

NEWS RELEASE: Nov. 15, 2011

Greene County balances 2012 Budget proposal

Following two weeks of intense discussion and review, Greene County officeholders and management staff have worked together to balance the proposed 2012 County Budget.

The proposed budget was presented to the Greene County Commission this morning during a posted meeting. Individual department budget hearings continue through November and December. Missouri law requires the commission to balance projected revenues with expenditures before they sign the budget Jan. 10, 2012.

The proposed budget includes \$34,566,105 in General Revenue, a 1.6-percent increase over the 2011 budget. The increase is based on sales tax revenue, which has grown more than 6 percent since the 2011 budget was adopted and is projected to go up another 2 percent in 2012.

Despite growth in revenue, the 2012 budget includes several significant additional and new expenses, including:

- \$150,000 increase in Juvenile Office legal fees, to serve more than 1,000 children under supervision of the court.
- \$787,019 in election costs for 2012
- \$246,375 in out-of-county jail inmate expenses
- \$200,000 in fuel costs
- \$260,000 employee health insurance cost increase

Earlier this month, projected expenses exceeded revenues by \$1.44 million. The current budget proposal eliminates that deficit. Officeholders and management staff, who had already cut General Revenue budgets 21.6 percent since 2008, further reduced their staffing and operations expenses to eliminate the shortfall. Proposed cuts include:

- \$150,300 in delayed maintenance and upgrades to the county's telephone system, and computers, networks, and software
- \$30,000 in postage
- \$46,070 in funding for county boards and non-profit organizations which work closely with the county, including CASA of Southwest Missouri, the Child Advocacy Center and the University of Missouri Extension
- \$100,030 in eliminating vacant positions for an associate planner, maintenance worker and custodian
- \$102,988 in moving portions of County Administrator, Human Resources, Public Information and Information Systems expenses to Road & Bridge fund
- \$100,000 in suspending all non-reimbursable training
- \$9,000 in reducing lawn mowing to once every two weeks
- \$82,472 in Health Department Laboratory Services for water testing
- \$76,504 in Health Department Animal Control services outside Springfield city limits
- \$253,625 in out-of-county inmate expense, reduced from \$500,000 (reducing the average daily number of inmates housed out of county from 30 to 15.)
- \$42,125 in reduced jail maintenance

- \$80,000 in reduced election labor costs
- \$15,000 in elimination of a vacant part-time Assistant Prosecuting Attorney position

Priority in proposed General Revenue cuts has been given to maintaining services with minimal employee lay-offs and reductions in pay and benefits. However, Greene County remains under a hiring freeze, in place since 2008, and county residents may experience delays in some county services due to staff shortages.

Greene County Director of Administration and Budget Officer Jeff Reinold said the proposed 2012 budget depends upon several key assumptions, including a 2-percent growth in sales tax revenue, keeping the number of jail inmates at or below 550, and no additional cuts or unfunded mandates at the state level. Revenues and expenditures will be monitored month-to-month and formally considered by the commission six months into the budget year. If the key assumptions are not met, additional cuts may be necessary.

Members of the Greene County Commission commended the cooperation of county officials and staff in balancing the 2012 budget.

“I’m really impressed how the department heads and the officeholders voluntarily stepped up to close this gap,” said Presiding Commissioner Jim Viebrock. “We had an unbelievable gap to fill, and instead of posturing and fighting, they stepped up. I think that shows amazing character and I’m really impressed.”

“Once again, County Officeholders, Department Heads and employees have joined forces in meeting a financial challenge that, to many, may seem all but impossible,” added District 1 Commissioner Harold Bengsch. “This is not done without sacrifice stacked upon sacrifices already made in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and now, 2012. We are indeed so very fortunate to be blessed with such dedicated staff.”

District 2 Commissioner Roseann Bentley also acknowledged the collaborative efforts.

“It was an incredible feat to get that \$1.4 million down, we couldn’t do it without people making extraordinary sacrifices in their offices and departments,” said Bentley.

For more information, call the Greene County Commission at 417-868-4112 or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 417-224-5510.

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