

Save-Our-Workers Rally, Ravalli County Administration Building
Tuesday, September 13th 2011

Opening: ~~XXXXXX~~ You say that, because there is a budget crisis, your only solution is to lay off more than 20 of our fellow citizens. You've been quoted in the paper as saying that the job cuts are "certain" even though the public review process has not been completed. You've been presented with many questions about the proposed budget that you have yet to answer and so we're here to ask these and many more questions and we expect answers. Questions such as: How much are we paying Geoff Maher and why? Why should our County Attorney's incompetence and your desire to cover up this incompetence mean that so many of us have to lose our livelihoods? Why are you 5 all still going to be paid \$20,000 in mileage money just to drive to and from work when others are being put out of their jobs?

We're also here because we believe that the public process has been compromised – you put out a budget document for public review that is missing 71 funds that were in last year's budget – and we are demanding that you restart the review process from the beginning, fully answer the public's questions and then clearly explain how you came to the conclusion that cutting jobs was the best or only way to reconcile the budget. The budget process has been flawed from the beginning and we are demanding that you stop this ridiculous pretense of transparency and provide a budget process that will enable the public to clearly see where, why and how our money is being spent. Then, and only then, can we, as taxpaying citizens of this county, have meaningful input on whether our money is being spent wisely and fairly or not.

Questions: (please feel free to add your own questions and/or comments)

Commissioners Budget and Commissioners Actions

- Why are the Employer Contributions (140) in the Commissioners budget projected to increase 7% when the salaries projection has dropped by 7%? And, why has the litigation/settlement line item increased from \$5600 last year to \$75,000 for FY 2012? What are the details to support this increase? What litigation are you expecting?
- Did you consider removing the \$20,000 line item for mileage reimbursements that are paid to the 5 commissioners just for driving to and from work in order to save your ¾ time assistant's (Beth Perkins) job? If you did consider it, why didn't you adopt that plan? If you didn't consider it, why not?
- Many people have heard various Commissioners say that this job is the best paid part-time job there is. Did you consider taking a cut in salary, of any amount, at any time in the budget reconciliation project? If so, what was the discussion and why wasn't it adopted? If you didn't consider it, why not?
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- Your Compensated Absence Liability Fund budget shows \$105,970 for severance pay, a 290% increase...what is this for and why the huge increase? If it's to pay RIF'd employees, was this additional cost figured into your determination that the job losses would save the County money? How did you figure that?
- Your Subdivision Mitigation budget shows that \$59,865 was spent in FY 2011 (when \$0 were budgeted and less than \$1,000 had been spent in the previous 3 years total) and you're projecting that an additional \$37,256 will be spent in FY 2012. What was this money spent on in FY 2011? Has the FY 2012 money already been spent and on what?
- In your Capital Reserve Fund budget, \$7,000 has allocated for "Remodel Costs". What is that for? What remodeling will you be doing with that money? You also have \$38,479 in "General Unprogrammed Cost" when there was no money spent in this line item in the previous four years. What was that money earmarked for?
- Also in your Capital Reserve Fund budget, \$100,615 has been earmarked for Law Enforcement software? What is that?!!! What kind of software and why is it needed at this time? You also show that \$10,000 was spent for "Culverts" in FY 2011 ...what specific project was that for? \$6,075 has been put aside for "Improvements" at the Airport in FY 2012 ...again, for what specific project?
- You have dropped the support funds for the Microloan program coming from your Economic Development Authority Fund by 79% and yet you have increased the money coming from this Fund and going to the Compensated Absence Liability Fund (which pays for severance packages) by \$60,000? How do you justify this huge cut to a successful program while moving money out of the fund to pay for something completely unrelated?

Other Budget Questions

- Why are the revenue projections that are based on Real Property Tax (311010) different percentages for different funds? For example, a majority of the funds show a small, 2-3% decrease or increase in their revenue from Real Property Tax (2050 Entitlement Levy, 2110 Road Fund, 2160 Fair Fund) but a few others show a significant decrease or increase in their revenue projection from Real Property Taxes [2130 Bridge Fund (-19%), Weed Fund (-33%), 2271 Mental Health Fund (+238%)]. Why the big differences?
- In the Road Department budget - There is \$4,000 allocated for "Consultants" and \$15,000 for "Energy Efficiency Upgrade" - what are these line items paying for and why are they needed when nothing has been spent on these items before? Also, what are the details of the Sardot (pronounced Sar-Doe)/8 Mile Creek Road litigation? Was it settled and what did the settlement require the County to do? What has the County actually agreed to do and what is the estimate for this work? Isn't \$50,000 a bit much to be paying for one stretch of road? What are your personal/financial/political relationships with Nikki Sardot?

- Also in the Road Department budget - What was the justification for increasing salaries for Admin (22% or \$36,000) and Maintenance (7% or \$54,000)? Do these increases represent new hires or salary increases? They're also being given \$15,000 to purchase software...what software and for what use?
- In the Sheriff's Budget, Why is Admin overtime projected to increase by 106% (\$8,667 to \$17,895) in FY 2012? And, \$300,000 was spent on new automobiles in FY 2011....what was the justification for spending another \$300,000 in FY 2012? How many cars does \$600,000 buy?
- Please see attached copy of the "Table of Contents" from the Ravalli County Budget for FY 2011. The highlighted lines are funds for which there is no detail in the budget for FY 2012. The total # of funds unaccounted for is 71. Was the budget reconciled without considering these funds, both revenue and expenditures? If not, why were they omitted from this year's budget? If so, where was each line item moved and why? Were these changes and the reasons for them made public? How were you expecting the public to be able to reconcile revenue and expenditures in the overall budget without this information?
- Why is the \$1,513,074 PILT amount shown on the Budgeted Transfers Worksheet for FY 2012 not showing on the Revenue Budget Report? Was this money figured into your budget calculations? If so, why isn't it showing in the budget document? If not, doesn't this completely change the outcome of your analysis and subsequent decisions?
- There is a new fund # showing up in this year's budget that was not there last year - namely Fund #4002 - Building Reserve CIP Fund. The financing source for this budget item is an operating transfer in the amount of \$129,381. The expenditures accounted for total \$35,000. What are the plans for the remaining \$94,381? What projects is the \$35,000 earmarked for (\$10,000 Admin Building, \$10,000 Courthouse, \$5,000 Crisis Stabilization Facility and \$10,000 Fairgrounds)?
- Where in the budget do your payments to the American Stewards of Liberty show up? Can we please see copies of all payments made to them and all invoices from them asking for payment?

Reduction in Force (job cuts)

- My understanding is that you did not publicly consult with any department heads prior to your decision to fire 20+ county employees. In fact, some department heads (and even some of the soon-to-be-fired employees) found out only when they walked in and saw the employee's name and their severance pay listed on the screen during the budget hearings. Please justify for the public now how you can unilaterally fire people without any input from their supervisors or without giving them the opportunity to come up with other budgeting alternatives.

- The Personnel Policies and Employee Handbook for Ravalli County has very specific rules about which employees can be laid off or have hours permanently reduced before others. Here's what it says: "The County will lay off or reduce hours for probationary employees before laying off or reducing hours for regular employees." Please explain your decision to lay off quite a number of "regular employees" while not laying off Terry Nelson, your Planning Administrator, who still has 3 months left in his probationary period. How do you plan to defend this in court if and when a lawsuit or multiple lawsuits are brought against the County for wrongful termination? In case you haven't seen the page out of the Employee Handbook, here's a copy (turn it in to Secretary).
- Please tell us exactly how many employees will be caught up in the Reduction-in-Force (RIF) process? What is the ratio of men to women? What are the salaries or hourly rate of each RIF'd employee?
- How much do you say the County will be saving when you put the RIF into effect? Can you show that to us in black and white with a complete budget with all funds showing and with all grant money that has been brought into a department for use by that department left in that department's budget and not moved somewhere else for another use?

Closing ~~(Maggie Quillen)~~

You've heard many questions here today and there are many more that are still out there waiting for answers. The public needs to know that their money is being managed wisely. However, until you have an open and transparent public process, there is no way for the public to be assured of that. You have presented the public with a budget document for their review that is missing a significant amount of information. In addition, because your official minutes, by your own design, give only the barest of details and show what decisions were reached but not the reasons for those decisions and because you decided not to utilize the already-installed video camera in your meeting room to record public meetings, you've made it impossible for anyone unable to be present at the budget hearings to get any useful information and therefore be meaningfully involved in the process.

Therefore, we come to you today to strongly suggest that you delay the final approval of the FY 2012 budget because this public process has been so seriously compromised and we feel that if you move ahead with the decisions you have made, you will cost the County's taxpayers far more than you could possibly save by making these cuts in the workforce. We also question your assertions that the job cuts are the only way to balance the budget and we call on you to revisit that decision as well by finally holding public meetings with each department head so that the public can see whether or not the loss of so many jobs is the only way to balance our budget. In light of the County's quarter of a million dollar settlement with Geoff Mahar and other questionable uses of County funds

that have been highlighted here today, it is extremely important that you Commissioners make a special effort to see that this budget process is totally transparent and accessible to all of the citizens that you are supposed to represent. To do any less would be a *dereliction of duty* on all your parts.

All of us here today look forward to your corrective action and to more discussion about the questions we have raised here and about solutions other than job cuts for any budget challenges the County may face.

Thank you.

Submitted 9/13/11 by Maggie Wright (BWP)

RAVALLI COUNTY BUDGET
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2011
 Table of Contents

Fund #	Fund Name	Page #
	Tax Levy Requirement Schedule	1
1000	General	4
10	Commissioners	8
20	Justice Court #1	11
25	Justice Court #2	12
27	Jury/Witness Costs	13
30	Treasurer	15
40	Clerk and Recorder	17
50	Finance	19
60	County Attorney	21
65	Special Investigator	23
60	County Superintendent of Schools	25
110	Office of Emergency Management	27
120	Public Health Nurse	29
130	Health Officer	31
160	Environmental Health	33
170	Veterans' Burial Services	35
210	Information Technology	37
230	Human Resources	39
450	Central Supply	41
570	Contribution to Communities	43
580	Operating Transfers	45
2015	Facilities	47
2050	Entertainment Levy	51
2075	Compensated Absence Liability Fund	54
2110	Road	57
2115	Road Improvement Fund (SRS)	62
2130	Bridge	65
2140	Weed	68
2141	Forest Service Invasive Weed Control	71
2150	Predatory Animal Control	74
2160	Fair	77
2170	Airport	82
2172	USFS Air Operations Building	85
2175	FAA Airport Grant	88
2180	District Court	91
27	Jury/Witness Costs	93
100	Juvenile Detention	95
250	Clerk of District Court	97
260	Indigent Cost	99
2185	Juvenile Detention	100
2190	Comprehensive Insurance	103
2210	Parks	106
2211	Highway 93 Bike Path - Parks	109
2220	Library	112

Fund #	Fund Name	Page #
2220	Library	112
2240	Cemetery	115
2250	Planning	118
2251	Comprehensive Planning Enhancement Project	122
2252	GIS	124
2254	LIDAR Mapping Grant	127
2260	Emergency Disaster	130
2271	Mental Health	134
2280	Senior Citizens	137
2282	Valley Veterans	140
2285	Economic Development	143
2288	Radon	146
2290	Extension	149
2300	Public Safety	152
2302	Detention Facilities Transport Van	157
2335	Animal Protection & Control	159
2360	Museum	162
2370	Employer Contributions - Fringe Benefits	165
2375	Employer Health Contributions	168
2382	Search & Rescue	171
2390	Drug Forfeitures	174
2393	Records Preservation	177
2397	Addressing	180
2401	Corvallis Lighting	183
2402	Westview Lighting	186
2403	Victor Lighting	189
2450	Subdivision Mitigation	192
2800	Alcohol Rehabilitation	195
2810	WIC Program	198
2811	WIC Special Projects	201
2825	Source Water Protection Grant	203
2830	Junk Vehicle	206
2835	DNRC Grant (Septic Systems Impact Evaluation)	209
2840	Weed Grant	212
2841	Metcalf Cooperative Agreement	215
2842	Bio-Control Donations	218
2843	National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Grant	221
2850	911 Basic/Enhanced Fund	224
2851	911 County Fund	227
2859	Drug Free Communities Grant	230
2871	Homeland Security Grant	233
2875	Bio-Terrorism Grant	236
2876	Vaccination Fund	239
2878	Child Advocate Center - unrestricted	241
2879	MTUPP Grant	244

Fund #	Fund Name	Page #
2900	PILT	247
2905	JAG Equipment Grant	250
2909	Recovery Act Assistance to Rural Law Enforcement	253
2910	RASS/Cops in Shops Grant	256
2920	Victim Witness Contributions/Surcharge	259
2928	Victim Witness Grant	262
2937	Justice Assistance Grant - FY 2007	265
2939	Justice Assistance Grant - FY 2009	268
2940	Community Development Block Grant	271
2946	CDBG Planning Grant	274
2947	Justice Assistance Taser Grant	277
2950	DUI Task Force	280
2958	SAFE Rural Domestic Violence Grant	283
2960	Local Option Tax 1/2%	285
2963	CTEP - Florence School Sidewalks	289
2964	CTEP - Eastside Path - Corvallis	292
2966	CTEP - Stevi Streetscape	295
2969	Unrestricted - Safe Kids/Safe Communities	298
2972	Family Planning	300
2973	MCH	303
2976	Immunization Grant	306
2990	DOE Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant	309
2991	HB 645 Grant for Museum	312
3001	Justice Center Bonds (1993) Debt Service	315
3003	Open Lands Bond #1: Debt Service	318
4000	Capital Reserve	321
4001	Info Tech Capital Reserve	324
4005	Road Capital Reserve	327
4006	Prorata Road - Florence/Stevi Capital Reserve	330
4007	Prorata Road - Victor Capital Reserve	333
4008	Prorata Road - Corvallis Capital Reserve	336
4009	Prorata Road - Hamilton/Pinesdale Capital Reserve	339
4010	Prorata Road - Darby/Sula Capital Reserve	342
4200	Open Lands Capital Projects	345
4300	MDOT Road/Bridge Capital Projects	348
4301	TSEP Road/Bridge Capital Projects	351
4303	West Fork Bitterroot Rd Preservation Project	354
4304	MDOT Westside Road Capital Project	357
4400	Crisis Stabilization Facility Capital Project	360
5720	Jail Commissary	363
5790	Employees' Counsel	366
6025	Fleet Management	369
	Budget Resolution	372
	Other District Levies & Assessments	374

Subject: Employee Separation

Number: 5.13

Effective Date: August 1, 2005

Reference:

Last Revised: July 18, 2005

Approval: July 18, 2005

STATEMENT OF POLICY:

Employee separation means the removal of an employee from County service for either voluntary or involuntary reasons.

Resignation

An employee may resign in good standing by submitting a written resignation to his/her Elected Official/Department Head stating the effective date of resignation at least two weeks prior to the effective date, unless extenuating circumstances require a shorter period. Failure to comply with this requirement may be cause for denying future re-employment with the County.

Layoff or Permanent Reduction in Hours

A layoff is the involuntary termination of an employee due to lack of work, lack of funds, elimination of a position, or any other situation where continuing to fund a position would be inefficient or non-productive for budgetary reasons. A permanent reduction in hours occurs when funding for a position is permanently reduced, but the position is not eliminated from the budget. When a layoff or permanent reduction of hours is necessary, the following will apply:

- The County will layoff or reduce hours for temporary employees and short-term workers before laying off or reducing hours for probationary or regular employees.
- The County will layoff or reduce hours for probationary employees before laying off or reducing hours for regular employees.
- If two or more regular (non-probationary) employees occupy the same position that is to be reduced or eliminated as part of a budget reduction within a County department, the County will retain the employees who, at the County's discretion, are most qualified and capable of performing the assigned work.
- If employee's qualifications and capabilities are substantially equal, the County will retain employees based on their length of continuous service with Ravalli County in that position.

Recall

In the event that the position from which an employee was laid off is reinstated, the County will mail a recall notice to the employee at the employee's last known mailing address. The employee will have five (5) working days to accept