



Issue 15

County Administration Newsletter

Vision & Stewardship

May 2015

Administration

Preparing and approving an annual budget is the most important task of many local governments. The budget reflects the community values at that time, establishes spending priorities, and assists in meeting department goals. In order to better prepare an annual budget, setting guidelines can be a critical step to ensure that staff is preparing a budget that reflects the spirit of the elected officials.

While the below guidelines are not inclusive of all that may be used, it is intended to provide a roadmap for the process.

The Administration Committee started discussion on the budget guidelines in May, with additional discussion anticipated at the June meeting. In addition to some of the short-term guidelines identified, the Committee will also be reviewing and providing input on mid-term guidelines, which will assist in setting the financial direction and planning for the next 2-5 years.

Short Term

- Reduce tax levy operations by 2-5% from the current budgeted amount

- Plan on no more than \$40K in increased tax levy due to current levy limits
- Provide for increase value to employees
- Adopt compensation plan and approve funding for 2016
- No new positions in 2016
- Focus on Highway/Forestry facility needs

As the guidelines are further developed and approved by the Administration Committee, they will be communicated throughout the organization.

Aging and Disability Resource Center

"One person can make a difference" -John F. Kennedy

On Wednesday, April 29, we were honored and humbled to celebrate our 2014 Volunteers at the Grantsburg Senior Center. We truly would not be able to have such a great program if it weren't for these volunteers. To put it in perspective, for our transportation program (medical runs) there were 72,056 miles driven and 3,054 hours volunteered to make sure that our elderly and disabled residents could get to their doctor

appointments. For nutrition, they logged in 79,608 miles and delivered 23,415 meals to our participants in the home delivered meal program and volunteered 3,083 hours. Our volunteers who helped at the congregate dining centers put in 1,944 hours. These volunteers help setting the table, do the dishes, and clean-up.

We are very busy with our Health Prevention & Promotion Workshops as well. Our Stepping On workshop is our most popular and the class is always

full. This teaches people how to prevent falls and remain independent in their own home without the fear of falling. We teach them balance and strength exercises that they can utilize in their home. We also bring in local experts to talk about medication management and vision which can affect the risk for falling. We also offer Living Well with Chronic Conditions and Powerful Tools for Caregivers. Please see our website at www.adrcnwwi.org for more information.

Emergency Management

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR PETS

If you are like millions of animal owners nationwide, your pet is an important member of your household. The likelihood that you or your animals will survive an emergency such as a fire or flood, tornado, or terrorist attack depends largely on emergency planning done today.

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling an animal emergency supply kit and developing a pet care buddy system, are the same for any emergency.

Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance for your pets. Keep in mind that what's best for you is typically what's best for your animals.

Prepare a portable disaster supply kit for your pet. Keep items in an accessible place and store them in sturdy containers that

can be carried easily.

- Proper identification, including current photos
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses (as modeled below by my pooch “The Worthless Furbutt”), or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can't escape
- Pet beds and toys
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions and medications, behavior problems, veterinary records and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to board your pets
- Ample supply of food and water

If you must evacuate, take your pets with you if possible.

- If you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside
- Plan in advance for shelter

alternatives that will work for both you and your pets

- Make a back-up emergency plan in case you can't care for your animals yourself
- Develop a buddy system with friends, neighbors, or relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so

BE INFORMED. MAKE A PLAN. MAKE A KIT.



Health & Human Services

The month of May has been proclaimed Foster Care Month by Governor Walker. All of our children need safe and stable homes in order to grow and become healthy productive adults. There are children and families who are living in crisis that need support and healing.

One way to help is through offering Foster Care. Children and families are diverse but there is also diversity in permanency. Permanency can be in kinship care, guardianship, and lifelong permanent connections. Successful foster parents come from a variety of backgrounds –

they are all different ages, races, income levels, and occupations. But they have two things in common: they have a desire to help children, and they have the ability to roll with the punches. Foster parents are single and married, own their own homes and rent apartments, and work

(Continued on page 3)



in and outside of their homes. Many foster families already have children, but some are caring for children for the first time. There is not a minimum income requirement for foster parents as long as they can take care of family expenses outside of the reimbursement received for fostering. Most importantly, foster families need to provide safe, stable and caring homes for children.

Burnett County is in search of more Foster Families to open their hearts and homes to children in need. Please help us spread the word. Being a foster parent is a rewarding experience that you and your foster child will remember for the rest of your lives! To learn more, contact Burnett County Health and Human Services, 715-349-7600. Other resources available to learn more about foster care are fosterparentsrock.org, wifoster-careandadoption.org, and www.dcf.wisconsin.gov.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month.

One in 5 adults experiences a mental health condition every year. One in 20 lives with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Approximately 1 in 5 youth aged 13–18 experiences a severe mental disorder in a given year. However, the struggle is not confined to solely those battling a mental illness; family, friends, and communities are affected as well.

A mental illness is a condition that impacts a person's thinking, feelings, and/or mood, and may affect and his or her ability to relate to others and function on a daily basis. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis.

At Burnett County Department of Health and Human Services (BCDHHS), the Mental Health/Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (MH/AODA) unit works hard to link those to the services that will lead to recovery. Recovery, including meaningful roles in social life, school and work, is possible, especially when each person starts treatment early and plays a strong role in the recovery process.

The MH/AODA unit works very closely with Aurora Community Counseling (ACC) to make sure everyone has access to needed services. ACC is contracted by BCDHHS to provide a 24 hour mental health crisis line. Each call receives follow up by the MH/AODA unit and many of the callers are scheduled with one of the therapists at ACC, or other area providers. Typically, MH and AODA therapy appointments are available within a week. In March, psy-

chiatrist Dr. Rugowski retired from ACC and was replaced by Tele-psychiatry services. Tele-psychiatry allows ACC to have multiple prescribers with different areas of expertise. When appropriate, the MH/AODA social workers coordinate and actively participate in clinical consultation and case staffing with the treatment team. Psychiatric appointments are available in about a month, with the option of being added to the cancellation list.

Being very aware that mental health affects daily living on all levels, the MH/AODA social worker puts much effort in the coordinating of all supports the consumer may have. This includes the client's family, other service providers, community agencies, law enforcement, other HHS units, as well as landlords, physicians, retailers, and employers. The goal is to obtain, facilitate, and coordinate the delivery of services in a timely, efficient, and cost effective manner in an effort to help maintain the client in the community.

The MH/AODA Department is very aware that mental health conditions touch a significant amount of the Burnett County population, and knowing this, it is a priority that services are available so everyone that seeks them will have linkage and services available in a timely manner.

Land and Water Conservation

Because pollinators play a critical role in our everyday lives, it's important that we work to protect their habitat. While many pollinators may seem like just annoying insects, they form the underpinning of a healthy and sustainable future for food and the environment. Some pollinators have shown disturbing signs of decline in recent years. When their numbers decrease, many plants either produce less seed or no seed at all. The bottom line is, when pollinators start disappearing, plants start disappearing.

Most plants, whether they be ornamental or food-producing, depend upon pollinators to reproduce. While animals can travel and move around to find

mates and reproduce, plants are rooted to one spot and depend on pollinators to move pollen. On planet Earth there are more than 100,000 species of insects, including bees, flies, moths, butterflies, and beetles that work hard as pollinators. There are also over 1,000 species of other animals such as birds, reptiles and mammals, including bats, that pollinate plants.

The National Association of Conservation Districts (which includes Burnett County) celebrated the 60th year of Stewardship week April 26 – May 3, 2015. The 2015 Stewardship Week was themed, "Local Heroes – Your Hardworking Polli-



nators".

The recent decline in pollinator numbers has raised serious concerns. The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service has moved several programs that promote pollinator growth to the forefront of its cost sharing opportunities.

Also, the Land & Water Conservation Department has for sale wildflower plants & seeds that attract pollinators.

If you are interested in purchasing any plants or seed, or may have a project that may be fundable through the NRCS cost sharing program, please contact the LWCD.

Maintenance and Grounds

Hydrochlorofluorocarbons, or HCFCs, are chemicals that are mainly used as refrigerants. Unfortunately, releases of HCFCs are suspected of depleting the Earth's protective ozone layer and contributing to climate change. The United States agreed to phase out these chemicals with a 1992 amendment to the 1987 Montreal Protocol, an international environmental agreement, that established requirements that began the worldwide phase out of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

R-22 is the refrigerant used in the air conditioning systems at the Government Center. As the U.S. phases out refrigerant R-22, we will need to make informed choices when servicing, repairing, or replacing an existing air-conditioning unit or when purchasing a new unit. The EPA has already banned the manufacture of new equipment that contains R-22. We need to consider and balance several key factors in our decision to purchase new units, such as energy efficiency, performance, reliability, cost, and the type of alternative refrigerant to be used.

The R-22 phase out schedule is:

- January 1, 2015 - Ban on production, importation, and use of all HCFCs, except for continuing servicing needs of refrigeration equipment. The Montreal Protocol requires the U.S. to reduce its consumption of HCFCs by 90% below the U.S. baseline.
- January 1, 2020 - Ban on remaining production and import of R-22. After 2020, the servicing of systems with R-22 will rely on recycled or stockpiled quantities. The

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Montreal Protocol requires the U.S. to reduce its consumption of HCFCs by 99.5% below the U.S. baseline.

- January 1, 2030 - Ban on remaining production and importation of all HCFCs

The phase out period allows us some time to replace our air-conditioning equipment that contains R-22. In the meantime, R-22 remains available for servicing equipment made before 2010, but the supply is limited. Our primary air conditioning units are from 1984 and are not compatible directly with the alternative ozone friendly refrigerants.

Equipment replacement may be the only future option. Planning a change or waiting for the need to replace equipment are also choices. Realizing that supplies of R-22 and parts for R-22 equipment will become more limited and be in short supply could also be factors in taking action sooner rather than later.

Register of Deeds

We are excited to announce that recordings are up in the Register of Deeds Department this year! By this time last year, we had recorded 1,185 documents. This year, so far we have recorded 1,409 documents for a total increase of 224. Transfer tax col-

lected is also up significantly from last year, which seems to indicate a more healthy housing market in the area.

Another big change for our department is on the way from the State Vital Records Department. They are switching to a comput-

erized system for registering and issuing marriage certificates, as they have already done for births and deaths. Staff training has been done and we will go live on May 18th.

Sheriff's Office

It has been a very busy year so far at the Sheriff's Office. We have been responding to a variety of calls such as burglaries that have plagued us in the lakes region. We have made several arrests in these cases and the suspects are awaiting their day in court. Our officers have recovered a substantial amount of stolen property and much of this has been returned to the rightful owners.

Our officers have been working with the FBI and the Wisconsin Department of Justice investigating a narcotics trafficking network that is very active in our county. Good job to all involved.

Over the past few years there have been a variety of scams that have hit our county. The one that many have fallen for is "the grandma scam." This is when someone calls an elderly person and tells them that one of their grandchildren is in the hospital or in jail in a foreign country and they need to send money as soon as possible. Many of our citizens has fallen victim to this scam. If the money is sent Western Union, Green Dot or Moneygram we cannot recover these funds. Another scam is the lottery scams where someone receives a check sent to them for a specific amount and an accompanying

letter with instructions. Over two million dollars a month is lost in Wisconsin alone to this scam. This money is used to fund terrorist organizations and other criminal organizations.

Free money sounds great. But if someone calls out of the blue telling you that you have been awarded thousands of dollars in a "free government grant," don't believe it - especially when the caller asks for your banking information. A grant phone scam may currently be targeting the 608 area code, and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Con-

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

sumer Protection (DATCP) is asking residents to be on the lookout for these fraudulent calls.

In the past few months we have added two people to our staff, the first is Deputy Kenneth Pardun who began his duties in early April, and the second person is Dispatcher/Jailer Tiffany Osumi who began her duties in early May. We welcome both to

our family and hope they find it challenging and rewarding here in Burnett County.

In the near future we will have our own Facebook and Twitter page. This will be used to keep the public up to date on activities and things to be aware of in our day to day life.

National Police Week is May 10 through May 16, 2015. I know that when you read this letter this week has already passed.

Please take the time to thank our officers for their commitment to this profession. In 1962 President Kennedy made May 15 the National Peace Officer Memorial Day. There will be 273 fallen heroes names added to the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington DC. Polk County Deputy Michael J Seversen is among the names added to this memorial.

Stay safe out there!
Sheriff Ron Wilhelm

Treasurer

The County Treasurer's Office is now set up to use Positive Pay, an anti-fraud option offered by Bremer. When accounts payable and payroll checks (County Board and new employees) are

printed, we will transmit a file to the bank containing check information. This file is matched up with checks as they are processed through the County's account. If a check does not match

the file, an exception is issued and we can look into the problem before that check is debited against the county's account.

University of Wisconsin-Extension and Tourism

The Burnett County UW-Extension Staff has been involved with a study of the effects of silvo-pasture for the past several years. Silvo-pasturing is the practice of grazing livestock under a thin tree canopy cover of 35 to 40%. The experiments are being conducted at Black Creek Bison farm, which is owned and operated by Dave and Veronica Fogerty. Plots are being monitored to assess the changes to grasses, trees, and shrubs after the canopy has been thinned and livestock are introduced. It is expected that grasses and forbs will evolve to more typical pasture species,

and that tree and shrub saplings will be damaged, or eliminated. Of particular interest is the tendency of the bison to browse the

new aspen sprouts, which is being assessed in several plots.

This year will be the fourth year of monitoring the grasses, and the first year of monitoring trees and shrubs. Monitoring this year will include a review of the study plan, attended by the original sponsors of the study,



and an evaluation of the data collected so far. Partners in the study include UW-Extension, Burnett County Land & Water Conservation Department, Northwest Graziers, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.