



Administrator's Update 7/25/08

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Document Imaging System The county continues its work on installing a document imaging system to reduce the amount of paper necessary in our various systems such as the courts. Initially, the County Board approved imaging of records in the Friend of the Court's Office, Family Court, the Prosecutor's Office, and Finance. The development of the software and the workflows for those departments are well underway with an estimated roll out of the new system approximately September 15. Once the system is up and running, the departments will begin to purge files and scan documents onto the imaging system. In some departments, that will happen in a short period of time. In others, such as the Friend of the Court, the files will be sent away, imaged, and stored, and that process will take approximately 8-12 weeks. Once the system is up and running and the documents have been recorded, the system will be evaluated and the county will look at the next round of departments to be imaged. The system that the County Board purchased is a system that allows for expandability. In the 2009 budget, there are approximately nine departments that have been identified as possibilities for the second phase of implementation. Because of budget constraints, that number will probably be reduced somewhat with additional departments planned in 2010. A process is now being developed to evaluate the needs of those departments and the cost benefit of completing the imaging. A priority list will be developed, which will be then reflected in the 2009 budget.


Budget Speaking of budget, Dean Bott, Finance Director, and I are in the middle of budget meetings with departments at this point in time. We have held approximately 10 budget meetings with departments so far with about 20 scheduled in the next 2 weeks. Initial indications are that the budget requests exceed estimated revenues by about \$5 million. We have \$42 million in requests with \$37 million in revenues. This does not include any expenses for the implementation of the wage and benefits study completed for Grand Traverse County. Generally, it appears that revenues are down somewhat from previous years. This may be a reflection of the economy. Tax revenues have dropped from the 8-9% range to less than 4% in 2008 with a similar expectation in 2009. Also, interest revenues have dropped significantly with an estimated reduction from 2007 of \$800,000 - \$900,000. New position requests for next year are slightly lower than in past years; although, the outlook for new positions is not good. We will be meeting with departments over the next several weeks and developing a recommendation to the Board, which we anticipate presenting on August 19. Budget hearings will be held in the first part of September with an anticipated adoption of the budget at the County Board meeting on Wednesday, October 29.

Wage and Benefits Study At the Ways & Means meeting this past week, the County Board voted to accept the Segal wage and benefits study report. It is important to clarify the term "accept". I indicated to the County Board that we were asking them to accept the study in a manner similar to a consultant's report or an engineering study. In other words,

the study is accepted for further consideration and possible implementation with or without modification. I explained to the County Board that modifications to the study may be necessary where inequities or errors are found. Modifications will be implemented with the following parameters: that Human Resources may make recommendations to the Board for changes to the system due to identified errors, inconsistencies, or bargaining unit negotiations; and based on the Board's direction for Human Resources to review a specific area of the report which results in the Board's action to implement a subsequent change. Implementation will only take place by action of the County Board of Commissioners - in most cases the result of collective bargaining. No implementation of the study has been approved by the County Board. It is anticipated that, while it will be the County Board's decision of implementation on non-union implications of the study, no implementation of the study for unionized employees will occur until the terms of the implementation are negotiated through the collective bargaining agreements.

 **Boardman Dam** Developments continue in the Boardman Dam project. Recently, as I indicated to you in a previous update, the County Board asked the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to consider allowing us to raise Boardman Pond by approximately 4-5 feet. We felt this would offer greater stability to the pond during rain events and significantly reduce the fluctuations in water levels that occur during rain events or snowmelt. Earlier this year, we have seen rises and falls in the pond in the 5-6 foot range during substantial rains or snowmelt. Every time the water level changes, it increases the erosion of the shoreline and limits the amount of re-vegetation that can take place on the remaining shoreline. DEQ has denied our request. The fallback position of the county was to ask that the turbine from the second penstock (that is the tube that the water flows through from the pond to down river) be removed. This will double the volume of water that can pass through the dam unimpeded. The owner of the turbine has been notified and has been asked to remove the turbine within 45 days. We are hopeful that this action will limit the significant water fluctuations, and we hope to have this change in place by the fall rains.

 **Septage Treatment Plant** At the county's direction, consultants have been hired to evaluate the operation of the Septage Treatment Plant. They have four primary tasks: 1) evaluate the financial viability of the plant and make recommendations on financial mechanisms to support the operation, 2) evaluate the operations to ensure efficiency, 3) develop a marketing plan and 4) develop an education plan for the plant. That study is well underway. Much documentation has been provided to the consultants - URS engineering and Plante Moran accounting firm. Those firms are evaluating the implementation at this time, and we anticipate a study to be presented to the county's Board of Public Works and the Sewer and Water Committee of the Board Public Works by approximately September 15.

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