

WHEREAS, in the opinion of the County Auditor, the public interests required that the Lake County Council, should be called to meet in special session at this time, for the purpose of discussing 2010 Budgets, a written notice was sent to each member of the Council, and proper advertisement made, and all other acts performed in accordance with the laws governing such matters.

And now in obedience to such call, come Larry Blanchard, President, Thomas O'Donnell, Ernie Dillon, Elsie Franklin, Jerome A. Prince, Christine Cid, and Ted Bilski County Councilpersons, together with Ray Szarmach, County Council Attorney.

OPEN: Public Comments, Council Discussions, and Actions.

President Blanchard said that the meeting was called to balance the bottomline of the 2010 budget. He said that a balanced budget was already submitted to the State, and we just have to bring the bottomline into balance with the amount of dollars that we have to work with in each department, and to also match what was sent downstate.

Blanchard said there is a remaining \$1,708,797.00, as of the printing of this sheet, in reductions, out of approximately \$10.5 million dollars total. Blanchard explained at least \$10.5 million in the general fund, and then another \$1 million from the Parks and Health Department.

Blanchard said it's almost \$12 million dollars.

Dante said and several millions worth of temporary stipends on top of that, that bought us to the \$17 million.

Blanchard said we have \$1.7 million left.

Dante spoke about the budget for Superior Court Civil. He said that they made a good attempt of reducing, but they didn't make it. The total reductions that they needed was \$248,048. He said they missed their mark by \$73,178.

Dante said their appropriations have already been reduced and that shortfall is all in the 100 series.

Franklin made a motion, seconded by Bilski to eliminate 2 secretary positions in Department 3900, Fund 001.

Cid asked does that bring them in line, or does that bring them over?

Bilski said there will be a surplus.

Cid asked do you want to add additional to their part-time and maybe they could have a part-time secretary to help?

Dante said he can balance that out. O'Donnell said that the motion is to increase part-time by whatever the balance. Dante said I can figure that out.

Dante said I will take the 2 lowest ones out. The Judge and the Administrative Assistant determines what body goes, we don't do that.

All voted "Yes. Motion to approve carried 7-0.

Dante said that 8 positions are coming across to the Jail Misdemeanant Fund. He said that when you have a \$700,000 or \$800,000 dollar revenue strain trying to support \$1.3 million, you have to be very careful. You can see the consumption, when you lay those 8 jobs over here, those 8 positions over here, they are going to "eat" up that cash like no one's business, but that was what was submitted this morning.

Dante said what that did to the Jail budget was it turned your Jail budget into a surplus budget. He said what he did was take what was submitted prior, take the positions that the Sheriff has offered, assuming they are going to be removed December 4th, not through the course of the year like it was proposed in the proposal, but assuming that they are going to be removed December 4th. Assuming what the Sheriff submitted in reductions on Overtime, and Food & Lodging, and Medical & Hospital Services which was quite aggressive. That, Jail Work Release, plus what was submitted this morning, plus what was submitted prior turned this into a surplus budget by \$251,000 dollars.

Dante said Jail Misdemeanant got 8 additional positions and it's got to carry the load of \$1.3 million with \$800,000, or \$700,000 dollars worth of miscellaneous revenue, how long that will occur, Dante said I do not know. Your Jail budget now turns into a positive right now, with 12 positions being removed, effective immediately, not through the course of the year, with aggressive reductions on Jail Overtime, Medical

Services, and Food & Lodging, and Dante said that inmate population has to come down, or there are going to be issues here.

Dante said the last piece of this puzzle is the Work Release budget. He said there was no change on Work Release whatsoever. Work Release stays at the \$51,315, which is on your original deficit, so Work Release wasn't touched in this process, general fund Work Release. It still carries the original submissions. The Sheriff did not touch it in his new submissions. It still stands at the reduction of \$51,315.

Dante said \$251,000, which is a surplus on the Jail budget, \$51,000 negative here, you are still to the plus \$200,000 dollars between those two funds.

Dante said now in the Sheriff' budget what was submitted this morning was 8 positions being reduced here. Dante said the reductions that were submitted prior in the 200 series carried forward, those 8 positions adding them all through still left a shortfall in the Sheriff' budget of \$954,208. So taking those 8 positions into account, effective immediately, plus the prior submissions on the 200 and 300 series, plus this morning' submissions you have a deficit of \$954,208, applying the \$200,000 from the Jail and Work Release, applying it to the \$950,000, you have a deficit of approximately \$750,000. Dante said I have to confirm it again. He said all 3 budgets, not including the Animal Control, which has another \$25,000 to it, you're at \$750,000 to the minus on all 3 budgets – Work Release, Sheriff, and Jail.

Franklin asked we have to reduce his budget by \$750,000?

Dante said the machine is going to look for balancing of \$750,000, that's how this thing works, plus Animal Control. I don't know how you want to deal with Animal Control, "maybe you just want to throw it off the map today", I don't know, but that's without Animal Control it's just so small. It's not in my target range.

He said the Sheriff has a lot of data in here. He has savings in here, he has revenue in here, he has the 4 and 2 in here, lots of interesting stuff. Dante said, unless some policy changes, holiday schedules change, or contracts change, this system won't recognize that. It won't accept that. I can't punch it in. It wants positions, it wants line item cuts. That's where the \$750,000 comes in.

Blanchard said the Book & Release is in this package.

Sheriff Dominguez said we have looked at everything, and we will continue to do that. He said he will continue to do everything he can to assist the Council in the deficit. He will continue to assure that they provide public safety for our community. He said, with regards to the Sheriff, general fund, his staff will work diligently to ensure that they enact those things so that we prepare for next year. He said you need more cuts, it's tough, and he knows that the Council needs at least 10 more cuts, and he will make 10 more cuts.

He said last year they cut 22 positions, this year, 20. If you want 10 more, I will cut 10 more because that's what you need, and I will do that without affecting public safety.

Attorney John Dull said I am a member of that Jail Oversight Committee. He said the Sheriff has made the projections, and based upon those projections, and I'm not speaking of overtime, I'm speaking of food and other things. Those are probably good projections. He has nothing to do with implementing that book and release program. If the Courts, the 17 Judges don't do it, and do it to the extent of releasing the 250 people, you're in the hole \$1.4 million dollars. He has projected it, but that doesn't mean they've agreed to it. He has made his projections, but it's the Judiciary that has to implement that program. If they refuse to do so in a fashion that yields 250 out the door, he is prepared to do it. He is prepared to run it and release these people. If the Judiciary doesn't buy in, we're \$1.4 million dollars in the hole.

Sheriff Dominguez said Attorney Dull is right. I don't control the Jail. I operate the Jail. All the local jails that closed, the Police Officers that bring their prisoners to jail, we're familiar with that. I can say that the Senior Judges of each Division, County Courts, Criminal Courts, Cities and Town Courts have agreed to pursue this book and release. I don't think there is a disagreement that we shouldn't do it. I don't think that there is a resistance to it, even if they did it, we don't know what that will produce, other than by taking a snap shot of the number of inmates who are in there. If we are to reduce it, we are always going to save money. If we don't reduce it, if we didn't do the Saturday Bond Court, if we didn't do the credit card, if we didn't do all these other things, we would have been in a mode of having a bond for \$60 million dollars for the Jail addition, am I correct?

Attorney Dull answered correct.

Sheriff Dominguez said we will continue to do this, we understand it, I understand that, and I'm saying to you today, you need 10 more people, I will cut 10 more people on top of the 20, on top of the 22 that we did last year, and I will make sure that our public safety statutory duties are kept, and will continue to do that and see what we do for next year as we prepare for the budget deficit, and looking at revenues, we will move aggressively to enact those recommendations on the Maximus Study.

Blanchard said we want to close this off, and we need those positions as soon as possible, tonight, today.

Sheriff Dominguez said after you're done, we can go into the office, me, you and Dante, and whoever else would like to, and I will tell you where we're going to cut.

Bilski said that I think that maybe in the form of a motion that we allow Dante to figure out what that, to look at the deficit, and look at those positions, line item by line item, and come up, and I would hope that it's 10, but you had heard that number but I'm not quite sure exactly how many bodies it is Sheriff. But I do know we have to take action, and I don't know how exactly which way to present that in the form of a motion Dante, but to have you go ahead, make those reductions but before you finalize them in the machine, we sit with the Sheriff' staff to make sure that that's done.

Dante said it will have to come from the Sheriff because if it's a lower paid staff, it will be 12, 14, 15, the motion should be to resolve this it will be \$750,000 dollars worth of full-time positions, equivalent. Dante said, I don't know how you want to word that, but that's what you need with benefits, and everything else, and it depends on what positions. There may be 9 of them if they're the higher ones, and there may be 15 of them if they are the lower ones, something like that so it's contingent upon the position that's being eliminated.

Bilske said that's the point I was trying to make, and I will make that as the form of a motion when it's time.

Cid said in eliminating these positions, are we looking at those that, I mean, we have certain positions in Correctional Officers, and Merit Police who are under Contract, so we can't, I don't know what the law says, I don't think we can cut those positions.

Bilski said I believe the way the Collective Bargaining Agreement reads, is that we would have to keep the positions open, but just would be unfunded, and unoccupied. That's the key work the position would be unfunded, and unoccupied, but on the books.

Sheriff said I will cut the amount that you need. Just to let you know, we will begin with Court Security. Do we want to make them? Of course not. Nobody does, but that's where we will have to begin. We will start with our Court Security, where we need to. What do you do with that then? We will assure you that then we will take those Police Officers and put them in the Court. We've got to have security for our Judges, security for our jurors, and security for people who come into our facility, so then I will get with the administration, and we will then determine where we place Police Officers in the Courts, in this building, but in terms of where we're going to start, that's where.

Cid asked if there are any Grants that you have right now that can help fund Police Officers, or anything like that that you may have to do away with, and maybe use Grant money?

Sheriff Dominguez answered, we applied for the stimulus money for the Police Officers, but because our stats are based on unincorporated, not the county-wide stats, so the stimulus money went to urban, Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago. Cid said like the JAG Grant? Sheriff said the JAG Grant was the stimulus that went to replace Police Officers. The other JAG Grants doesn't go for Police Officers, it goes for equipment.

He said the stimulus money to hire Police Officers, or to keep them still working, went to Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago because our violent crime stats used in our unincorporated area did not compete with them. It went where the need was at, so there is not money for that.

Prince said that the part that resonated the most is that the Sheriff stated that he gets it, and that he is going to do whatever is necessary to comply, and to help us comply with our statutory obligations. He said that Dante has laid out the amount of \$750,000 dollars, and the Sheriff said that he will do whatever it takes to reach that amount without compromising public safety. Prince said he has no doubt in his mind that the Sheriff will hold to that.

Prince made a motion to move forward with the additional cuts in the amount of \$750,000 dollars contingent upon the fact that the Sheriff and Dante will get together immediately after this meeting and identify exactly where those positions will come from. \$750,000 to include positions, as well as benefits. Franklin seconded the motion.

O'Donnell asked the Sheriff if jobs like Administrative Chief of Staff, do they get merit retirement, or if that's just a perf job?

Sheriff Dominguez answered, that's correct.

Bilski said we do run a high risk here, and with this book and release issue, what can we put into this to insure that we are able to track this, and to get those figures so we know what this, are we online with these recommended savings? Can we get a report the 1st and 15th of every month, and I'm not quite sure if this has to be in the form of a motion. He asked Attorney Szarmach if he could answer that, but we need to get that data into Dante on a regular basis, in order to...

Prince said we have a motion, and a second on the floor.

Bilski said I didn't know if that needed to be included as part of, if we're approving this overall budget. That's my concern. We agree with those positions being eliminated, but what security if we are going to approve all of this, are we going to have in there to make sure that we have a way of tracking these savings so we can monitor to make sure we are on line.

O'Donnell asked am I understanding, so I'm not micromanaging on a global..., the proposition is that the cuts are going to start at Court Security?

The Sheriff answered, yes.

O'Donnell asked will they end at Court Security?

The Sheriff answered that's what we will talk to Dante about.

O'Donnell asked are you eliminating Court Security?

The Sheriff answered, that's where we're going to start at.

O'Donnell asked so then we're going to put Merit Officers in this building?

The Sheriff answered, correct.

All voted "Yes". Motion to approve carried 7-0.

Blanchard said we have Animal Control.

Dante it is a \$25,900 shortfall.

Sheriff Dominguez said in reference to Councilman Bilski' comment about monitoring. We meet with the Jail Oversight monthly, and we will be informing the Jail Oversight on a monthly basis on the progress, or results of the book and release so that whatever report that we make through the Jail Oversight, we will give that report to each and every one of you. You will get a monthly report on the progress and results on the Book and Release.

Bilski said and then as a request I guess for the Jail Oversight Committee, I guess that's something we should probably monitor every two weeks, when it comes off the ground, so we keep an exact handle on it.

Dillon said in reference to Animal Control, I see some recommendations have been made, and at this time because of what's happening with the other issues, I'd like to make a motion to lump this Animal Control reduction into the conversation that they are going to have. Franklin seconded the motion.

Dante said so it will be a \$775,000 dollar motion. I don't know how you can do this, on Prince' motion.

All voted "Yes" to approve. Motion carried 7-0.

Dan Murchek said I think that it's important that the Unions are a part of these discussions. Some of the suggestions that you may consider, the Sheriff talked about eliminating Court Security. I understand that they are going to eliminate some of those spots perhaps. I may suggest for instance, every Judge here has numerous Bailiffs, many Bailiffs. Judges constantly do not have trials going on. What are these Bailiffs doing? They could fill in on Court Security. They already understand how this building works. Instead of putting Merit Police Officers here, we are short on the street as it is. We have bare minimum, so using Court Bailiffs, when there is not an actual trial in there would be a function that they could do.

I think we should also look at some civilian staff maybe working a 72 hour pay period in some cases, before we start reducing public safety in areas. By putting Police Officers in Court Security we're taking Police Officers off the street, we're at the bare minimum, we've made some reductions. We're prepared to sit down with this Council and look at our agreement to help, but just to put Policemen inside again defeats the purpose of having Police doing what we train them for, when we have Bailiffs and other folks who could do it.

I also would urge this Council to look at locking this building down. It may be an inconvenience, but we don't need to have this many entrances open, it's that simple. These are big savings that we can do here, and things that we need to look at.

Our 4 and 2 schedule, the Sheriff talked about here, on the Merit Police side, which I only speak for, we only have 50 officers that work that. We're not the cost of the Sheriff' Department' overtime, I can tell you that, and I'm sure that everyone is aware of where the overtime is going. I have no problem of reducing

the overtime to almost nothing, at this point to save jobs to keep Police Officers on the street, until things turn around,

I understand that, but I would strongly suggest locking this building down, using Court Bailiffs to fill in those positions, and not putting Merit Police Officers in there, and if there's anything that we can do and sit down with our group, and maybe come up with something to help you, please reach out to us. We don't want to be left out of this process.

There being no further business to come before the Council, it was moved and seconded that the Council does adjourn to meet again, as required by law.

President, Lake County Council

ATTEST:

Peggy Holinga Katona,
Lake County Auditor