Official Proceedings of the Stutsman County Budget Hearing – October 7, 2025

At 6:00 p.m., Chairman Taylor called the Stutsman County 2026 Budget Hearing to order. Ben Tompkins, Mike Hansen, Amanda Hastings, Chad Wolsky (via telephone), and Levi Taylor answered roll.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Jessica Alonge, Auditor/COO, presented budget challenges, such as House Bill 1176 requiring caps, employee and fringe benefits, with a 3% COLA and 2.5% step increase for all eligible employees included, and reclassifications of positions in the auditor, IT and sheriff's departments. Challenges also included replenishing the emergency fund after several back-to-back disaster declarations both state and federal, and balancing the county-wide budget due to increased costs while attempting to maintain Capital Improvement plans.

Revenues decreased by $499,409. Expenditures increased by $1,427,876. Significant expenditure increases include $631,051 in salaries, $57,345 in health and dental insurance premiums, $97,930 in capital asset purchases, and $198,968 due to the dissolution of the joint library. Significant expenditure decreases include $109,500 in election costs.

As presented, the budget currently has an unused cap amount of $535,402 or 4.76%. House bill 1176 only allows an excess percentage of 3% carryover, leaving approximately $198,000 unable to be carried over.

No member of the public spoke at the public hearing.

Alonge presented an emailed public comment from Peterson township regarding the water issues near Crystal Springs.

Alonge explained the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan.

A motion to budget an additional $198,000 in the general fund, earmarked for water management for the current water issues and to avoid a carryover in excess of what is allowed by law was made by Hastings, seconded by Tompkins. This will increase the general fund mill levy by 1.35 mills, from 40.81 to 42.16. Roll call vote: Tompkins, Hansen, Hastings, Wolsky and Taylor voted aye. Motion carried.

The Board discussed the library levy and budget. The city currently pays 85% of the operating expenses, while the county pays 15%. Sarah Hellekson, a county appointed library board member and Jamestown City Auditor, stated that the anticipated cost to run the Stutsman County Library part-time annually is about $350,00 per year. The city always approves 15 mills for the city library levy.

Joe Rector, James River Valley System Library Director, stated the Stutsman County Library building is open from 12:00-5:00 Monday-Friday. They would like to have longer hours, but due to a reduction in county funding a couple of years ago the hours had to be reduced. Rector spoke about the future of the city library. The city library will continue to function after the dissolution of the joint board, and anyone living out of city limits would currently have to pay $60 a year to get a library card. Wolsky spoke in favor of the library and praised the programs that they put on for families and the community. A motion to

approve 4 mills for the library mill levy, was made by Wolsky, seconded by Hastings. Roll call vote: Hansen aye, Hastings aye, Wolsky aye, Taylor no, and Tompkins aye. Motion carried.

A motion to adopt the 2026 budget with the change to the general fund mill levy and the associated expense and revenue accounts was made by Hastings, seconded by Tompkins. Roll call vote: Hastings, Wolsky, Taylor, Tompkins, Hansen and Hastings voted aye. Motion carried.

A motion to adopt the 2026 Capital Improvement Plan was made Hastings, seconded by Tompkins. Roll call vote: Wolsky, Taylor, Tompkins, Hansen and Hastings voted aye. Motion carried.

Alonge presented the 2026 Budgeted Transfers. A motion to adopt and approve the budgeted transfers was made by Hastings, seconded by Taylor. Roll call vote: Taylor, Tompkins, Hansen, Hastings, and Wolsky voted aye. Motion carried.

A motion to certify the 2025 property tax levies with the total mill levy of 78.19 mills, was made by Tompkins, seconded by Hastings. Roll call vote: Tompkins, Hansen, Hastings, Wolsky, and Taylor voted aye. Motion carried.

A motion for the Auditor/COO to certify the Central Valley Health District 2025 mill levy with the Logan County auditor was made by Hastings, seconded by Hansen. Roll call vote: Hansen, Hastings, Wolsky, Taylor and Tompkins voted aye. Motion carried.

A motion to send a letter to the City of Jamestown requesting they consider retracting their notice of withdrawal from the joint library service agreement was made by Hastings, seconded by Wolsky. Roll call vote: Hastings aye, Wolsky aye, Taylor no, Tompkins aye, and Hansen aye. Motion carried.

At 7:26 p.m., a motion to adjourn the 2026 budget hearing was made by Tompkins, seconded by Hastings. Unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Jessica Alonge	Levi Taylor
Auditor/COO	Commission Chairman