



The McLean County Board of Health

Budget Workshop

Tuesday, July 30, 2019, 8:30 a.m.

200 W. Front Street, Room 322, Bloomington, Illinois.

Call to Order: 8:35 AM

Present: Ms. Judy Buchanan, Ms. Rose Stadel, Ms. Hannah Eisner, Ms. Cory Tello, Ms. Susan Schafer, Ms. Sonja Reece

Staff Present: Ms. Tammy Brooks, Ms. Cathy Dreyer, Ms. Amy Brooke

Judy Buchanan (JB) shared that County Administration was very appreciative of the precise budget presentation that Ms. Dreyer prepared for their meeting. JB shared that the reason for the meeting today was to clarify questions that BOH had expressed regarding the budget.

Initial discussion centered around Dental Fund 102.

Cathy Dreyer (CD) shared that the dental clinic was losing money rapidly last spring. At that point, the BOH was informed that the HD would like to try new approaches in the dental clinic. There was \$97,172 available for a transfer if necessary. However, at this time, it looks like less than \$20,000 might be needed, if any. In consultation with Administration, the line item for that possible transfer was made \$0 in the 2020 budget.

Tammy Brooks (TB) attributed the turn-around in the dental clinic to giving consumers a better experience. Historically, hygienist appointments had been allotted 20 minutes even though they routinely took at least 30 minutes. Scheduling the appropriate length of time is one way that customer service and the overall experience has been improved. People are no longer waiting over an hour for their appointments.

CD also noted that expenses were decreased in the elimination of an OSS position through attrition.

Cory Tello (CT) noted that it is wonderful news for the community to have continued access to dental care.

CD and TB noted that beginning in August there will be late appointments available in all clinics. It will be interesting to see the impact this has on all the clinics.

Discussion moved to the WIC 103 Fund. It was noted that the caseload is lower, but the budget numbers are approximately the same as 2016.

CD explained that the amounts budgeted are consistent with the grant contract amount. After reviewing the transfer amounts, the transfer amount from Fund 109 was zeroed out. She budgeted to use the 103 Fund Balance if needed.

Susan Schafer (SS) asked specifically why the budget was essentially the same with less of a caseload.

TB noted that the federal WIC program works to avoid drastically cutting money. They evaluate the previous caseload and also the amount agencies are paid per person. In this case, the caseload went down but the money per participant increased. The two offset each other. They increased what they paid per person.

Hannah Eisner (HE) suggested that the Health Department should look at how to increase WIC participation. If the Health Department focused on increasing WIC participation would the budgeted number be too conservative?

TB shared that one of the largest barriers is that people feel their needs are being met through the SNAP program. WIC participants are asked to complete an on-line learning module every three months. This is not a requirement for SNAP.

Rose Stadel (RS) asked how the community finds out about WIC.

TB explained that Health Department staff work with local agencies to ensure that their staff are informed. WIC has been advertised on the website, Facebook, bus ads, fliers, and at health and wellness fairs.

Members discussed making sure that pediatricians and obstetricians are aware of the program. TB noted that doctors are referring to the Health Department for the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program.

HE stated that the money budgeted is based on caseload. Do we have enough money available if that caseload increased?

CD stated that this is something that would be reviewed if it were needed. She stated that she would rather have a plan before budgeting for it.

SS shared that an emergency appropriation could be done if it were needed.

CT noted that if the WIC caseload increased, it might mean an increase in the grant next year.

HE observed that Community Needs Assessment always hits on obesity. WIC is part of addressing that.

Members discussed the Preventative Block Fund 105. It appeared to some members that the balance grew by \$32,718 in 2018.

CD explained that \$28,000 of the \$32,718 was deferred revenue that was the result of delayed payment from the State of Illinois in 2017. Most of the apparent increase was due to accounts receivable. The additional \$4,000 was revenue from vision and hearing screenings. At the time, we did not have a technician on staff to do them. A nurse from the CD clinic was performing the screenings and being paid from 112. If her salary had been charged to 105, that \$4,000 would have decreased.

JB observed that in effect, that \$32,000 is almost all gone.

HE asked if a fund balance was needed in 105.

CD responded that currently only the Health Education programs are allocated there. They primarily get grants for their programs.

HE clarified the question of how the money in the fund balance might be used.

CD stated that she would need to clarify how much money is there and then the use of the money could be examined as a strategic plan. Programs would need to be developed to use the money. She stated that this could be something for the new Health Promotions manager to look at.

It was confirmed that the money can only be used across those grant programs because it is money that was generated from those grants.

Members discussed how the tax levies are set. CD stated that the proportion of the tax rate remains the same. If the tax setting EAV rate goes up, the property taxes generate more. This is the reason for the increase in property tax support.

HE stated the rate is set by the BOH for these funds.

CD responded that County Administration has encouraged the Health Department to keep the levied rates level.

SS expressed the reserves bother many on the County Board. The question becomes, "Why have the tax payers pay that when the funds are sitting there and without being used?". She stated that it is one thing for the County to have those reserves in the General Fund for the entire County and another for the Health Department to have these reserves. Then when the BOH asks to increase fees for Food Service Establishments, it raises a philosophical question. They see the CAFR and don't see everything else that the BOH sees. They see 3 million dollars sitting there and ask why aren't we doing this or that? It is a special revenue fund. Special revenue funds are supposed to be kept at a minimum.

CT observed that the fund fluctuates greatly during the year.

SR stated that it is good management to have reserves. The balance is need to enable us to keep doing what we are doing and not live on the edge.

JB shared that we are beginning to spend it down with programs to meet unmet needs.

TB stated that it is one thing for all of us to sit and understand it. The message that is given is also important. It is frustrating when we keep saying, "Why does Environmental Health want to raise fees?" Every department in the County was charged with thinking of ways they could raise more revenue at the budget meeting for Department Heads in May. Environmental Health was not asking to raise fees until we asked that of them. Those were the ideas that Environmental Health generated because they were instructed to do so. The public shouldn't think that Environmental Health was just trying to think of ways of getting money. The response should be that, as a County we were looking at ways to generate more revenue and that was one of the ways that Environmental Health was able to fulfill the task that they were assigned. That is a way of putting a positive spin on why we are looking at raising fees. We were asked to do that by County Administration

HE stated that there is a need to be conscious of the fact that we are growing a fund balance. She expressed the need to take a real look at budgeting that money. We know how much cushion we need before property tax collections come in. Beyond that, is there a target number?

JB noted that we are discussing two different fund balances.

HE stated that she was referencing the 112-fund balance. The fund balance people talk about is the one that is created through property taxes. She said that if we say every year that we are budgeting and using it but don't use it, someone will say that isn't honest. It has been cut down a bit. A percentage point of what we need to address things that come up is needed.

Multiple people spoke at once. Someone said that we should have 6 months of operating expenses.

SS stated that this is different from the County as a whole. These are special revenue funds. There is a distinction between the County and individual departments. If something should happen in the jail that resulted in a lawsuit, the jail doesn't have all this money for an emergency. It would fall back on the County level. The same thing would happen here.

JB stated that she is told the exact opposite by County Administration. If we have money prior to the tax collection, it needs to be kept there. It is a myth that the County will step in and meet that need.

HE stated that there is a need for education about that and about accounting.

CT stated that a few years ago several people met with Michelle Anderson and asked those types of questions. She is the one that said there should be 6 months of operating expenses in reserve.

JB stated that the budget for this year has been submitted and the figures are being entered. As we present the budget for action in August, we could have the talking points that address the fees, fund balance, and other things that might be raised. A discussion about the handling of the tax dollars in the future can take place later.

CT stated that it is a matter of moving forward responsibly for the tax payer but also having what is needed in an emergency.

TB stated that the elimination of the FFP will make things look different.

Multiple people spoke at once.

SS stated that she is not asking to change the budget. BOH members need to be more thoroughly educated.

CD stated that the miscellaneous revenue in the document is the use of the fund balance in all funds.

JB stated that the \$25,000 MHAB concept will be \$50,000.

CD stated that she had only budgeted \$25,000.

CT and JB said that it was supposed to be a total of \$50,000.

JB stated that it could be adjusted. She shared that the genesis of this came from the MHAB drilling down on their recommendations.

CT stated that the goal is to make everyone more sustainable.

JB shared that the idea is to maximize the dollars we have available go further. It is about helping agencies understand billing and other resources to maximize the dollars available.

CT described it as education and coaching.

JB stated that the additional money is about possibly having a navigator. The recommendation was for \$50,000. It is not for two positions. The money will be in collaboration with others. How that will be done is yet to be determined.

SS stated that some of these things have been talked about within the Communication Specialist position. In addition, there has been talk about having a Medicaid expert employed by the County. That concept is part of this.

JB stated that we have been told that the co-funded communications specialist will likely be highly utilized by the Nursing Home in the first year.

TB relayed that it will take a few months for the Communications Specialist to get to know the job and then focus will be on the Nursing Home. County Administration is funding more than half of the position.

CT shared that the intent of this was not a forever need but an intense hit in buying very specific expertise to maximize dollars. It may be done contractually.

Members moved on to different items.

HE clarified that fund 106 is likely where the Health Department will use fund balance. She pointed out that in that instance we are not hitting the property tax fund balance.

HE observed that the 3% fee increases in Environmental Health were included. She asked if some of the other possible fee increases were included.

CD and JB stated that only the 3% increase was included.

JB shared that some of the other possible sources of revenue were less palatable. The fee increase was likely to be the most well received because of the new FDA requirements and the additional time sanitarians are being required to spend during the inspection processes.

HE asked if the County was looking at ATB and merits for 2020.

CD stated that the budget reflects a 1.5% merit increase and a 1.5% ATB.

HE asked if the reason it is difficult to fill nurse positions is due to pay.

JB stated that at some Health Committee meetings they have discussed nursing pay. Someone could work a couple of weekends at a hospital and make good money.

Multiple people talking at once.

SS stated that the pay for nurses was increased. There was difficulty keeping people at the Nursing Home. The Nursing Home Blue Ribbon Panel did a survey to find out what everyone was paying. As a result, it was agreed to raise nursing salaries at the nursing home. Is a study for the Health Department needed?

TB confirmed that there is difficulty in filling nursing positions. There is one vacancy that has been posted multiple times.

SS asked how many steps you could start someone at on the impacted positions list.

CD stated that it was 30 and after that special permission is needed. There is also concern with bringing new people in at a higher rate than existing employees.

TB stated that the entire salary range needs to be bumped so that you don't bring people in at a higher rate than existing employees.

CD stated that existing nurse salaries had been bumped up previously.

HE stated that there was provision for existing staff at the Nursing Home. She also observed that the overall FTEs for the Health Department are going down.

CD stated that one of the positions was the OSS that would be covered by the Shared Service Center. The other loss of the FTE was the result of combining the adult and children's immunizations nurse.

JB pointed out that our proposed budget is less than last year.

HE said that she would like to see the HD budgeting for positions that would increase caseload.

CT described it as a marketing and engagement piece.

Discussion moved to budgeting for capital expenses.

HE suggested that there should be a 5-10-year plan for capital expenses.

HE said that she would like to address the front doorway.

CD stated that the issue would need to go to Eric Schmitt. They are working on the elevator.

HE asked if there was any anticipated revenue from Social Workers who can now provide counseling.

CD stated that she was very conservative with that. They first need to pass licensure. Fund 106 was increased by \$10,000.

Members circled back to the consultation services.

Multiple people talking at once.

JB suggested that someone may need to speak with Trisha Malott regarding this concept.

SR made comments about ongoing funding. She stated that she had conversations in the past with John McIntyre about the funds coming in from the sales tax. None of that money is meant to cover positions or ongoing programs. It is for innovations. Continuing the programs will be the responsibility of the departments. She does not have the understanding that there is a pool of money to pay for this consultation. The BHCC meets quarterly and listens to the reports. They will agree to actions but won't be the ones to make it happen. It is her understanding that paying for ongoing programs is paid for at the departmental level.

SR stated that she is used to 5-year capital plans. Computers become outdated in less than three years today. Do we have a 5-year capital plan?

JB stated that we don't. She said that in these times that we may need to begin looking at that.

JB asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Reece/Tello to adjourn.

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.