

Madison County Officials Pass Proposed Budget and Property Tax Levy

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EDWARDSVILLE — The Madison County Finance and Government Operations Committee on Wednesday approved a proposed \$143.8 million fiscal year 2021 budget, along with its \$30 million property tax levy.

The committee unanimously approved a \$143.8 million spending plan for FY2020, which includes \$48.2 million in general fund monies, that starts Dec. 1. The County Board will vote on the proposed plan at 5 p.m., Nov. 23.

“This is an extremely tough time for Madison County, but we managed to balance the FY2021 budget,” Chairman Kurt Prenzler said. “It has been my priority, along with County Board members, to reduce the county's reliance on property taxes.”

The committee also approved a \$30.8 million tax levy, which \$8.733 million goes toward the General Fund, and a \$3 million replacement tax allocation.

Prenzler said the administration worked hard to keep costs down, as well as keep the tax levy flat, despite seeing a reduction in sales tax revenue due to COVID-19.

“The county is experiencing a \$2.4 million revenue shortfall due to a decrease in sales tax and county fees since the start of the pandemic,” Prenzler said. “It’s been a tough year. But taxpayers expect us to keep costs down.”

On Tuesday, taxpayers overwhelmingly approved a referendum to lower the maximum levy’s general fund tax rate from .20 to .18 percent. This is the second time voters have approved a reduction in the general fund rate. In 2016, voters approved a reduction from .25 to .20.

The levy is the amount requested from property taxes used to finance a portion of the county’s budget. The general fund makes up about one-third of the county’s total tax levy.

The General Fund, which pays for the majority of personnel costs, is \$48.2 million. Other funds include Special Revenue (\$74.6 million), Capital Project (\$2.33 million), Enterprise (\$3.85 million) and Internal Service (\$14.8 million.)

Funding sources for the budget includes property taxes, grants and fees, as well as sales tax revenue.

Prenzler said that the administration met with department heads and elected officials prior to presenting the proposed budget and asked for voluntary reductions. He said the No. 1 cost for the county is personnel.

In May, the County Board voted to rescind a cost-of-living increase for all non-bargaining unit employees. The plan includes 362 non-union employees.

The wage freeze intends to minimize employee disruptions, layoffs and ease financial conditions for the county.

“We’ve had to make some tough decisions and it wasn’t easy,” Prenzler said. “But it’s been a cooperative effort by everyone and no jobs were cut.”

