Official Proceedings of the Stutsman County Commission – July 27, 2021

At 10:10 am, Chairman Klose called the special meeting of the Stutsman County Commission to order. Ramone Gumke, Joan Morris, Steven Cichos, and Mark Klose answered the roll call. Dennis Ova was absent.

Jessica Alonge, Interim Auditor/COO discussed the 2022 preliminary budget. The proposed mill levy was presented with a total increase of 21.64 mills to include all preliminary requests. The general fund proposed increase is 17.52 mills which includes a road project of $1.2 million or 12.97 mills. Klose inquired about the Peterson township grade raise at Stink Lake. This was included in the budget in the Emergency Fund.

Shannon Larson, Human Resource Director discussed employee wage increases. They included a 3% COLA and a 2% step increase for all eligible employees. They also included some changes in the IT, Auditor, and Communications departments that will need to go to the Personnel Committee. The COLA and step increases, with FICA and retirement, equal $224,094.02. They also included a 3% increase in health insurance which would be $42,362 but they are hoping for no increase.

An increase for the Soil Conservation District was included per their request. They had levied .06 mills in the past but are requesting an increase to 1 mill.

Klose inquired about undesignated CARES funding. Alonge reported that there is $425,870 remaining. The other portion was used last year to buy down the mill levy. The county will be receiving additional funds through the American Rescue Plan, but the requirements for what it can be used for are stricter.

Larson pointed out losses in revenue due to lower interest rates, the elimination of the Safebed program, and changes in foreclosure laws. Due to changes in legislation the county no longer keeps any revenue from property foreclosures.

Klose inquired about the revolving loan fund.

Alonge discussed the park department budget. They will be losing revenue on cabin leases due to the owners purchasing their lots after the land transfer. There is also a fund for Campground expansion in 2025 that has a budgeted contribution of $37,500 each year. They are hoping for a grant to match the funds at that time.

The 2022 capital budget was presented. The corrections budget increased because they will have to hire more outside contractors for projects after the former maintenance supervisor's retirement. The cost of the new temperature control system in the jail increased by $29,000, but they are looking into other companies to get the cost down. The road budget increased due to the $1.2 million project on County Road 67, and other smaller items. In the maintenance budget, they removed the Courthouse 2 remodel project and added a few smaller projects. The motor grader budget is higher because they are buying two machines and the trade in value has decreased. The park department budget includes money for insulating and heating the shop so that Karl can do projects during the winter.

The board set another budget meeting at 2:00 on Tuesday, August 3rd. The board would like to speak to the Soil Conservation district, the James River Valley Library, and Central Valley Health Department regarding their budgets.

The Preliminary Budget Hearing was set for Friday, August 6th at 10:00 am.

At 11:34 am, Gumke made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Morris. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Jessica Alonge Interim Auditor/COO	Mark T. Klose Commission Chairman