

Board of County Commissioners of Lincoln County
September 26, 2022

The Board will begin conducting reviews regarding preliminary 2023 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 Ty Stogsdill – Land Use Budget

10:00 Jim Covington – County Treasurer’s Budget

10:15 Jeremiah Higgins – County Assessor’s Budget

10:45 John Palmer – Fairgrounds Budget

11:00 Ken Stroud – Office of Emergency Management Budget and E911 Budget

11:30 Kelly Meier – Public Health Budget

11:45 Patrick Leonard–Weed Control Budget and Karval Water Users Activity Enterprise Budget

1:00 Chris Monks, Bruce Walters, and Judd Kravig – Road and Bridge Budgets

2:00 Robin Halley – Extension Office Budget

2:30 Andy Lorensen – Human Services Budget and Coroner Budget

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

Commissioners	Community Development Block Grant
Administrator	Rural Economic Development Initiative Grant
County Clerk and Recorder and Elections	Lincoln Community Hospital
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	

The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. on September 26, 2022, for the annual budget hearings. Chairman Doug Stone, Commissioners Ed E. Schiffers and Steve Burgess, County Administrator Jacob Piper, Clerk of the Board Corinne M. Lengel, commissioner-elect Wayne Ewing, and Limon Leader reporter Stephanie Zwick attended.

Chairman Stone called the meeting to order and asked Lincoln County Sheriff's Captain Michael Yowell to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

The captain, Sheriff Tom Nestor, and Undersheriff Gordon Nall met with the Board to present the 2023 budget requests for the Sheriff's Operations, Jail, and Victim Assistance departments. The sheriff explained that the most significant increase occurred because he and the other elected officials felt he should adopt a separate pay scale, which he had done. The budgets reflected a seven percent increase, or roughly \$500 a month for each employee. Sheriff Nestor said he needed to offer competitive salaries to ensure quality applicants and to keep deputies on staff. They tell new hires about the excellent health insurance benefit, but paying competitive salaries is also crucial. Mr. Burgess asked what he thought of offering signing bonuses, but the sheriff said he wasn't in favor of it for several reasons.

Other increases to the Sheriff's Operations budget were for the Courthouse Security (the sheriff said he would start requiring them to wear vests and uniforms), Holiday pay and OT, Uniforms, Education and Training, and Telephone line items. An extreme jump in the Equipment line item was for new bodycams and dashcams through the Axon company. Limon PD and CSP currently use the company, and while the sheriff said it was expensive, their insurance underwriter now required cameras that couldn't be manipulated. Captain Yowell commented that there were many advantages, including automatic activation. Sheriff Nestor had also increased the Repairs & Maintenance, Gas, Limon Substation Maintenance, Limon Substation Utilities, and Dues & Meetings line items.

The captain presented the jail budget, again explaining the increases were due mainly to salaries, over time, and holiday pay. They will no longer give their command staff over time, cutting down on some of the costs. The Equipment line item increased by \$44,000 due to the Axon cameras for jail staff, and there were also increases to the Education & Training and Travel and Transportation line items. The captain said he'd raised the latter because of inmate extraditions.

While discussing the Victim Assistance budget, Sheriff Nestor said that the advocacy center was a place used for victims of crime, and it needed to be clean and well kept. Previous users of the facility, namely DHS, hadn't taken care of it to the Victim Advocate's or sheriff's liking, and he'd asked Undersheriff Nall to put several restrictions in place.

As for justifications for capital outlay budget requests, Sheriff Nestor included \$185,000 in the Capital Projects budget for vehicles. He believed he could trade in a 2019 Chevy Silverado and a 2019 Chevy Tahoe for close to \$45,000. Vince's Chevrolet in Burlington got one of the new units he'd ordered for 2023, and with the \$26,000 he had on credit, it would cost around

\$17,000. The sheriff said Vince's allowed them to take the vehicle and would invoice the remainder this year.

Mr. Burgess thought the county should keep the 2019 Silverado for a land use pickup and get rid of the one Mr. Stogsdill currently drives because of its high mileage. Sheriff Nestor said he could get \$20,000 out of it at Vince's, whereas the old pickup might bring \$8,000 to \$10,000. He added it was the commissioners' decision and asked them to let him know their decision.

The wrecked Dodge Charger appraised at \$18,000, so the county should get a check for \$13,440. Mr. Piper said it would go back into the General Fund. Sheriff Nestor noted his department could equip and pay for all three vehicles this year if the commissioners could find the funding. They could then remove the \$185,000 from the 2023 Capital Projects budget. Mr. Piper commented that the fund balance would be the same either way, and Mr. Stone felt they should do it this year.

Sheriff Nestor explained his other capital outlay justification for Lexipol digital law enforcement policies. Other agencies have moved to digital policies, which their insurance underwriter now requires. Implementation of the system and uploading data for the first year would cost \$48,000. The annual subscription after that is \$14,000.

While the sheriff's budgets appeared to have increased by half a million dollars from 2022, Sheriff Nestor stated their inbound financials from JBBS and tickets should cover approximately half of it.

Mr. Ewing asked the sheriff how the new sally port door worked, and Sheriff Nestor said they were constantly calling the company to adjust it. Thankfully, it was all still warranty work, but they'd decided not to replace the other door until they got the issues worked out with this one.

Sheriff Nestor, Captain Yowell, and Undersheriff Nall left, and Ty Stogsdill presented the Land Use budget at 9:50 a.m. Mr. Stogsdill noted that the pickup needs a front-end alignment but said he'd hold off if the commissioners planned to get rid of the vehicle. He added that he'd increased his budget for his salary based on the commissioners' instruction to add a cost-of-living raise. He also increased his Postage, Travel, and Ads & Notices line items.

Treasurer Jim Covington and Assessor Jeremiah Higgins met with the Board at 10:00 a.m. to present their budgets. Mr. Covington said Mrs. Lengel suggested to him and Mr. Higgins that they move their chief deputies to Level 6, putting them on the same level as "second in command" staff members in other departments. However, because of her longevity and current position on the pay scale, it would only give her a few more cents an hour. He had increased the department head's salary per state statute and added more to the Telephone and Ads & Notices line items.

Mr. Higgins echoed Mr. Covington regarding salaries but said he'd reduced his Internet Fees line item slightly. He, too, increased his Telephone and Postage line items and added money to Capital Outlay.

The Office of the Board budget increased due to salaries, and Mr. Burgess asked Mr. Piper to cut the Ports-to-Plains line item in half, leaving \$5,000. They added more to Dues & Meetings because of higher lodging prices.

The Administrator's Salaries line item increased for the two-step COLA and a step raise for Mr. Piper. He also increased his Telephone and Travel & Transportation line items but reduced the Office Supplies line item.

Mrs. Lengel presented the Clerk and Recorder and Elections budgets, explaining that she'd reorganized her staff into the correct budgets and moved them on the pay scale according to their job descriptions. For instance, the recording deputy was in the election budget instead of the clerk's. She provided justification sheets for all four employees, stating that her reason for moving the chief deputy to level 6 was to compensate the employee for running the department in the supervisor's absence. Mrs. Lengel also asked to move the finance director to level 5, rewarding that employee's honesty, integrity, and dedication in a highly liable and stressful position. Mrs. Lengel justified a promotion for the driver examiner to level 4 by saying that the job required a reliable, trustworthy, and independent person who could handle often rude, demanding, and unreasonable customers and complex laws and rules. Lastly, the recording clerk or deputy had never been correctly represented in the budget, even though document recording was the fundamental duty when state statutes created the position of Clerk and Recorder decades ago. She asked to move the recording clerk to a Deputy I position in the Clerk and Recorder budget rather than a Clerk II in the Elections budget, which made little sense. Mrs. Lengel had increased the Department Head Salary line item according to state statute, raised the office supplies line item but decreased the education and training line item, and adjusted the Capital Outlay amount as directed by the county auditor. As for the Elections budget, Mrs. Lengel requested a level promotion for Ryan Davis, making him the chief election deputy. Not only did his performance warrant the pay increase, but Mrs. Lengel explained that if she moved the recording clerk from the Elections budget, she wouldn't have anyone to fill the position of election deputy. Mrs. Lengel had also reduced the Judges, Postage, and Background Checks line items and the Education & Training line item. She and the other three employees who started their national election certification finally completed it and graduated, so they would not need to take as many courses for their renewal.

While presenting the 2023 Administrative budget, Mr. Piper stated that even though the Workers' Compensation and Medical Insurance increased by seven percent, moving to the higher deductible and HSA plans saved the county quite a bit of money. Mr. Piper said it appeared the Liability Insurance increased considerably, but it was because he'd adjusted it between the General and Road & Bridge funds differently than in the past. Where sixty percent used to come from the Road & Bridge Fund and forty percent from the General Fund, he'd swapped the two based on recent claims. Mr. Piper had added a Ransomware Software line

item and an Outside Grant Writing line item to the Administrative budget and had removed the line items relating to the pandemic.

Fairgrounds manager John Palmer met with the Board at 10:45 a.m. to discuss the 2023 fairgrounds budget. The Superintendents/Judges line item increased significantly, and Mr. Palmer said the commissioners would need to talk to Robin Halley about the reasoning behind it. The support staff amount increased because Mr. Palmer said he needed more help during the fair. The Trash Removal & Septic and Tent line items also increased. Mr. Palmer said he'd added \$5,000 to the budget for Special Events and asked the commissioners if they might want to contribute to outside events, such as the recent cornhole tournaments. The Board agreed it would be hard to give money to one event without giving to all of them, so they removed the \$5,000 from the budget request.

Mr. Burgess asked if it was worth having a rodeo since it costs so much, but Mr. Palmer said they could spend twice as much elsewhere. He added that he hadn't seen a contract from the stock company for a couple of years and felt they needed to send one shortly after the first of the year. Mr. Piper said he'd like a better breakdown of the company's insurance policies.

Mr. Schifferns commented that they needed more participation in the fair, not just from farmers, ranchers, and cowboys. He again mentioned holding a tractor pull or a different event that would draw in people with other interests. Mr. Palmer agreed but said no one wanted to accept the work and responsibility of putting something like that together.

Mr. Palmer informed the Board that the arena lights weren't working, so he had a couple of people check them out; both said they needed replacing. The commissioners told him to look into it and get an estimate. Mr. Piper said they could take the money from the Capital Projects budget or Conservation Trust. Mr. Palmer also said there was one furnace they couldn't get parts for in the Ellis Allen building because it's over twenty-five years old. He added that if they lost the unit over the restrooms, they'd have severe problems again if the waterpipes froze and burst. The picnic tables are getting harder to move from the awning to the tent for the auction, so Mr. Palmer said he'd like to ask the sale committee for money to buy more. The group also discussed a sunshade at the back of the show barn and how to handle the beer garden if they had a concert on Friday night again.

Emergency Manager Ken Stroud met with the Board at 11:00 a.m. to present the 2023 Emergency Management and E911 budget requests. Public Health Director Kelly Meier also attended the discussion. Mr. Stroud proposed making the Emergency Manager's position full-time, stating that OEM and EPR had seen an increase in requirements and activities. Doing so would support the ongoing E911 changes, provide Lincoln County representation at the local EMS Council and Plains-to-Peaks RETAC meetings, help Homeland Security (DHS) and Public Health plan for mass casualties, and support local fire and EMS departments and healthcare providers. He felt now was the perfect time with the EMPG grant reimbursement increasing from around \$16,000 to \$31,550. Mrs. Meier also said it was the right time to make the transition since the funding was available. Since the county split Mr. Stroud's salary in half

between the Public Health and General funds, he said the request wouldn't add more than the two-step cost-of-living increase the commissioners asked department heads to calculate.

Mrs. Meier said the regional EPR Coordinator, Darcy Janssen, planned to retire in a few years, so she would like to have Mrs. Janssen and Mr. Stroud train a new county EPR Coordinator. She added that one of her current employees could take on the responsibilities. When Mr. Burgess asked how Public Health would cover the cost, Mrs. Meier told him they would receive \$36,000 for the part-time STEPP coordinator position and probably \$25,000 for EPR, thus fully funding the job, including benefits.

Mr. Burgess asked Mr. Stroud if the \$31,550 would carry on after next year, and Mr. Stroud told him it would. Mr. Stroud added that creating a full-time emergency manager was an excellent opportunity for both departments to build more powerful positions.

He had also increased the Repairs & Maintenance line item for the county-owned generator and light plant and the Travel & Transportation line item in case the commissioners agreed to a full-time emergency manager.

As for the E911 budget, Mr. Stroud increased the Telephone line item because the 911 access costs \$3,800 per month.

Mr. Stroud left, and Mrs. Meier presented the 2023 Public Health budget. She'd increased Professional Services to cover the WIC program but said the state would fully reimburse it. Mr. Piper said he'd left the quarter of a mill in the budget, but they could take it out, and the fund would continue to operate fully and efficiently because Mrs. Meier did an excellent job of getting grant money. The commissioners agreed they didn't want the state thinking the county depended entirely on grant funding to run the department and left the quarter mill in the budget.

Patrick Leonard met with the Board at 11:45 a.m. to discuss the Weed Control budget. The Salary and Repairs & Maintenance line items increased, but Mr. Leonard said he'd left everything else the same. He noted it would be nice to have some additional workspace and a larger area to store the chemicals and asked Mr. Stone if he could use the other bay at the shop. Mr. Stone said he'd speak with Judd Kravig about it.

Mr. Piper said the Karval Water Users budget was in the county's budget as an enterprise fund. Mr. Leonard said GMS came out last week, and they picked a spot for the well. They surveyed everything and expected to start the waterlines in February or March.

The group broke for lunch, and when the meeting reconvened at 1:00 p.m., the road foremen, Chris Monks, Bruce Walters, and Judd Kravig, met with the Board to discuss the 2023 Road & Bridge budgets. First, Mr. Burgess wanted to discuss the bridge on County Road 109 south of the courthouse, stating that Martin Merklinger with Rock Sol said they'd need to rebuild the deck and paint the girders. Mr. Burgess anticipated a total cost of \$1.2 to \$1.4 million. The

county would have to provide a twenty percent match if the project qualified for the grant funding and building a detour would count as that match. They wouldn't hear whether they'd gotten the grant until the end of November, but if successful, half of the budgeted \$500,000 in the Bridge Fund would already been allocated. Chris Monks said that Mr. Merklinger told them that while they had the deck off, they might as well paint the girders if they wanted the bridge to last twenty or thirty years. The state rated the bridge deck a five, and anything less than a six qualified for funding. Mr. Merklinger agreed to do a Scope of Work for the project, and they could use the Professional Services money to pay him. Mr. Monks had talked to TLM Construction, and they estimated it would take twelve weeks to replace the deck and another several weeks to paint. He added they could probably put in a detour where the old road used to be, but it would take a lot of dirt. Mr. Burgess commented they had to have an emergency route.

The group discussed fuel loads and prices, and the commissioners told Mr. Monks to lock in six loads now.

Mr. Burgess and Mr. Walters had discussed equipment needs for 2023 and decided they'd need a mower, pickup, and tractor. They would have to budget for a new road grader the following year. Mr. Monks said he didn't like the tractor leasing program and would prefer not to do it, but the other foremen had had no issues with it.

Extension Director Robin Halley presented the Extension office budget at 2:00 p.m., stating it only increased by \$800 from 2022. He reported that the fair went well and that the 114 lots in the sale totaled over \$300,000. They also had over \$30,000 in add-ons.

Mr. Stone told Mr. Halley what John Palmer had said about the sale committee paying for some picnic tables, and Mr. Halley said he would bring it to their attention. They discussed the sunshade on the show barn, and then Mr. Halley left.

The commissioners then reviewed the 2023 budgets for Maintenance of Building and Plant, the Land Surveyor, Health Inspector, Veterans Office, and Library Fund. Mr. Piper cautioned that the commissioners might keep an eye on the latter's fund balance because, at its current trend, they might have to find another quarter mill to put toward it.

At 2:30 p.m., Human Services Director Andrew Lorensen and accountant Sherri Hansen met with the Board to discuss the 2023 Human Services budget requests. Mrs. Hansen told the commissioners that the county admin was over budget by \$35,000 the previous year and could be even worse this year. Mr. Piper said the fund balance actually went up, but they would still have to do a supplemental appropriation because of the Food Assistance Program. Mr. Lorensen reminded the group the funding would decrease whenever the public health emergency ended, but they had to budget the total amount anyway. Mrs. Hansen noted that the Child Welfare and Core Services state funding would decrease again. She explained that the county matched ten or twenty percent of all programs, so the total county portion of the 2023 budget, including the cost-of-living raises, came to \$692,304.

Mr. Lorensen had included \$30,000 in the budget for a family visitation center. He said the Limon office was set up more like a meeting room rather than a place for family visitation, so he would like to find something with a kitchen where families could prepare meals and interact during that process. When asked if he had an idea where that would be, Mr. Lorensen said more clients were from Limon, so it would probably be best to have it there. He'd thought about approaching the current landlord to see if he would consider renovating the office.

Mr. Ewing asked who cleaned the Limon office, and Mr. Lorensen said they contracted with one of the DHS employees to clean it weekly. He would have to ask that person to do more if they found something else. Mr. Lorensen had also considered one of the townhomes on Hwy 71, but the rent would be much higher than they paid now. Mr. Burgess told him to see what was available.

Mr. Ewing asked if someone supervised the family visits, and Mr. Lorensen said either a staff member or therapist supervised them.

Mrs. Hansen left, and Mr. Lorensen presented the 2023 Coroner's budget. He'd increased the elected official salary, operating expenses, support staff, and travel and transportation.

Mr. Ewing asked how many family visits DHS did each month, and Mr. Lorensen said it depended on the number of kids in out-of-home placement, but it wasn't uncommon to do several visits each week.

After Mr. Lorensen left, the Board reviewed the Conservation Trust and Capital Projects budgets. Mr. Piper said it had a healthy fund balance overall. Mr. Burgess said they should increase the Alternative Daily Cover line item in the Landfill budget. Mr. Piper said he'd added an Expansion Characterization line item for the test wells.

The Board reviewed the Lodging Tax Tourism Fund, ECCOG, Fire Control, District Attorney, Ambulance, EMS, EMS Subsidy, Developmentally Disabled, CDBG, Economic Development, and Lincoln Community Hospital budgets.

Mrs. Lengel asked if they'd considered increasing the per diem rate, and Mr. Burgess said he'd forgotten to check the state's rate but would do so.

Mr. Burgess asked the others what they thought about keeping the sheriff's 2019 Chevy pickup as a Land Use vehicle, and Mr. Stone felt they should.

With no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Stone adjourned the meeting at 3:40 p.m. The next meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. on September 29, 2022.

Corinne M. Lengel, Clerk of the Board

Doug Stone, Chairman