



GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY Administration/Board of Commissioners

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Grand Traverse County provides mandated and necessary services that ensure safety and add value to our community.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 23, 2015

G.T. County Commissioners Hold First Budget Meeting

Traverse City – On Thursday, October 22, at Twin Lakes Park, Grand Traverse County Commissioners participated in the first of several special budget meetings to be held between now and the end of 2015. With an over \$3 million structural deficit identified in a preliminary independent financial analysis report, commissioners are faced with making budget cuts that may affect county employees and services. According to the report, the county also will see a pension deficit over \$44 million and a projected retiree healthcare debt of an additional \$12 million.

Said County Administrator Tom Menzel, “We have a great deal of work to do to complete a budget by the end of 2015, and we’ll need the support of staff to have that happen. It’s important that we get accurate information on which to make fair and equitable decisions regarding next year’s budget.”

No actions were taken by the board Thursday. As a start, commissioners asked staff to research two or three options for reducing healthcare costs to the County by \$1 million.

Other potential savings brought up during Thursday’s special meeting include contract renegotiations, capping healthcare costs for individuals retired from the County, freezing current employees’ wages by eliminating the 1.5 percent-per-year raise, selling county properties, and changing the pension structure. Commissioners will consider the healthcare savings scenarios and continue the budget process during its next special meeting.

During its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, October 28, the board will hear a final report from independent financial analyst Stephen Peacock, and set the special budget meeting schedule for the remainder of 2015.

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