

Balancing Options

Goal Setting

The Lane County Board of Commissioners met on September 20, 2009 to discuss the County's priorities and set goals to guide the organization for the coming one to two years. This goal setting work followed two years of Board discussion on budget direction, service priorities and a commitment to involve the citizens of Lane County in discussions regarding the County's future.

The Board reviewed options at the Federal, State and local level for opportunities, potential revenue sources, outreach and service to Lane County. Two main issues facing the County are a long-term financial plan and a shorter-term strategic plan. A decision was made to proceed with a revision to the strategic plan by the end of calendar year 2010. Following that adoption, the goal will be to develop a long term financial plan to help further guide the County's budget process and decision making.

The Board of Commissioners in their leadership role re-stated their commitment to working with the community on ideas and solutions to provide the right service levels and organizational configuration for the County in the future. Commissioners noted a priority in serving their citizens and restoring public trust through additional outreach methods. See Appendix A for more detail on County Goals.

Leadership Team

The County's Leadership Team (consisting of Department Directors & Commissioners) met in December 2009 to discuss the status of the State Budget; PERS rates; Service Option Sheets and Service Priorities; and the General Fund Forecast. As a result of that meeting, they instructed the County Administrator to construct a current service level budget for FY 10-11.

Initial Budget Committee Meetings

Two Budget Committee Meetings were held prior to the Budget Message presentation – February 2 & 9, 2010. The purpose of these meetings is to bring the Budget Committee members up to speed on the current state of external influences to the budget. Topics of those two meetings covered PERS; health benefits; labor trends; long-term financial planning; bonded debt; state budget and legislative information; tax revenue and fee review and loss of timber payments (SRS). These informational meetings allowed the Budget Committee to understand some of the cost factors, issues and challenges facing the county as they enter into the FY 2010-11 budget process.

County Administrator Proposed Budget

The Budget staff and County Administrator met with each department after initial budget preparation to review their current service levels, known and anticipated changes in revenue and expenditures, and areas of concern or high need. The County Administrator wanted to ensure that the budget he recommended to the Budget Committee met with the instruction provided at both the Goal Setting Session and Leadership Team meetings in late 2009.

The Proposed Budget reflects a current level of service, with a few minor additions in the area of health & human services, where the need to our most vulnerable population, especially during the time of the current recession, is greater.

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