CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Budget Committee Chairman Philip Curran.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: P. Curran, P. Stockin, J. Burdick (arrived at 1:00 p.m.), D. Fanton, B. Harris, J. Ricci, C. Crandall


2020 Budget Presentations

Emergency Services/Fire Services

Emergency Services Director Jeff Luckey attended the meeting to discuss his 2020 Budget with the committee. Mr. Luckey stated that he would like to budget $3,500 for A3410.405 (Fire - Conference Expense) which is the same amount budgeted in 2019. They haven’t used that full amount in the past, but the cost of attending conferences is increasing. He’s also requesting that A3410.409 (Fire - Fees) be increased to $500 to cover the rising cost of memberships. Mr. Luckey also requested an increase in A3410.447 (Fire - Public Safety Contracts) for additional assistance for the Wellsville Tower. The Allegany County Fire Advisory Board has requested an increase in the assistance given to the Wellsville Tower. The budget for A3640 (Emergency Services) included the addition of A3640.404 (Emergency Services – Vehicle Maintenance) for maintenance expense for the newly acquired Chevrolet Tahoe. Mr. Luckey mentioned the redistribution of rental space for his department. Their A3640.414 (Emergency Services – Rentals Real Property) budget would need to be increased. County Treasurer Terri Ross stated that the overall cost to the County for renting space at the Crossroads Complex isn’t going to increase, the rental fee is being redistributed based on actual square footage being used by different departments in that complex. County Treasurer Ross noted that Mr. Luckey’s staff experienced problems entering their budget into the accounting system and several accounts were showing the amount requested as zero. Legislator Harris requested that the issue be corrected and to have Mr. Luckey come back tomorrow to go over his budget again.

Community Services

Dr. Robert Anderson was present to answer questions regarding his 2020 Budget requests for the accounts associated with Community Services (A4191, A4220, A4310, A4311, A4312, A4313, A4314, A4315, A4316, A4317, and A4390). He stated that he hadn’t received all of his figures from the State, but that so far there weren’t a lot of changes to his budget. Committee Chairman Phil Curran asked if Dr. Anderson anticipated any major changes. Dr. Anderson stated that it’s tough. Changes are being made with Medicaid. He expects there will be some changes in his revenues. Ms. Ross pointed out A4390.456 (Mental Hygiene Law – Contracts) to the committee. Dr. Anderson explained that this is the account used when they have to pay for someone who needs treatment in the forensic unit. It’s very expensive for those
services and it’s an expense we just cannot predict. Ms. Ross stated that they’ve put $20,000 in the budget as a placeholder. Legislator Harris asked about some of the amounts related to contracts. Ms. Ross said that she is waiting on a breakdown for those contracts. She suggested that the committee look at last year and assume that the expense is going to be very similar for 2020. She said that by next month she should be able to have a better look at the budget for this department. Chairman Crandall remarked that this is a budget that they’ve struggled with for some time, but the County contribution has remained the same. Dr. Anderson invited the Legislators to take a tour of his offices. Legislator Hopkins remarked on the complexities of the department especially when you consider all of the agencies that comprise Community Services.

Treasurer

County Treasurer Ross reviewed a portion of her budget with the committee while they waited for the next scheduled department to arrive. Ms. Ross noted that the first portion of her budget is for general operations (A1325). Not a lot has changed. They do have an increase in credit card fees. This is for municipalities who collect property taxes by credit card. The municipalities pay for this. The increase is the result of a couple more municipalities starting to accept credit cards. They also have an increase in maintenance for the software that’s used in her office. Committee Chairman Curran asked how many employees are in her department. Ms. Ross stated she has eight full-time employees, including herself, and two part-time employees. Legislator Harris asked Ms. Ross about reserves and fund balances. Ms. Ross stated that individual departments don’t manage their fund balance. She said that OFA has a reserve, not a fund balance. It’s not maintained by them. They would have to come to the Board to request money from that reserve. She also touched on foreclosures and the tax sale (A1362). She explained that taxes on municipal property (A1950) is for County-owned property that isn’t being used for municipal purposes. She talked about Community College (A2495) Chargebacks and how the State requires the County to pay a third of the tuition for County residents attending a community college. This is a tough number to estimate and it’s really a town responsibility that the County takes care of. As far as anticipated revenues from forest (A8710) sales, she hasn’t put a figure in there because we don’t have any anticipated timber sales for 2020.

Probation

Probation Director Robert Starks was on hand to discuss his 2020 Budget. Committee Chairman Curran asked if Mr. Starks had any predictions for funding for 2020. Mr. Starks stated that the budget is slightly higher than last year. He indicated that he has at least one employee, and possibly two, who will be retiring next year. Salaries will be lower if they do. As far as Raise the Age goes, we are where we expected to be based on predictions. Mr. Starks stated that with Raise the Age they get reimbursed for overtime costs, not regular duty. His office has not incurred much overtime with Raise the Age. Legislator Harris asked if they had heard anything about reimbursements related to bail reform. Mr. Starks stated that he hasn’t heard much on the subject. He said that he has a meeting coming up in September to learn more. Legislator Harris asked about two grants totaling $53,000 that had been lost. Mr. Starks stated that the Juvenile Justice Grant and the Office of Violence Against Women Grant both expire on September 30. Neither are being offered again.
Treasurer (continued)

County Treasurer Ross continued going through her budget with the committee. The real property tax line doesn’t get filled in until we have our tax levy. The committee discussed PILOT agreements and how the budget is affected.

Attorney/Client

A motion was made by Legislator Harris, seconded by Legislator Ricci, and carried to enter into attorney/client session at 10:34 a.m. Immediately following discussion, a motion was made by Legislator Fanton, seconded by Legislator Harris, and carried to come out of attorney/client session and return to the regular meeting at 10:49 a.m.

Sheriff

Sheriff Whitney introduced the new Accountant Sarah Weller. He indicated she will be taking Randy Hartwick’s position upon his retirement. Sheriff Whitney said new rules for dealing with youth and cashless bail are difficult to budget for. Legislator Harris asked if the zero percent increase in payroll had to do with negotiations. Sheriff Whitney stated he believes so. Legislator Harris asked Sheriff Whitney to talk about bail reform and its effects on the jail population as well as the financial impact. Sheriff Whitney doesn’t believe it will impact local inmates as very few of them are sentenced. Legislator Harris asked what would be done if the population does decrease. Sheriff Whitney stated they would have to look at shutting down a pod and laying off staff. The group discussed the enumerator position and the staffing of dispatch. Legislator Harris noted that there is a zero percent increase in payroll, yet a twelve percent increase in the bottom line. Sheriff Whitney stated that was due to $1 million less in revenue for federal inmates. Legislator Harris asked if there was a contract for the maintenance of towers and if that comes out of the Sheriff’s budget. Ms. Ross stated it is in their budget and pointed out the maintenance contracts in their budget report. Legislator Harris asked if there was any way to minimize the damage caused by the reduced number of inmates. Sheriff Whitney stated that his Jail Administrator is on the phone a couple of times a week trying to see if there are any to be housed. Jail populations are down all over.

District Attorney

District Attorney Keith Slep was present to answer questions on his 2020 Budget for A1165 (District Attorney) and A1190 (Grand Jury). He indicated that 2020 was going to be a difficult year for his office with all of the changes in laws. Legislator Harris asked if Mr. Slep was going to hire. Mr. Slep stated that he needs to get someone trained. He isn’t going to have enough staff to handle everything they will need to do next year. Legislator Harris asked what accounts for the increase in his salary budget. Mr. Slep stated that it was increased to accommodate adding another staff member and also increasing the current salaries of staff. Legislator Harris asked if he had received anything from the State about them helping with the extra expense they will incur. Mr. Slep stated that the next meeting on the topic is being held in October. Legislator Ricci asked what the fines and forfeited bail are. Mr. Slep stated it was from the Traffic Diversion Program. The group discussed how the money for the program is collected and returned to the towns and villages.
Public Defender

Public Defender Barb Kelley stated the only increase in her budget for A1170 (Public Defender’s Office) was a 2 percent increase for non-PEF employees. She stated that whatever she can use State funding for she will. They are getting much better at processing claims. Their Case Assistant is now responsible for those. It can be her first priority. This State is also doing a better job of getting the funds out.

Treasurer (continued)

County Treasurer Ross stated she doesn’t anticipate any changes for interest on real property taxes. As far as sales and use tax, she hasn’t had a chance to put that together. The AIM payment is going to be reduced. She also hasn’t figured a possible increase in sales tax revenue for development at the Crossroads. Chairman Crandall noted that internet sales tax revenue should increase; however, the total received will be reduced by AIM money that is taken out of that. Ms. Ross said she has estimated internet sales tax to be $586,000. Also our AirBNB contract is helping us collecting more hotel tax. The group talked about the tobacco settlement money that’s received saying that it’s been going down but is close to what we’ve been getting. Legislator Harris asked how we decide what is going to be drawn from the Fund Balance. Ms. Ross stated that will take place later in the process after adjustments have been made.

The committee took a break for lunch at 12:09 p.m., and reconvened at 1:03 p.m.

Public Health

Public Health Director Lori Ballengee was on hand to discuss her 2020 Budget for A1185, A2960, A3645, A4010, A4025, A4035, A4037, A4043, A4046, A4050, A4051, A4052, A4053, A4054, A4056, A4060, A4070, A4071, A4072, A4189, and A4190. She was accompanied by Director of Environmental Health Tyler Shaw and Public Health Accountant Dave Rahr. Ms. Ballengee reminded the group that their revenues are always delayed by three months. She said their expenses are down and overall they are doing well. She distributed a document showing all of their revenues by cost center. Committee Chair Curran asked if she had a plan if State funding started to disappear. Ms. Ballengee stated that if grant programs lose funding they will have to look at staffing. She said the State seems to keep expecting more to be done without additional funding. She noted that the acceptable lead levels are going to be lowered. She expects this will increase their workload six fold. She has budgeted for another RN and another Health Technician to cover the extra work. She’s hoping they will receive a grant to cover the extra expense. Ms. Ballengee said they’ve had immunization clinics almost every day in order to comply with the new immunization requirements. Committee Chairman Curran asked Ms. Ballengee if they’d seen an increase in lead cases. She said there’s a lot of old housing in the County which contributes to the problem. Legislator Harris asked how the water lab was doing and if there are any plans to expand services. Mr. Shaw stated they’ve been doing well. If they expand into testing for metals, they would need additional equipment. They are ready to service town water samples. The towns have to report the findings to the County so it saves time and currier expense for them to bring their samples to the County.
Social Services

Social Services Commissioner Vicki Grant was accompanied by Director of Administrative Services Don Horan to discuss the 2020 Budget for A6010, A6055, A6070, A6101, A6106, A6119, A6129, A6140, A6141, A6142, and A6150. Ms. Grant stated the department is doing well. Their billing and claims are always delayed. She spoke about different programs and legislation such as Raise the Age, Families First Prevention Services Act, and People in Need of Supervision, and how it’s affecting her office financially. Ms. Grant said her department has 108 staff members. There are four positions that are on the books but not filled. Legislator Harris asked about the huge increase in expenditures for 2020. Ms. Grant stated that it’s related to Raise the Age. It’s something that’s reimbursed 100 percent.

Planning/Development/Tourism

Planning Director Kier Dirlam was on hand to discuss the 2020 Budgets for Planning (A8020), Development (A6430), and Tourism (A6989). He talked about the redistribution of rent for those departments renting space at the Crossroads building. Committee Chair Curran asked about the positions that have been added to the budget. Mr. Dirlam stated that their secretary is retiring. They are also looking at a Grant Management Coordinator and possibly looking at moving the Planning and Development Specialist up and then backfilling that position. The committee discussed the benefits of having a full-time grant person on staff. Legislator Harris asked Mr. Dirlam about the increase in funding for the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Dirlam stated the Chamber hasn’t had a raise since 2010.

Employment & Training

Employment & Training Director Reita Sobeck-Lynch was accompanied by her department’s Accountant Brian Thierman to discuss the 2020 Budget for the CD1 Fund. Committee Chairman Curran asked Ms. Sobeck-Lynch if she knew of any funding changes for next year. Ms. Sobeck-Lynch stated she hadn’t heard of anything except for they are getting more funding in WIA and an extra $8,000 from DSS. Ms. Ross reminded the committee that the Employment & Training budget is in a fund by itself. She received $60,000 in County funds. The remainder is state and federal money.

Elections

Elections Commissioners Mike McCormick and Brent Reynolds were on hand to discuss their 2020 Budget (A1450). Mr. McCormick talked about the three election cycles that would be taking place in 2020. The three election cycles will increase expenses due to the extra ballot and inspector costs. The increase in minimum wage will also cause an increase in their costs. Committee Chair Curran asked what else was contributing to their budget increase. Mr. McCormick said the maintenance agreement for the voting machines is also something they’ve got to consider. The group discussed the future of ballots and internet service for electronic poll books. Mr. Reynolds stated that even if there is outside funding available to help with the costs of updates, they will likely have to pay for things upfront before being reimbursed.
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m. on a motion by Legislator Stockin, seconded by Legislator Harris, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah M. Decker, Journal Clerk/Deputy Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators