

# Official Minutes

## May 11, 2023

### Board of Commissioners Meeting

**In Attendance:**

Randy Church, Chairman  
 Mike LaBrose, Vice Chairman  
 Jeff Branch, Commissioner  
 Donnie Potter, Commissioner  
 Robbie Wilkie, Commissioner  
 Donald Duncan, County Manager  
 Abigail Rich, County Clerk

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Church called the May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Budget Workshop to order at 5:36 PM.

**Invocation:**

Chairman Church asked Vice-Chairman LaBrose to provide an invocation for the meeting.

**Items of Discussion:**

The Chairman turned the meeting over to County Manager Donald Duncan to present information on the budget for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year. The County Manager provided information about the key highlights of the budget. These highlights are outlined below:

#### Caldwell County, Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Proposed Budget Highlights

**General Fund**

- Property tax rate will remain at 0.63¢ per \$100 of value.
  - Tax base grew \$170,000,000 year over year.
- Sales Tax estimated at 5% growth year over year.
- Funding for Public School System and CCC&TI to remain at current level.
- Implement second round of Merit Pay for Employees earned upon successful completion of annual evaluation. (Merit I and Merit II)
  - Sheriff's Deputies on Special Assignment will receive additional Merit III.
  - Potential funds for the second year of three in the 1/3 pay plan.
- Includes Capital Outlay Loan of \$1.5 million.
- Reduces Fund Balance Appropriation by \$500k to \$3.8 million.
- Includes new fees schedule for Building Inspections, and Emergency Services to bring us in line with other counties.
- Decrease of health premiums by 7.7%.
- Includes 4 new positions.
  - Permit Specialist for Building Inspections
  - Animal Care Enforcement Officer
  - Convenience Site Supervisor
  - Grant Administrator for Sheriff's Office and Emergency Services
  - Intern for Public Information Office
  - Reclasses 12 positions

- Contracted Planning position with WPCOG
- Pay Adjustment for Register of Deeds
- This Budget makes no allowances for Medicaid Expansion but does include a reorganization of DSS to streamline services and improve management.
  - Medicaid Expansion will be done with a budget amendment once we receive clear guidance from the State.
- Allows for reorganization in Public Health. Eliminating a Director and creating a nurse position for Health Clinic.
- General Fund Capital Purchases with Capital Outlay Loan of \$1.5 million
  - IT Network Equipment Replacement
  - Comms Interface Server Replacement
  - Testing for Respirators
  - Replace 1 Truck for Building Inspections
  - Replace 3 SUV's in DSS
  - Replace 2 Trucks for Animal Care
    - Upgrades Fleet with Climate Controlled Boxes
    - 1 New Truck
  - Heart Monitors and Stretchers
  - Rifles, Suppressors, Drones
  - Replaces 8 Patrol Cars
  - 1 Ambulance Remount
  - Repairs to Detention Facility and Sheriff's Office
- Creates a grant program for non-profit parks in the county.

#### **Fire Department**

- Includes tax increases for 6 of the 14 departments.

#### **Utility Fund**

- Includes Capital fee of \$1 per month per customer.
- Includes Career Path for staff.
- Continues Capital Project list.
- Capital Outlay
  - Replaces Dump Truck and 2 service trucks.

#### **Opioid Settlement Fund**

- First year operating solely from Opioid settlement funding.

#### **Total Budget**

GENERAL FUND	\$113,556,000
WATER FUND \$	4,413,143
<u>OPIOID FUND \$</u>	<u>560,709</u>
TOTAL	\$118,127,479

#### **Discussion Continued:**

The Commissioners discussed the fire tax increase requests that were sent in by some of the fire departments in the County. After discussion amongst the Board, they requested the departments who are requesting an increase attend the budget hearing and present information to defend this request. The Board specifically asked that the departments provide justification for the increase and outline how it will benefit the department and its citizens. The Board also requested there be an increase in the fees charged for extraordinary events.

Another point of discussion concerned the increasing of fees for some departments in the County. The County Manager explained to the Board that Caldwell County's connection rates are far below neighboring counties in areas of building inspections, fire inspections, and water fees. The Board asked for the water department tap fees to be modified slightly. Those changes would make the ¾ inch tap fee

\$1,200 and the 1-inch tap fee \$1,500.

**Item for Decision:**

DSS has a requested budget revision for donated funds. Normally DSS budgets for \$60,000 in donated funds, but the donations that were received have exceeded the budgeted amount. DSS Director Will Wakefield explained that these donations come from individuals, groups, organizations, etc. Commissioner Wilkie made the motion to approve the budget revision. The motion carried unanimously.

**Adjourn:**

With there being no more business to attend to, Vice Chairman LaBrose made a motion to adjourn at 7:34 PM. The motion carried unanimously.

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