



## Administrator's Update 4/27/10

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■ **Records Management System** Departments continue the installation of a new records management system for the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office, City Police, and County Jail. The new records management system will bring the record-keeping system managed jointly by the Sheriff and City Police to a new Windows-based system. This allows for a great deal of additional information to be shared back and forth between the departments and the Jail. The new system will also upgrade and improve speeds in data retrieval for individual police vehicles. This will allow officers to check more information during a stop and will include the ability to generate electronic tickets in a matter of seconds. The system will also allow officers to access Jail records and improve their fingerprinting system for the County Jail. Departments have developed work teams to be trained on the new system. Installation and completion is anticipated for late this year.

■ **Health Services Building** The County Board of Commissioners authorized staff to do preliminary work on the possible expansion of the Health Services Building. For more than 10 years, there has been a plan to build a new Health Services Building on the LaFranier Campus. Due to the current economic situation, we have decided it's more prudent to investigate the possibility of expanding the existing facility on Garfield. The Board has authorized work to be done on a conceptual design and budget estimate for such a project. The new project would include expansion of the Women Infants & Children's Program and clinic-related services, as well as the expansion of the Dental Clinic, which serves our area, and possible expansion of the Emergency Operations Center where all emergency situations would be managed. We are currently seeking grants and other forms of assistance to attempt to reduce the cost of this expansion. That is, perhaps, getting a little ahead of the game since the feasibility hasn't been determined at this point, but we believe it's never too early to begin the investigation of funding sources. The goal of a possible expansion would be the same as past building constructions over the last 10 years. It will only be done if no additional taxes will be required.

■ **Budget** The Equalization Director, Laurie Spencer, presented the County with her Equalization Report last week, which indicated there would be a 1.94% drop in taxable value this year. This is the first year that we've had a drop in tax value in recent memory. We had anticipated a 1.6% taxable value increase for this year. Combining the two means this year's general fund budget will be approximately \$775,000 short of meeting revenue projections for this one revenue line item alone. We are also seeing revenue shortfalls in court budgets and Register of Deeds fee filings. This all comes on top of last year's \$600,000 shortfall in interest revenue. Dean Bott, our Financial Director, and I are evaluating this and preparing a plan as we did last year to accommodate the \$600,000 shortfall and will be presenting a plan to the County Board in May. This, obviously, will present serious issues for the County not only this year, but also over the next several years. This will have an impact on future annual budgets starting with 2011.

■ **Budgeting for Outcomes** Speaking of budgets, the County is looking at options for changing the budget process in the future to help make decisions more citizen-driven, performance-based, and service-related. Currently, we are looking at a process titled “Budgeting for Outcomes”. This is a process that identifies all the programs that the County provides, assesses their relative value compared to strategic objectives established by the County Board of Commissioners based on citizen input, and measures departments’ successes in accomplishing those goals. It also allows the County Board to set priorities, which are so critical in difficult economic times. Evaluating processes will take some time to complete and implementation may not take place until 2012, although, the possibility exists to accelerate the timeline. In any event, Dean and I have changed our budgeting focus from expenditures to revenues. At the direction of the County Board, we will be developing budgets based on living within the funds that we generate, which translates in all likelihood to not using any fund balance for the 2011 budget.

■ **Labor Negotiations** Contract negotiations continue. We have two open contracts at this time with six more contracts opening at the end of this year. The County Board has set a goal to have all employees contribute towards the cost of health insurance, which you all know, has risen annually. This, of course, must be negotiated and we are in the process of doing that now. To lead the way, the County Board has set their compensation for 2011 and 2012 providing no pay increase for Commissioners for the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive year and requiring a 10% premium for health insurance for single coverage. Commissioners will pay all the costs of any additional family members that are covered under the insurance.

■ **School Police Liaison Officers** The County Board met with Kingsley School Board representatives and the TCAPS School Board representatives this past week to discuss the schools’ decisions to eliminate their contributions towards funding of the School Liaison Officers. The County provides four School Liaison Officers and Traverse City provides one School Liaison Officer. These officers work full time in the high schools and middle schools providing assistance to the schools in building a bridge between the students and law enforcement. The County was providing more than half of the funding for this program and the schools were asked to contribute the remainder. It’s clear that the schools eliminated their contribution based on the difficult economics of times that they face. The County Board took the opportunity to talk with the school boards about the importance of this position. Presentation was made by the Sheriff Department’s Undersheriff Nate Alger and Captain Dave Meachum who explained the impact of these positions in the schools. The County Board encouraged the schools to reevaluate and relook at their priorities and consider funding these positions again. While no decisions were made, the dialogue was positive and hopefully helpful in addressing the situation in the upcoming months. Positions are fully funded through the end of this school year - June of this year - and funding is in jeopardy beginning in September.



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