Official Proceedings of the Stutsman County Final Budget Hearing – October 7, 2024

At 6:02 p.m., the Stutsman County budget hearing was called to order by Chairman Mark Klose. Jerry Bergquist, Chad Wolsky (via telephone), Joan Morris, Levi Taylor (via telephone), and Mark Klose answered the roll call.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Jessica Alonge, Auditor/COO, presented budget challenges, such as employee and fringe benefit costs, with a 3% COLA and 2.5% step increase for all eligible employees included, increases in service contracts county-wide, replenishing the emergency fund after several back to back disaster declarations both state and federal, sustaining the capital improvement plan with increased cost and supply/demand issues, and balancing the county-wide budget due to increased costs while attempting to maintain Capital Improvement plans.

Revenues increased by $3,837,943. Expenditures increased by $503,729. Significant expenditure increases include $432,880 in salaries, $19,946 in health and dental insurance premiums, $457,770 in capital asset purchases, and $45,100 in utility costs. Significant expenditure decreases include $65,100 in election costs since there is no planned election in 2025.

Morris questioned the increase in the weed board budget from the preliminary budget. Klose proposed removing $100,000 from the weed board budget. The board would still be eligible for their grants at that amount, and they have enough in reserves where it would not affect operations.

Klose stated that he was contacted by the Streeter Senior Center about a leaking roof, and that they do not have the funds to repair it. Elray Fercho has been in contact with the Auditor's office and is on the agenda for the next commission meeting.

No members of the public attended the public hearing.

A motion to reduce the weed board levy by $100,000 was made by Morris, seconded by Bergquist. Roll call vote: Bergquist, Wolsky, Morris, Taylor and Klose voted aye. Motion carried.

A motion to adopt the proposed 2025 Stutsman County Budget, with the changes made to the weed board line items, was made by Bergquist, seconded by Morris. The total mills changed to 73.11 for the final budget, from 75.81 in the preliminary budget, for a 2.7 mill decrease. Roll call vote: Wolsky, Morris, Taylor, Klose, and Bergquist voted aye. Motion carried.

The Capital Improvement Plan has not changed since the preliminary budget. A motion to adopt the 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan was made by Morris, seconded by Taylor. Roll call vote: Morris, Taylor, Klose, Bergquist, and Wolsky voted aye. Motion carried.

Alonge presented the 2025 Budgeted Transfers. A motion to approve the 2025 Budgeted Transfers as presented was made by Bergquist, seconded by Wolsky. Roll call vote: Taylor, Klose, Bergquist, Wolsky, and Morris voted aye. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the certification of 2024 property tax levies was made by Taylor, seconded by Morris. Roll call vote: Klose, Bergquist, Wolsky, Morris, and Taylor voted aye. Motion carried.

A motion for the Auditor/COO to certify the Central Valley Health District 2024 mill levy with Logan County auditor was made by Bergquist, seconded by Morris. Roll Call vote: Bergquist, Wolsky, Morris, Taylor, and Klose voted aye. Motion carried.

Shannon Davis, Human Resource Director, informed the commission that at the LEC Governing Board meeting it was recommended to begin immediately advertising open positions with the 2025 wages, in hopes of getting more applicants. There are currently four open positions in corrections. A motion to approve advertising for the vacant positions in corrections and communications with the 2025 wages was made by Bergquist, seconded by Wolsky. Roll call vote: Wolsky, Morris, Taylor, Klose, and Bergquist voted aye. Motion carried.

Davis informed the commission that there have recently been three terminations in the Road Department.

Morris thanked Alonge and Davis for their hard work on the budget and for the excellent job that they do.

At 6:59 p.m. a motion to adjourn the Final Budget Hearing was made by Morris, seconded by Bergquist. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Jessica Alonge Auditor/COO	Mark T. Klose Commission Chairman