



# Onondaga County Legislature

**DEBORAH L. MATURO**  
Clerk

**J. RYAN McMAHON, II**  
Chairman

**KATHERINE FRENCH**  
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202  
Phone: 315.435.2070 Fax: 315.435.8434  
[www.ongov.net](http://www.ongov.net)

## **WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE – 2017 BUDGET REVIEW OF COUNTY CLERK** **September 16, 2016** **David Knapp, Chairman**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. Jordan, Mr. May, Mr. Kilmartin, Mr. Shepard, Ms. Williams

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mrs. Ervin

**ALSO PRESENT:** Chairman McMahan, Mr. Burtis, Dr. Chase

Chairman Knapped called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m.

**COUNTY CLERK, pg. 3-12 – Lisa Dell, County Clerk; Jackie Norfolk, Principal Deputy County Clerk; Elizabeth Ducett, Fiscal Officer**

Ms. Dell presented the following:

*The County Clerk's office is mandated by Federal, State and Local law. It is our mission to record, maintain, preserve and make available for public inspection all public records filed in our office. The proposed budget we are asking for maintains the needs of our office.*

*In the County Clerk budget for 2017, the minimal increase in the 101 payroll is due to the recently adopted CSEA contract increases and title change of Records Preservation Supervisor to Accountant I. This department has no control over contract increases. Staffing numbers remain at 37 funded positions. There is a salary savings of \$84,476.00, as this office will be leaving a couple of funded positions vacant in 2017. Additionally there are two individuals that are expected to take the incentive retirement buyout and that could be a further salary savings of \$94,800*

*The 103 part-time position roster is being reduced from five positions to just two. The Seasonal Aides and Messenger have been eliminated. This was possible through cross training and redistributing work assignments. This is a salary savings of \$13,255.*

*For the past few years, this office has not been able to show a surplus due to low mortgage revenue and high IT interdepartmental billings. In 2017 we hope to change that trend. This office is bringing in a new, outside vendor Records Management System with an e-commerce component. The IT bill should show a significant decrease while revenue alone will increase due to the new income source generated by this system. We are currently looking at the variety of e-commerce fees set by county clerk's offices across the state. This new system will create a more efficient work flow and any open positions will be assessed as to whether they are still necessary.*

*We will continue to work with the courts to implement more electronic-filing of court records. This along with the new system will reduce the need for storage and in turn reduce the need for lektreivers and maintenance costs.*

*In conclusion, this office recently added NYS Thruway EZ-Passes and Federal Duck Stamps to generate income. A cost savings was also found by reducing the fees incurred to mail Passport applications. We will diligently search to find ways to generate additional revenue.*

Ms. Dell:

Was notified recently of a 3<sup>rd</sup> individual expected to take the CSEA retirement incentive

Mr. Jordan:

- 101 - showing a decrease of \$129,338, but there was a replacement page, which provided for an increase in some salaries. Not sure if the \$129k is still an accurate number or if it should be changed.

Mr. Morgan:

- The budgets were built on the rosters that are behind the scenes that have the right salaries in them; it's just the page itself that didn't update properly, which is why we had to replace those pages.
- We pulled from the wrong table for all of the electeds/flats, but the actual dollars are based on their correct salaries – the 101 accounts are accurate.

Mr. Jordan:

- 3 people interested in the retirement incentive – what is going to happen with those positions? Are you going to be able to eliminate them from your roster, or have to replace any of these positions?

Ms. Dell:

- 2 positions will be eliminated; 1 will need to be filled, but if we hire, it will be at a reduced salary than what the current person is making

Mr. Jordan:

- Do we have a number in terms of anticipated savings because of the elimination of those 2 positions?

Mr. Morgan:

- Throughout the budget we allocated salary savings of roughly \$8 million across departments except for a handful that we exempted, based on the number of eligible retirees that the departments had compared to the total.
- Say for example, I don't have the correct number of the top of my head, the Clerk had 5 eligible retirees out of the number it was, and it was 10% - they would have got allocated 10% of the \$8 million in their account as a decrease
- Once we find out who will actually take the incentive, we will have to go back and analyze who went from where, and which ones have to be filled, and how we are going to adjust those accounts accordingly.

Mr. Jordan:

- So the 101 lines throughout the budget have been decreased by your estimate of who is going to take the retirement incentive

Mr. Morgan:

- There was a gross number that we had that we needed to decrease salaries by to bring a balanced budget over, and that is what we did. The way we allocated those salary savings was based on the number of people within each department - eligible retirees compared to the total

Mr. Jordan:

- Did you decrease the 101 line by 10%?

Mr. Morgan:

- 10% of the gross dollar figure that they needed to bring the budget into balance
- All of the things we did – using non salary costs, using reserves, revenue items – there was a remaining dollar amount that was there. The way we are going to approach that was to offer this retirement incentive that you approved.
- In order to bring a budget over, we didn't know who was going to leave from where, so we had to allocate that \$8 million somehow
- The way we allocated it was based on the number of people eligible to retire from each department

Mr. Morgan:

- What happens if we don't have enough people utilizing or accepting the offer, so to speak, where it would generate \$8 million in savings?

Mr. Morgan:

- There are going to have to be adjustments – that's what I spoke of and the Co. Executive spoke of in her address yesterday
- It's going to have to be a two-part budget because we won't know who is going to accept the incentive and who isn't until after the budget is adopted.
- There is going to be a levy adopted on 10/11 and we won't find out who is going to take the incentive until October 21<sup>st</sup>. At that point we will have to determine and analyze who took it, from where and determine and reconcile the 101 accounts and bring back a resolution to clean that up

Mr. May:

- *Speaking to Mr. Morgan* – you said that the formula is approximately 10% of the amount you need to balance

Mr. Morgan:

- That was just an example.

Mr. May:

- Because it will vary by department and who is eligible

Mr. Morgan:

- Exactly

Mr. May:

- If a department has X eligible and they need to balance a budget, you are looking at each department formulaically to allocate the salary savings.

Mr. Morgan:

- That is what we did.

Mr. May:

- It sounds conservative; do you feel it is conservative?

Mr. Morgan:

- Again, the number is the number. We knew we needed a certain amount of money to balance the budget, after all of the other actions we took.
- As you go through this budget, you will see that there are a lot of parenthesis in this budget.
- We took a hard look at a lot of non-salary items – using reserves and other items before we got to the ending point -- this is the remaining gap that we have.
- Then we starting thinking about what is our approach going to be, and that's when we thought of this retirement incentive.
- The time it is going to take to determine who is going to take will be past the adoption of the budget, so we had to factor in somehow the potential savings related to that.
- We took that gross number and allocated it based on the number of potential retirees in each department compared to the total potential retirees

Ms. Dell:

- We had 6 people eligible for the incentive; 3 are taking it; and have 5 positions that we are eliminating and not going to be filled.
- Due to retirement and attrition, someone moved out of state, I don't feel that position needs to be filled. Three people are going to retire, unless they change their minds, and had someone else retire earlier this year
- The only one I would like to refill is the one that handed me her papers today – it would be necessary for my department

Mr. Jordan:

- What positions are those?

Ms. Dell:

- One recording clerk; two clerk 3's, one account clerk 3, one recording supervisor
- With the new system coming in and recommended work flow options – it really streamlines our workflow; I am evaluating that with the positions that have already left or are leaving

Mr. Jordan:

- Which position do you want to refill?

Ms. Dell:

- A Clerk 3, in the criminal department, an essential, one person department
- I believe the duties in that department should be handled by a Clerk 3
- Hiring a new Clerk 3 is obviously going to be a lower salary than the person who is leaving.

Chairman Knapp:

- 103 line has a reduction – down \$13,255 – what is it typically used for

Ms. Dell:

- A messenger, used to have seasonal aides, a book binder, and a Clerk 1 – we are just keeping the bookbinder and Clerk 1 – are getting rid of seasonal aides and messenger

Chairman Knapp:

- Maintenance line has gone up pretty significantly since 2015 - \$16k or so. What is that?

Ms. Ducett:

- It is because of the copy machines – we have to pay now for all of that – copies come out of that account

Chairman Knapp:

- Is there a revenue line on the copy machines?

Ms. Ducett:

- That goes into our general fund.

Chairman Knapp:

- \$81,300 Professional Services for new software – do you expect that to cover it?

Ms. Ducett:

- That is the amount that we would be paying every year to be able to search the system; it is a set amount through the contract.

Chairman Knapp:

- What has been the impact on EZ Pass and duck stamps; has it been pretty positive?

Ms. Dell:

- EZ Pass has been a little bit more than we thought – we had 25 and have already sold 15 of them in a small amount of time
- Once we get the word out, I'm sure we will be selling more.

Chairman Knapp:

- How is the storage situation?

Ms. Dell:

- Yesterday one of my staff members came to me, who was at Molloy Road, and was speaking to a member of DSS and they were moving their stuff out
- So, I don't know if we are going to get a notice that we have to move our almost 4,000 boxes out
- DSS had to be out by March
- I was going to contact the proper channels to find out.

Chairman Knapp:

- A time ago there was a huge back log on pistol permits, your predecessor offered to help process the pistol permits
- You don't have to do that anymore, right? They are caught up.

Ms. Dell:

- Yes – the Sheriff's Department is handling all of that

Chairman Knapp:

- What grants do you have in the budget?

Ms. Ducett:

- Right now we have the RMI grant, which we have had for quite a few years
- That money is used to do any records management improvements within the office

Chairman Knapp:

- The software is very exciting; what is your timeline – an update on that since we last talked

Ms. Dell:

- The contract is being worked out – languages going back and forth – hoping it will be signed soon
- Vendor is confident – is looking at the first of January
- Obviously, we have to make sure that the migration, our data from us to them, works well
- I'm staying positive; everything is going to be fine – looking at January

Mr. May:

- Requested a legal opinion or advise from counsel – we can talk about positions in every department and the spirit of this incentive is such that it is totally voluntary. I'm concerned that if we start getting granular in these proceedings, when we are really dealing with the numbers, until such time that we really have a

sense of what it going on across county departments, I would like to know what our counsel thinks about those specific discussions going forward.

- We can go through it in every department or we can hold off.
- I just want to make sure that the incentive program maintains its integrity and spirit of making it a voluntary option.

Mrs. Berger:

- There has been common practice to discuss matters specific to persons in executive session, and budget discussion should be capped at the level of resources and allocation of them.

Mr. Morgan:

- That's why I wanted to answer Casey's (Jordan) question the way I did – this is a work in progress.
- We don't know who is going to take the incentive and won't know until the 21<sup>st</sup>
- So to speculate and talk about specific positions, I tend to agree.
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The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



DEBORAH L. MATURO, Clerk,  
Onondaga County Legislature