

Madison County Board Passes Budget and Property Tax Levy

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EDWARDSVILLE — The Madison County Board on Wednesday approved a \$181.1 million fiscal year 2023 budget, along with a \$30.75 million property tax levy.

The board voted, 26-0, to approve the upcoming spending plan that starts on Dec. 1. The board also approved for the sixth year in a row, a zero-growth property tax levy.

“The county board once again kept the property tax levy flat,” Chairman Kurt Prenzler said.

Prenzler said the board worked to balance the budget and keep the levy request the same. The levy is the amount requested from property taxes used to help finance the county’s budget.

He said taxes are the No. 1 concern of both the board and property owners.

“For the past five years we’ve managed to hold the levy at \$30.8 million,” he said. “During my first year as chairman the county board lowered the levy by \$1.8 million and it’s stayed flat since then.”

The budget includes 11 funds — the general fund, along with special revenue funds for the Detention Home, Health Department, Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, Social Security Fund, Mental Health, Veterans’ Assistance Commission, Highway, Bridge, Matching Tax Funds (grants), Tort Judgement and Liability Insurance.

Prenzler said there is a 6.7 percent overall budget increase from last year due to contractual wage increases, unfunded mandates, as well as capital outlay and capital projects the county delayed from previous years.

The General Fund pays for the majority of personnel costs. Other funds include Special Revenue (\$94.9 million), Capital Projects (\$7.8 million), Enterprise (\$4 million) and Internal Service (\$15.7 million.)

The General Fund budget increased \$5.7 million from FY2022. The budget includes \$4.3 million in general fund operations for public safety for the State’s Attorney, Sheriff and Public Defender’s offices, as well as the Probation Department.

The General Fund budget totals \$58.6 million, with \$55.9 million in county revenues and \$2.66 million in capital outlay. The property tax levy supports \$7.95 million in the general funds county revenue and the remaining monies come from grants, fees and sales tax revenue.

The general fund budget highlights includes:

- Salary increases of 2.5 and 3 percent.
- \$800,000 for healthcare increase in personnel budget.
- \$452,000 for unfunded SAFE-T Act costs for five new personnel in the State’s Attorney (3), Sheriff (1) and Public Defender’s(1) offices.

- \$270,000 in reimbursement funds for three new personnel in sheriff dispatch center and one for Illinois Department of Children and Family Services detail.
- \$98,000 for one employee for States Attorney Metro East Task Force.
- \$44,000 for new jail medical staff.
- \$325,000 for moving probation-alternative court from special revenue to general fund.
- \$150,000 for moving two personnel costs from Probation Department from special revenue to general fund.
- \$260,000 for moving four personnel costs from Building and Zoning Department from special revenue to general fund.
- \$465,000 for Information Technology cyber security and email upgrades for all departments.

The capital outlay includes \$460,000 in personnel, ERS software; \$1 million for Information Technology hardware and software upgrades; \$633,000 for sheriff's office computers; \$134,750 for Emergency Management Agency for a vehicle and the mobile emergency operations center.

Capital Projects includes \$3.5 million in improvements at the Wood River facility and another \$1.8 million for courthouse elevators.

Prior to approving the budget, County Board member Chris Guy of Collinsville asked for an amendment to remove \$1.5 million in capital outlay funding for the purchase of election tabulators. He said in speaking with the County Clerk-elect Linda Andreas the preference is to hold off on purchasing the machines until after she takes office.

County Board member Michael "Doc" Holliday asked if the funding would be available if it is determined that the new machines would be needed.

Guy said yes, if the clerk makes decision new tabulators are needed that funding would be provided. He said the budget and levy process starts during the summer and it takes months of work before it receives board approval.

"It's a pretty amazing feat that for the past five years this board has not raised the levy," Guy said.

County Board member Mick Madison of Bethalto agreed. He said FY2017 was the first year since he became a board member that the county did not increase its tax levy and in FY2018, it lowered the levy to where it is now.

He thanked the members of the finance committee and the county administration for all their hard work and diligence in continuing to be good stewards of the taxpayers' money.

“For six years in a row the county has not raised its tax levy on its portion of the property tax bills,” Madison said. “I wish the other taxing bodies on the property tax bill would do the same. Since Illinois is paying some of the highest property taxes in the nation.”