

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 considering the budgets for the Year 2015, 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 Ted Bilski, President, David Hamm, Jerome Prince, Daniel Dernulc, and Christine Cid, County Councilpersons, together with Ray Szarmach, County Council Attorney. Councilwoman Elsie Franklin, and Councilman Eldon Strong were absent.

OPEN: County Council Recommendations, Discussions, and Actions

Dante said what you have is a compilation of the actions that were taken in your 3rd run, which was last Thursday, (9-11-14), the bottom line is on your 2nd page, that's where we left off. It may look higher than anticipated because once you start exempting those groups, Corrections and Merit, they consume such a large portion of your salary base, when you omit them, your \$2 million dollar cost, goes way down, so if you are looking at the bottom line being larger than anticipated, that's because you omitted, or exempted some large groups in there. And when you are talking about such large groups, they amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Dante said, that was the most notable point, in terms of the bottom line, and you are to the surplus, and that's what we have as of this moment.

Bilski wanted to remind the Council that we are in negotiations with the Merit, and Corrections.

Dante said that as long as the Council puts away money to pay for whatever you commit to, just like you did last year, that's fine.

Dante said he has budget reports available for the departments to review, and they are current.

Cid said that there are currently 18 individuals at Juvenile Detention, whose salaries are under \$20,000, and she would like to bring them up, to \$20,000

Cid made a motion, seconded by Prince to bring those 18 employees for Juvenile Detention, Department 4200, up to \$20,000, prior to the 3% increase.

Dante said there are 8 in the category, which is the Protective Services category, and 10 in the Maintenance & Service category. They are full-time salaries.

Dante said they are all going in at \$20,000, plus the 3% increase. There are a total of 18 positions, and they are going to \$20,600 dollars.

The majority voted "Yes". Franklin and Strong were "absent". Motion carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

Hamm made a motion, seconded by Dernulc to approve in Commissioners budget, department 2900, general fund, a position called Asst. Purchasing Agent at a salary of \$27,265.

Dernulc asked, it's neutral correct? Blanchard answered, yes.

The majority voted "Yes". Franklin and Strong were "absent". Motion carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

Prince made a motion, seconded by Cid to place \$140,000 dollars for the Mental Health Centers outside of the freeze.

Blanchard said Mental Health Centers are appealable items.

Dante asked Attorney Szarmach to make sure that it's in the form of a Resolution at the Second Reading, if we don't put it in a Resolution, the State will deny it.

The majority voted "Yes". Franklin and Strong were "absent". Motion carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

Judge Schneider said that she wanted to set the record straight. She said that it came to her attention, that there were some remarks made at the last meeting that we have settled all of our issues for 2014. Judge Schneider said, that's not true.

Prince wanted to clarify that, that was the understanding for this period, and he believes that there was a mistake when it was said that everything is done.

Judge Schneider said, "I just want to remind you that we had our last negotiating session, and we left that session, with you to come back to us with a counter proposal. It's September, and you haven't contacted us.

Attorney Szarmach said, for 2014 only, you would not go forward with the mandate for 2014 only, on the condition that we appropriated the 283, and 286 Fund, which we did.

Judge Schneider also said, and that you would continue to negotiate, and try to implement what we wanted.

Attorney Szarmach said, right, continue to negotiate the 2015 budget, anything you wanted then, or for 2015, would have to be in the 2015 budget.

Judge Schneider said, and we've asked for the same things, with the 3% salary increase, plus the salary schedule.

Judge Schneider asked, and you are still reviewing our requests?

Attorney Szarmach said, we haven't had First Reading yet.

Bilski said that Dante mentioned that you have the opportunity to view your proposed budget, and everything that has been done, up to this point, is available for you to review, and the actions that have been taken, the percentages that have been put in. Bilski said, I was under the impression that we had met the minimum requirements for 2015.

Judge Schneider said, just so we are clear, our 2015 request is upping the salaries because of the salary schedule.

Cid said to the Judge, the reason that I didn't vote in favor of everything that was given to the Courts so far, is because it was my understanding that it seems like it's a negotiation now, with the Courts, and not just our actions here. She asked Judge Schneider are we going to negotiate your budget every year now?

Judge Schneider said there is a reason why I proposed the salary schedule. You will see that the Feds do this, other large counties do this. We don't want to come back to come back year, after year, to do these negotiations. If you've got a schedule in place, and the employees know when they start working here, that this is where you start, this is what you can look forward to every 3 to 5 years, or every 10 years. And whenever you give across the board raises, you give it across the board to them. We don't want to come here every year to do that, we don't want to use our mandate power.

Bilski told the Judge, you have the opportunity to review your proposed budget, and everything that's been done, at this point, is available for you to review, and actions that have been taken.

Bilski said I was under the impression that we had met the minimal requirements that you wanted.

Bilski said we will give the best merit raise that we can, and we have to take care of all employees, a greater percentage of our levy is "eaten" up by the Criminal Justice System, whether it's in the Jail, or in the Courts. We are a big target, when they say County, and all of this money, we haven't receive that much money. We have cut our budget, and any County, in this State, that operates with a half million people. Our budget is low compared to what others do, with a lot more. Go across to Porter County and see what they spend, and what they're budgets are like, and the amount of people that comes through their Courts, and come through their Jails.

Dernulc made a motion, seconded by Cid to cancel the Budget Workshop for Friday, September 19, 2014, scheduled for 1:00 p.m. The majority voted "Yes". Franklin, and Strong were "absent". Motion to cancel the meeting carried 5-yes, 2-absent.

The next Budget Workshop is scheduled for Monday, September 22, 2014 @ 9:00 A.M.

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

President, Lake County Council

ATTEST:

Peggy Holinga Katona,
Lake County Auditor