



# Report to the People #61: Facing Budget Challenges

by Philip W. Chapman  
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## **Report to the People #61 by Philip W. Chapman County Board District Three**

Report to the People #61 is designed to report on my efforts to represent you. Its purpose is provide information and to aid with government transparency. This report is entitled; Facing Budget Challenges.

I serve on the Finance Committee which helps oversee the budget. A fiscal conservative, I think we can create a balanced budget which reflects our priorities. Government remains the servant of the people and should be a cost effective provider.

To understand the government needs I held face to face discussions with the following offices. The Auditor's Office, Assessor's Office, Coroner's Office, County Clerk's Office, Facilities Department, Public Defender's Office, Sheriff's Office, State's Attorney's Office, and Treasurer's Office. Their budgets reflect the mission and changing issues of county government.

Public safety remains a challenge. We continue to fund the jail repairs and must honor raises in the new police union contract. Recent positions added to the State's Attorney's and Public Defender's Office will focus on keeping the costs associated with a burgeoning jail population down by moving individuals quickly. The board will need to decide if it desires a systematic phased upgrade of the Sheriff's firing range. New vehicles may be needed for the Sheriff's Department. The State's Attorney lost several prosecutors due to salary differentials with competing concerns. The board will be asked to consider State's Attorney entry level and experienced staff salary raises.

The changing nature of township government poses fiscal challenges for the County Assessor's Office. As townships dissolve or cut assessment services, Madison County may have to pick up assessment duties. Previously townships only needed to pay a

portion of cost when requesting county assessor's services. As Tax Cycle Chairman, I helped pass a bipartisan resolution stopping this practice; townships now need to pay full cost for assessments. Nevertheless, it appears we will need to hire additional assessor staff if we assume Alton's assessment responsibilities.

The County Clerk will need funds to maintain fair and free elections. I voted to fund voting machine maintenance, early voting, and a full complement of election judges per statute. Federal grants and assistance should prevent foreign interference.

To conclude, a 'cost effective', balanced, 'no frills budget', should enhance public safety, ensure fair elections and taxing, and provide for all functions of government.

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