

\$2.1 million reduction in proposed county budget may not be more than 'smoke and mirrors'

October 16 2015 8:03 AM



EDWARDSVILLE —Treasurer Kurt Prenzler wants taxpayers to know a \$2.1 million reduction in Madison County's proposed budget announced Wednesday may not be more than "smoke and mirrors."

The cuts come on the heels of Prenzler's announcement to run for County Board chairman late last week.

“I pointed out the padding of the county budget and days later \$2.1 million of cuts were announced in the Finance Committee meeting,” Prenzler said. “From the details I’ve seen so far it looks like window dressing.”

Prenzler said it appears when you shine a light into the county, things change.

“It’s yet to be determined how these changes will impact the budget,” he said. “I’m looking forward to a presentation Friday.”

A special budget meeting is scheduled for 8 a.m. Friday with the Finance and Government Operations Committee.

Prenzler called for a 10 percent reduction in the county’s property tax levy and to end the padding of the annual budget. He believes this reduction doesn’t go far enough, but is an admission that more can be done.

Prenzler said he would like to see a more transparent budget.

“Their process is not clear and can be misleading,” he said. “We’re not given all the information that the state statute requires. A real budget includes both expenditures as well as revenues.”

The 11-page spending plan was presented during a special finance committee meeting on Sept. 17. The budget included expenditures, but no revenue projections.

The proposed estimates for the county revenue, which includes property taxes, fees and other income, were not presented to the committee. It was the third year the county missed its deadline to present the proposed budget by Sept. 15, which is the target set by county ordinance.

“Why did they wait a whole month past the deadline to present the projected revenues?” Prenzler asked.