

COMMISSIONER'S PROCEEDINGS
AUGUST 23, 2021 – BUDGET HEARING

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in special session for the 2022 Budget Hearing with Pat Hall and Joe D. Thompson present. Paul Kitzke, County Attorney and Amy Rich, Deputy County Clerk were also present. Tron Stegman was absent. Pat called the meeting to order.

Jeff Cox was in attendance with public comment. The commissioners explained the reasons for property tax increases.

Stevens County Treasurer, Jayme Rich attended to ask the commissioners for an increase in her budget for employees. She currently has two full-time employees and one part-time employee. She asked for her budget to accommodate transitioning the part-time position to full-time. Pat said she could possibly hire an additional part-time employee to work through the busy times, but a full-time employee is a large cost, and the commissioners are trying to stick to the budget cuts. Joe reminded that other departments have made cuts to their staff as well and have had to make it work. She relayed to the commissioners she had obtained 123 signatures on a petition from the public who support the transition. She said her concern is being able to keep a part-time employee without the incentive of benefits, as a part time employee is still required to go through all the same training as a full-time employee. Joe stated he has not been contacted by anyone with issues regarding the treasurer's office. Pat said the only feedback he has received is why a poll was put on Facebook and why no one comes out from the back office to assist up front when it's busy. Jayme said since there was only 13 days until the Budget Hearing, she put the petition on Facebook (as well as paper copies in the office), to reach more of the taxpayers. It wasn't possible for all the taxpayers to trickle through the treasurer's office in time to see the petition before the hearing. She felt it would also give the commissioners a visual of the public's input. She stated when she is in the middle of certain tasks at her desk in the back office, in which she cannot be interrupted, she is not able to come out and assist. She said she does try to bring a customer back to help them when she can.

Pat said he is not in support of three full time employees. Joe said as long as Jayme can submit and process things to the state in a timely manner where there are no issues or penalties, etc., he does not feel at this time, there is a big enough issue to change his mind. He added that he is not opposed to revisiting the subject in the future if circumstances are different. He said he always welcomes a phone call or communication from the public with concerns. He told Jayme to feel free to post his cell phone number in the treasurer's office.

Pat moved to approve the 2022 budgets. Joe seconded. Motion carried.

By motion, the Board adjourned.

Attest: Amy Rich, Deputy County Clerk

Joe D. Thompson