

ALLEN COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 1 & 2, 2005
8:30 AM

The Allen County Council met in the City Council Chambers Room 128, City County Building on Thursday, June 1 & 2, 2005 at 8:30 am. These meetings were to discuss the allocations for the different departments within the County General Fund Budget for 2006.

Present: Darren E. Vogt, President; Paula S. Hughes, Vice President, Michael W. Cunegin II, Calvert S. Miller, Paul G. Moss, Roy A. Buskirk and Paulette L. Kite.

Also Present: Lisa Blosser, Auditor; Tera Klutz, Chief Deputy Auditor; Jackie Scheuman, Financial Advisor and Susan Whetstone, Administrative Assistant. There were also several Elected Officials and Department Heads present.

President Darren Vogt called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

June 1, 2 & 3 (if needed) have been designed to lay out priorities for the 2006 Allen County Budget. Although the County will have the money needed to pay for the things that are absolutely needed in 2006, there is an additional of \$2.8 million for the things it would be nice to have. The Auditor warned that the extra money the county does have should be put away because the forecast for 2007 and 2008 is not good.

The Auditor estimates that the County will take in about \$77.5 million in 2006. If the department budgets are kept the same as 2005, they will total about \$71.8 million leaving about \$5.8 left. She recommended paying an additional \$500,000 toward the Boys & Girls School state debt, giving \$1.6 million in raises to county employees, putting aside \$1.8 million in the Rainy Day Fund and other items totaling \$5 million and that will leave \$747,227. However, that won't go very far because County departments have requested \$3.6 million in new appropriation.

Of the \$5.5 million the Auditor would like to dedicate, \$1.1 million for the Department of Planning Services. At this time all but \$100,000 of the DPS budget Comes out of the CEDIT Fund, if it is all moved into the County General Fund it would free up the CEDIT money for economic development projects, such as incentives for companies to grow and add jobs.

The county has been getting \$8 million in CEDIT money a year but that dropped about \$1.4 million this year because of annexations and the state's financial problems. The Aboite annexation will cost the county an estimated \$1.7 million a year. If there is no change and more CEDIT money is needed to attract a

major manufacturer, the money would, in all likelihood, have to come from cuts in the highway spending.

The Auditor also recommended step increases at a cost of \$250,000 and a 3% wage increase for all county employees would cost \$1.4 million.

There was a discussion on hiring a consultant to review every county job description; this may take as long as 2 years and most workers will need raises because they have taken on new responsibilities since the last review 15 years ago. The consultant the county has considered hiring has informed Council that county employees are likely paid between 6%-12% less than they should be.

Cal Miller said that he would rather reserve the dollars so we can fund as much as possible later on.

Lisa Blosser stated that if we give 3% now, it is less we have to pay later.

A few Elected Officials and Department Heads presented reasons they are requesting an increase in allocation in their individual budgets. Council made no decisions on these issues today in front of the departments.

Bob Lee, Treasurer and Sue Orth, Chief Deputy Treasurer were present requesting additional funds in their 2006 budget allocation. He would like more for postage as the rate is going up .02 cents. He needs to upgrade his software and his staff needs to receive some training. He also suggested the possibility of sharing an employee between the Treasurer, Auditor and County Assessor during busy times.

Mike Talbot, Executive Director of Cooperative Extension stated that he would like increases in the following lines: Extra Deputy Hire, FICA, Supplies, Contractual (for 5 educators) a ½ time contractual educator, Mileage, Electric, Gas/Heat, Maintenance, Computer Lease and Maintenance agreement for a total increase over 2005 of \$25,800.

Sheriff Jim Herman requested additional allocation in a number of line items with a total requested additional of \$356,901 in the Sheriff's budget which includes FICA, PERF and step increases.

Sheriff Herman requested additional allocation for the Jail budget in the amount of \$569,453 which includes FICA, PERF and step increases.

Sheriff Herman also requested additional allocation for the Work Release budget in the amount of \$32,414 which includes FICA, PERF and step increases.

There was also a discussion regarding the Sheriff's Commissary Account, it is basically used for new vehicles and equipment; training, tutoring of inmates for Work Release, Newspapers, web site upkeep etc.

Darren Vogt asked the Sheriff to provide a budget for the Commissary Account as Council would like to see the figures.

Roy Buskirk said that the fee for Sheriff Sale will go up from \$10.00 to \$200.00 as of July 1, 2005 as passed by the State Legislature this year.

Tom Yoder, Cedar Creek Township Assessor was present requesting additional allocation in his budget. He is requesting additional in Extra Deputy Hire, Supplies, Travel and Building Rent for a total additional of \$17,521.

Therese Brown, Clerk of Courts stated that she is currently in the process of having all of her (57) positions reviewed by the consultant. There are no additional positions being requested; she is asking for \$150,000 over the current allocation to cover this expense.

The Clerk also explained various other duties that are performed in her office and the fees that are collected.

She made a plea for Council to go forward with the reclassification of her employees.

Cal Miller asked where the equity was if the Clerk's office is done two years before everybody else.

Commissioners Linda Bloom, Marla Irving and Nelson Peters along with Judy Heck the Commissioners Financial Coordinator requested an allocation increase in the amount of \$224,433. Included in this amount is the salary of the Legislative Liaison, this was paid out of several different departments' budgets in prior years also FICA and PERF. Supplies, Stationery & Printing, Gas/Oil & Lube, Garage/Motor, Consulting Services (ACS contract), Contractual (Security), Postage, Travel, Liability, County Liability and Parking Garage Fees. The Contractual line was lowered by \$11,000 for the Legislative Liaison salary and increased 3% for the Telephone contract.

The only fund that can be used to reduce the increases in the Commissioner's general fund is the Cumulative Capital Development fund. That fund will be used for Highway CEDIT shortfall of approximately \$2 million. Cum Cap already pays all of the building maintenance and elevator maintenance for the County.

There was a discussion regarding the purchase of the building on the corner of Calhoun Street and The Landing; the Commissioners will purchase the building and Superior Court will pay rent; all of the renovations will be paid for by Superior Court/ACP User Fees.

Brian Dumford, Human Resources Director requested an allocation increase in the amount of \$36,796 included in this amount is Extra Deputy Hire, Reclassification, Supplies, Computer Software, Medical Testing (Hepatitis B vaccines to county employees), Contractual, Travel, Telephone, Maintenance Agreement, Dues & Subscriptions, Schools & Seminars, Office/Computer Equipment and Furniture & Fixtures.

Judge Tom Felts and Tim Miller, Circuit Court Administrator requested an allocation increase; four (4) Probation Officers should be moved back into County General due to a change in statute. They would move them into their IV-D Program budget and then be eligible for a 2/3rd reimbursement. The Magistrate/Hearing Officer falls under the judicial increase; that position is also in the IV-D Program budget so would be 2/3rd reimbursed. In the IV-D Program budget they also requested additional allocation in Translator Services and Per Diem Judges. They also requested additional allocation in Translator Service, Contractual Services, Travel, Per Diem Judges, Miscellaneous Services and Office/Computer Equipment in the main Circuit Court budget.

Judge Charles Pratt, Superior Court Family Division requested an additional allocation in Guardian ad Litem. The primary use of this is to pay for the appointment of attorneys, when ordered by the Court, to represent the interests of children who are in need of services (CHINS). Senate Bill 529, which was passed and signed by the Governor establishes the Department of Child Services (formerly the OFC), and requires the appointment of a GAL or CASA must be appointed in every CHINS case. Where this was done about 90% of the time, it will now be done in every case starting July 1, 2005. The request is for \$20,400 over the 2005 appropriation.

Superior Court is also requesting additional allocation in Supplies, Printing, Gas, Oil & Lube, Janitor Supplies, Law Books, Jury Room Supplies, Consulting Services, Postage, Travel, Other Utility Services, Auto Equipment Repair, Maintenance Agreements, Dues & Subscriptions, Schools & Seminars, Per Diem Cases, Pauper Attorney, Special Judges and Deposition Fees.

Superior Court is ***not*** requesting additional allocation in CASA Program, ACP Program or Court Security budgets.

Ron Zartman, Superintendent of Parks & Recreation and Jennifer Scherer, Parks Office Manager requested an increase in allocation for staff restructuring in the amount of \$95,312.

Deb Morrone and Barry Schust of Voter Registration were present to explain the difference in their budgets. They differ on where the allocation increase should be applied; Ms. Morrone requests increases in Telephone, Travel and Training for an additional allocation of \$17,757. Mr. Schust requests increases in Printing of poll books, City/County Directories, Travel, Telephone, Internet Access Fee and Office/Computer Equipment Rent.

There was also a discussion regarding the SQL Data Base, licenses and Hardware/Software backup. The State will furnish 'canned' reports but you can't always count on the State to come through; consequently Mr. Schust feels that Voter Registration needs backup especially since 2006 is an election year and you can always count on problems to occur.

This meeting concluded at 3:00 pm.

8:30 AM THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2005

The Budget Allocation meeting resumed at 8:30 am with all members of Council present. This session was for Council discussion and the respective Liaisons discussion other requests for increased allocations.

Bruce Little, Allen County Purchasing Director requested an increase in allocation in his budget for: Gas, Oil & Lube, Garage & Motor Supplies, Print Shop Paper and Utilities. The expenses related to these items are invoiced to and recovered from the using departments; then returned to the General Fund as Miscellaneous Revenue. He is also requesting an increase in allocation for Dues & Subscriptions; the largest expense from this line is for annual membership dues for a regional cooperative purchasing group (Hospital Purchasing Service). The dues for 2005 were \$2,217. In addition to special discounted prices, County departments received rebates from vendors in 2004 of nearly \$2,000 as a result of our membership.

Lisa Blosser asked if there was a possibility of having centralized mailing as some departments still use stamps and we need to use meters. The Auditor's office uses Post Masters; we put .30 cents on the envelope and there is a .02 cent charge for their services.

Paul Moss inquired about the Internet and if we are getting it free from ComCast. He said that he read the Franchise Agreement and that he feels we should be getting it for free. He feels that the ComCast fee is too high and that

the Commissioners and County Council should have some control over it. This situation will be investigated.

Lisa Blosser, Auditor requested an increase in allocation in Extra Deputy Hire. The additional funds in Extra Deputy Hire would pay for a part time employee who would be responsible for performing some of the new duties assigned to county auditors in the most recent legislative session.

The Building Department requested an increase in allocation for Gas, Oil & Lube, Reference Books and Schools & Seminars.

Building Maintenance requested an increase in allocations in the several different locations they oversee for a total increase of \$460,868. Cost of maintaining the county buildings and as more buildings are acquired there is more space to clean and maintain. They strive to keep costs down, but they need to know that there are funds available when an emergency occurs as we have an obligation to maintain all county owned buildings. They work closely with the Commissioners to make certain that all avenues have been explored before making any decisions that might cause unnecessary expenditures.

NIRCC requested an increase but most of it was in capital items in the amount of \$10,000 of which 80% is reimbursable. This will be used to replace and or upgrade the computers in the office, traffic counter/classifiers and other traffic monitoring equipment.

The Public Defender's Department requested an increase in allocation in their general fund budget. In the summer of 2003 and beginning on October 1, 2003, Allen County entered into an agreement with the State Public Defender Commission. The agreement calls for Allen County to maintain specific case loads for each public defender attorney and in return the Commission will reimburse the county a percentage of those expenses incurred. In order to continue towards the goal of compliance with the agreement, the Allen County Public Defender's office will need to add an additional public defender attorney and investigator to the 2006 budget.

The Public Defender's office would also like to add an additional contract attorney for 2006 to assist the court attorneys in the misdemeanor division. The caseloads in the misdemeanor court continue to grow and two (2) court attorneys simply are not able to effectively handle the caseload.

In addition, the Public Defender's office needs an additional \$10,000 to bring the department up to date on its obligation to the County Commissioners to pay for the indigent defense for lawsuits.

A discussion was held regarding the 3% pay increase for county employees, reclassification, funding 400 series items, health insurance and the State debt.

Roy Buskirk stated that he felt priorities should be set regarding \$1.8 million.

Paula Hughes made a motion for a 3% increase for employees in 2006 as they are our first spending priority. Mike Cunegin seconded it.

Roy Buskirk voted no as he feels that it is too early to determine a percentage at this time.

Cal Miller voted no as he feels it is also too early to determine a raise at this time.

Paul Moss voted no stating he was not in favor of a raise until the reclassification project is complete.

Darren Vogt, Paula Hughes and Mike Cunegin voted yes. Patt Kite abstained. This made for a tie vote 3-3-1 with 1 abstention.

The shooting range for the Sheriff was discussed, this is a one time expense and the Sheriff has some money saved toward this project.

Judy Heck said the ACS contract is being negotiated and may be higher for 2006.

It was decided that before Council made a decision on raises for 2006 that the consultant be contacted to see if it can be done sooner than 2 years. It was suggested that maybe other government entities should be contacted to see where we fit as far as salaries are concerned.

The following dates for the remainder of the 2006 Budget are as follows:

June 9, 2005	Adjusted Allocations Distributed to Departments
July 1, 2005	2006 Budgets due to Auditor
August 8, 2005	First advertisement of 2006 Budget
August 15, 2005	Second advertisement of 2006 Budget
August 18, 2005	Budget Hearings scheduled
Sept. 15, 2005	Final Budget adoption at September Council Meeting.

County departments can appeal their amounts during the August 18th meeting. However, Darren Vogt cautioned, any appeals could and will affect the amount of raises a county employee will receive.

The meeting was concluded at 3:15 pm.

