, but others were new. Mr. Burgess asked if \$500 was enough for Travel & Transportation, noting Mr. Martin should use a county vehicle when feasible. Mr. Stone suggested increasing it by \$500, but Mr. Burgess said \$1,000 would be better.

Mr. Martin left, and the commissioners reviewed the Office of the Board and Administrator's proposed budgets.

Mrs. Lengel presented the Clerk & Recorder and Elections budget requests, noting the most significant increases were in the Salaries line items. She'd removed the I/T operating supplies line items from both budgets, roughly \$4,500, but slightly increased the Telephone and Dues & Meetings line items in the Clerk & Recorder's budget. Although she'd already overspent her 2023 Travel & Transportation line item, Mrs. Lengel dropped it back again for 2024. Due to three elections next year, she and her staff would likely attend less training. However, Mrs. Lengel said she planned to request an increase to the Election budget's Education & Training

line item in 2025 because she and three staff members would have to renew their national certifications. Mrs. Lengel also mentioned the three elections affected the significant increases in the Operating Supplies, Judges, Postage, and Professional Services line items. While the Maintenance Contracts line item went up the annual two percent, Mrs. Lengel said it would drop considerably in 2025 due to recent contract revisions.

County Treasurer Jim Covington came to the meeting at 11:00 a.m. and apologized for missing his appointment. He said he'd thought it was the following day and told Mr. Higgins the same, apologizing for him as well. Mr. Covington asked if the commissioners would allow his part-time person to be full-time in January, but Mr. Stone told him the Board discussed it and thought September made more sense. Mr. Covington asked if they could compromise and do July, but Mr. Burgess said no. However, he told Mr. Covington to increase the employee's pay to \$20/hour. Mr. Stone had no problem with the employee going full-time in July, but Mr. Ewing said he'd like to consider it. Mr. Covington told them they start getting busier in July and would appreciate it if they would allow it then.

Mr. Covington left, and the Board reviewed the proposed 2024 Administrative budget proposal. Mr. Piper increased the Office Supplies line item by \$2,500 and said he wouldn't have the Workers' Comp figures until after the winter conference. He'd used the current number of employees and new rates to determine the Medical Insurance line item.

Weed Control Coordinator Patrick Leonard arrived at 11:20 a.m. to discuss the Weed Control department budget requests. Other than the Salaries and Social Security line items, he'd raised Operating Supplies, Fuel, and Repairs/Maintenance, an overall increase of \$3,550. Mr. Leonard said he'd added \$500 to the repairs line item because of programming issues on the truck's EGR. He also told the Board he gained three water sources this year and trades water for spraying the Limon gun range.

Mr. Burgess thought the county received \$10,000 from State Land Board grant funds several years ago. Mr. Leonard said he'd found some paperwork possibly referring to it and promised to check it.

Mr. Leonard left, and the group returned to discussing the Administrative budget proposals. Mr. Piper said he'd added the Postage Machine line item, per Mr. Covington's request, and decided a good starting point would be \$10,000. He said the Liability Insurance was a rough estimate, but he'd used the same rate, which increased it by \$55,000. Adding an IT person who could improve cyber-security would hopefully decrease it. Mr. Piper had increased the Retirement line item by roughly \$22,000 and noted it included the extra \$150,000 the commissioners agreed to add annually. Mr. Piper transferred the IT Services and Ransomware Software to the IT budget, increased the Accounting/Payroll line item (for the Tyler computer system) by \$5,000, and the Amend #1 – Hospital Tax Increase by a little over \$33,000. He'd also added \$500 to the Cafeteria Plan.

In the Maintenance of Building and Plant budget, the Full-Time Salaries line item decreased \$5,000 from reducing the janitor's hours from forty to thirty-five per week. Mr. Piper had left the Utilities-heat line item the same as 2023, even though it was already over budget by \$11,000. However, the electricity line item was underspent so far this year, so he'd reduced it by \$10,000. Mr. Burgess felt more comfortable dropping it by \$5,000 instead and thought they should raise the heat line item. Mr. Stone agreed and said Mr. Piper should budget \$35,000 instead of \$25,000. Mr. Piper had removed the internet line item as it wasn't necessary for John Mohan's shop.

The Surveyor and Health Inspector budgets were the same as in 2023.

Mr. Piper asked if the commissioners wanted to give the Veterans' Service Officer a cost of living raise since they'd recently adjusted the pay to \$1,550/month. The Board agreed to a \$50/month increase. The only other line item Mr. Piper changed was Travel & Transportation, which he increased by \$300.

The group took a lunch break and then met with road foremen Chris Monks, Bruce Walters, and Judd Kravig at 1:00 p.m. Emergency Manager Ken Stroud also attended the initial discussion regarding radios. Mr. Burgess asked that the sheriff join them as well. Mr. Stroud said they'd discussed providing Road & Bridge employees with digital VHF radios to help track them in emergencies. If lost in a fire or blizzard, the dispatch center could log into the system and pinpoint the employee's location. The radios would cost approximately \$750 each. Mr. Stroud noted they could still use the analog system to talk among themselves. The group discussed existing repeaters and towers, and then Mr. Burgess asked if the commissioners needed to add it to the 2024 budget. Mr. Stroud said it would probably take about a year to work out the details, but it would help if the road supervisors could determine how many radios each district needed. An estimated \$89,339.27 should cover the county, but that price would go up ten percent after January 1. Mr. Stroud said it would cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000 to buy a tower for Karval if they couldn't use the state's. Mr. Burgess said he thought the E911 board committed to half the cost, but Mr. Stroud said he didn't know for sure since they needed funding for the new dispatch center. Sheriff Nestor noted this was just the backbone of a multi-year build and that the county could add radios anytime. He and Mr. Stroud left at 1:20 p.m.

The Miscellaneous – Bridge Fund stayed the same, and Mr. Piper repeated the Workers' Comp and Medical Insurance line items were his best guess. Mr. Burgess felt the \$900,000 in the Maintenance of Oiled Roads line item wasn't nearly enough but said to leave it for now. In the Road & Bridge Administration budget request, Mr. Piper said they'd increased Physicals & Drug Testing, Internet, Travel & Transportation, Liability Insurance, Electricity, and Water. As for Equipment, the group agreed to increase the Gas & Fuel line item by \$40,000 and Outside Repairs by \$15,000. They also added another \$90,000 to Equipment.

Maintenance man John Mohan arrived at 2:00 p.m.

The commissioners and road foremen briefly discussed the tractor lease program, and then the foremen left the meeting.

Mr. Burgess moved to go into executive session, per C.R.S. 24-6-402 (4) (f) (I), for personnel matters. Mr. Ewing seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Mrs. Lengel left, and the others proceeded with the executive session. Mr. Piper recorded the meeting, which will remain on file in the County Clerk's vault for the statutory ninety days.

When the Board came out of executive session at 2:30 p.m., Mr. Mohan left, and the commissioners told Mrs. Lengel they'd approved his step raise.

The group reviewed the 2024 budget proposal for the Library Fund, and Mr. Piper said it might be prudent to add another quarter mill. He suggested taking it from Public Health, but the Board could decide after hearing Director Kelly Meier's requests at their next meeting.

Mr. Piper said the end-of-year fund balance in the Conservation Trust Fund was \$132,319. Mr. Burgess asked if they could use some money to improve the fairgrounds' south-side restrooms, and Mr. Piper said he'd check.

Mr. Piper noted the Capital Projects Fund was healthy overall, and they increased the Landfill budget's Gas & Fuel and Fees line items. Mr. Burgess asked if they could leave the rates as is, and the other commissioners agreed not to raise them. Mr. Piper commented there seemed to be something off with the revenues in the Lodging/Tourism Fund, but he would look into it.

The Board reviewed the Council of Governments, Fire Control, District Attorney, Ambulance Service, EMS, EMS Subsidy, Developmentally Disabled, CDBG, and Rural Economic Development Initiative Grant budget requests. Mr. Piper said the hospital's three mills equated to \$555,180, and the only adjustments they'd made to the Fairgrounds budget were John Palmer's salary and Social Security.

With no other business to discuss, Mr. Stone adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m. The next meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. on September 28, 2023.

Corinne M. Lengel, Clerk to the Board

Doug Stone, Chairman