



2

Today's Agenda

Role of County Board and Officials
Role of County Board and Other Subdivisions
Role of State Auditor
Budget Formula
Cash Reserves
Taxing Authority
Levy Limit
Lid Limit
Budget Amendments

Role of County Board and Officials

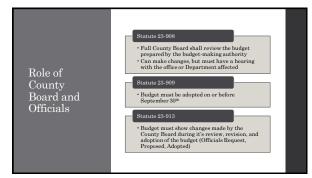
- * Counties are subject to \underline{both} the Nebraska Budget Act (Chapter 13, Article 5) \underline{AND} the County Budget Act of 1937 (Chapter 23, Article 9)
- Statute 23-906
- Statute 20-390

 Finance Committee is considered the budget-making authority, unless the Board appoints someone else

 On or before August 1st budget-making authority shall prepare the county budget and provide to County Board

 Summary of proposed budget must be published four days prior to budget hearing (can include day of publication, but not day of hearing)

4



5

Role of County Board and Officials

- Each Official and Department Head needs to be thinking about what their budget needs are for the upcoming year
 Do you need new computers? Other new equipment?
- · Legislative changes that are going to result in additional costs? Or additional revenue?
- Example: LB 644 additional costs for postcards, publication of joint hearing etc. Also additional revenue received because cost of postcards can be billed back to participating subdivisions
- · Other changes that need to be accounted for in the budget?
- Typically start thinking about filling out Official's budget requests in May
 June timeframe, but should be always kept in the back of your head.

Role of County Board and Officials

Statute 23-916

 ${}^{\bullet}$ No officer, department, or other expending agency can exceed adopted budget

Statute 23-919

• Guilty of Class IV misdemeanor and <u>subject</u> to removal from office if budget is exceeded

7



8

Budget Hearing Reminders

Statute 13-506 primary statute addressing budget hearing requirements

Must be held separately from any regularly scheduled hearing and cannot be limited by time

Purpose of hearing is to get input from the taxpayers – and then go back and finalize budget after considering their input

Intent of the statute is <u>not</u> to have hearing and adopt the budget on the same day

Schedule budget hearing as early as possible

Role of County Board and Other Governments

- * County has total \$0.50 of levy authority
 * Set by NE Constitution require vote of the people to change
 * Can allocate up to \$0.15 of this authority to other smaller governments in the County.
- Smaller governments in the County must obtain authority to tax from County Board
 Ag Society, Fire District, Townships, Cemetery Districts, Hospital Districts, etc.
- $^{\circ}$ Must provide resolution requesting levy authority to County by August $1^{\rm st}$

10

Role of County Board and Other Governments

- $^{\circ}$ Authority allocated to other districts counts against County's \$0.50 of authority.
 - Example: \$0.10 to Townships, \$0.01 to Ag Society, and \$0.04 to Fire Districts only \$0.35 left for County budget
- * Must respond to request by September $1^{\rm st}$ Approve as requested, deny completely, or approve different amount
- Must go to vote if they do not like authority given to them
- by County $^{\circ}$ If authority obtained through a vote, does not count against County's \$0.50

11



Fire Districts

- Fire Districts may have 10.5 cent levy without vote if:

 County levy is over 40 cents in previous year, or

 - County Board denied the District levy authority in any of the 3 previous years
- If Fire District obtains levy authority through 10.5 cent provision – <u>does not</u> count against County's \$0.50 levy limit

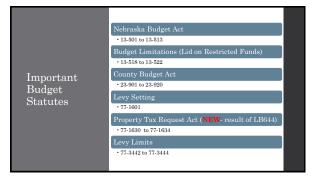
Levy Setting Reminders Can only set levy for political subdivisions that have filed their budget with the County \cdot If no budget received, no authority to set a levy for that entity \cdot No longer authority to set levy at prior year amount Implement good review procedures to ensure County is calculating levies correctly Every year, APA hears from multiple Counties that realized they set a levy wrong Send levies to all subdivisions in your County for them to review Consider requiring them to respond stating they agree with the levy that was set for their entity November 5^{th} – last day to correct a clerical error that resulted in the calculation f an incorrect levy

13

State Auditor's Role in Budget Process

- Why am I talking to you today? - § 23-905 outlines that forms shall be prescribed by State Auditor
- * \S 13-506 outlines that State Auditor may review budgets for errors, and noncompliance w/ Budget Act
- $^{\circ}$ § 13-504 requires material errors in the budget that are detected by State Auditor to be corrected
- A total of 2,431 budgets/budget waivers for 2021-2022 budgets were received and reviewed

14



Budget Formula

- Budget Formula:
 Necessary Cash Reserve + Budgeted Disbursements = Total Requirements
 Begining Fund Balance + Budgeted Receipts other than Property Taxes + Property Taxes = Total Resources Available
 Total Requirements MUST equal Total Resources Available
 In other words, the amount of money you need, must equal the amount of money you have available, in order to present a balanced budget
- · Property Tax Request becomes a plug number in order to balance the budget

16

Budget Formula

 Example: General Fund
 Fund Balance at 6/30/21
 Budgeted Revenue other than Property Tax
 Total Resources Available Before Property
 Tax 1,000,000 6,000,000 Budgeted Disbursements Necessary Cash Reserve Total Requirements 8,000,000 2,000,000 **10,000,000**

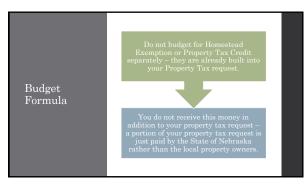
4,000,000

Tax Request required to balance budget

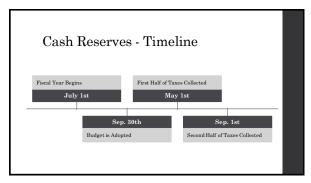
17

Budget Formula

- \cdot Focus of budget discussion is commonly on disbursements, but budgeting revenue is also a very important component of the budget process
- ${}^{\textstyle \star}$ If budgeted receipts are too high, or too low Property Tax request could be too high or too low
- · Example:
- Budgeted receipts other than property taxes of \$2,000,000, and a cash reserve of \$1,000,000
 If actual receipts other than property taxes come in at \$1,500,000 cash reserve goes down to only \$500,000
- · If actual receipts other than property taxes come in at \$2,500,000 Property tax request could have been lowed by \$500,000 and still maintained the same cash reserve



Cash Reserves Budget ≠ Money in the Bank - Just because you have budget authority does not mean you have money in the bank to pay the bills. - Budget may say you can buy a new motor grader, but if the Road Pund does not have actual money, you cannot pay for t. - May need to pay for it out of a fund that does have money, or transfer money from another fund. - Treasurer has the Fund Balances, need to make sure how much money is in the Funds (Bank) prior to approving claims



Cash Reserves -Timeline

Property Taxes to fund the budget do not start coming in until fiscal year is almost over

22

Cash Reserves

- Indicator your cash reserves are not sufficient:
 Consistently running low on money in a particular fund, and having to transfer money from another fund (that was not a part of the original budget)
- Need to get more money coming into the fund or reduce money going out of the fund
 Increase property tax request?
 Increase fees charged, if possible?
 Cut budgets?

23

Cash Reserves

- \cdot Be very careful if your County is consistently relying on the Inheritance Fund to address cash reserve issues. Estimated 15% reduction due to LB 310.
- · No guarantee Inheritance Taxes will be around forever. How would your County respond to the elimination of Inheritance Taxes?
- \cdot Some financial advisors recommend a minimum <u>25%</u> cash reserve In other words, you should have enough money to pay at least three months worth of expenses

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Taxing	Auth	oritv

- County is a creature of statute and only has the authority specifically granted by the Statutes.

According to the Nebraska Supreme Court:

A county in this state is a creature of statute and has no inherent authority. It has only such according to the state is a creature of statute and has no inherent authority. It has only such as the ineidentally indispensable to carry into effect those expressly granted it. A grant of power to a county is strictly construct, and any pix and reasonable doubt of the existence of the power is resolved against the county. State ex rel. Johnson v. Gage County, 154 Neb. 822, 826, 49 N.W.2d 672, 675 (1951).

- That means: If you are levying a tax in a specific fund you must be able to point to a specific statute providing authority for a tax request in that Fund.
- APA's County Accounting Manual has statutory citations for any funds created by statute.
 This is a starting point to review if the authorizing statute provides for a tax levy.

25

Taxing Authority

 ${}^{\circ}$ Example: Neb. Rev. Stat. \S 2-229 provides for a tax levy

The county board may, subject to section <u>77-3442</u> levy such amount of taxes as may be necessary but not to exceed the amount actually required for county fair purposes, including capital construction on and renovation, repair, improvement, and maintenance of county fairgrounds. Such tax shall be levied and collected in like manner as general taxes for the county.

Statute must specifically discuss levying of a tax

26

Taxing Authority - Road Fund

· Neb. Rev. Stat. § 39-1904

The county board may levy the same rate of county road tax upon the property within cities and villages as is levied upon the property in the county not within cities and villages. One-hold of such tax collected within cities or villages, when collected, shall be paid to the cities or villages within the county where levied to be used for the construction, improvement, or maintenance of municipal streets and alleys; and the remaining portion of such tax, when collected, shall be placed in the county road fund to be expended by the county board for construction, improvement, or maintenance of the roads and bridges in the county.

If you do not want to share taxes with the cities and villages, taxes should be levied in the General Fund and transferred to the Road Fund (instead of levying in the Road Fund directly)

County Funds

Recommend periodically reviewing the Funds your County is using $-\underline{\mathbf{Do}}$ you still need all of them?

Frequently see Counties that have several funds with little to no activity during audits

Formal Board action is required to close a Fund and direct the Treasurer regarding what to do with any remaining balance.

Board approval is also required to create a <u>new County Fund</u>
Resolution from the County Board should identify the following:
Name of the new fund
What money should go into the new fund
What the money in that fund can be used for

 $\underline{Remember}-Neb.\ Rev.\ Stat.\ \S\ 23-106\ assigns\ responsibility\ for\ managing\ the\ County's\ Funds\ to\ the\ County\ Board$

28

Accounting Code Manual

- Make sure the Fund, expenditure and revenue code numbers you are using match the State Auditor's Accounting Code Manual.
- Neb. Rev. Stat. § 23-1611 requires counties with population less than 100k to use State Auditor's codes.

 No authority to be using codes that are not in the manual

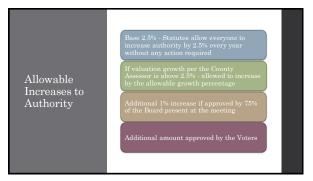
 No authority to be using codes for a different purpose than identified in the manual
- If you think you need a new code that is not in the Manual, need to contact State Auditor's office.
 Current plan is for <u>Rachel</u> to handle the Accounting Code Manual
- Current Accounting Code manual on State Auditor's website (<u>Local Government > County Information > County Manual</u>)

29

Levy Limit

- ${}^{\centerdot}$ County has overall levy limit of 50 cent (Constitution)
- · Included in the 50 cents:
- County Budget
 Fire Districts (unless quality for 10.5 cent provision)
- · Townships
- Ag Society
 Historical Society
- Any other small subdivision that does not have a levy limit in Statute 77-3442
- · Determination is based on each tax district
- No property owner should be paying more than \$0.50 when levies of all these entities are added together, unless additional authority obtained through Vote or Townhall meeting.

			0	DUNTY LEVY	LIMITE	ORM
	Name	Property Taxes Other Than Bonds	Bond Property Taxes	Valuation	General Tax Levy	Bond Tax Levy
	(Ostoro A)	(Drivers)	(Column d	(Celumn Ol	(Column El	(Orlamn F)
	Countywide Entities					
	County				0.000000	0.000000
Levy Limit	Ag. Society				0.000000	0.000000
LCvy Lilliu	Historical Society				0.0000000	0.000000
					0.0000000	0.000000
					0.000000	0.000000
					0.0000000	0.000000
	Total Countywide Entitle	5			0.0000000	
	Levy Authority - County levy	Emit is 45 cents plus 5 cer	vts for interlocal agr	rements. (77-3442)		
	County levy limit	County levy limit				
		County property taxes designated for interlocal agreements -			0.0000000	
	Other entities property t	axes designated for interlo	cologreements	24	0.000000	
	Total County Levy Autho	rity (Cannot exceed 50 cen	ts)		0.450000	(1)
	Levy Limit Analysis					
	Countywide General Lev	y (Line 13)			0.000000	
		Fire District - Largest General Levy Authority granted by County Board				
		ral Levy Authority granted			0.0000000	
		est General Levy Authority			0.000000	
		est General Levy Authority g			0.0000000	
		st General Levy Authority a			0.0000000	
		rgest General Levy Authorit			0.000000	
		General Levy Authority gra	inted by County Boa	d	0.0000000	
	Largest possible district	levy			0.0000000	(2)
		the resolution sent to the I	Nation well-back	or much law author	ity the	



	Beginnin	g Authority	1,000,000	
Allowable Increases to		2.5% Increase	3.5% Increase	Difference
Authority $-$ Example	1999	1,025,000	1,035,000	10,000
Authority – <u>Example</u>	2000	1,050,625	1,071,225	20,600
	2001	1,076,891	1,108,718	31,827
	2002	1,103,813	1,147,523	43,710
 Decisions made to today regarding approval of 	2003	1,131,408	1,187,686	56,278
additional 1% increase will impact the County in the	2004	1,159,693	1,229,255	69,562
future	2005	1,188,686	1,272,279	83,594
	2006	1,218,403	1,316,809	98,406
 Example County that approved the additional 1% 	2007	1,248,863	1,362,897	114,034
increase every year would have additional \$474.603	2008	1,280,085	1,410,599	130,514
of authority over a County that never approved it	2009	1,312,087	1,459,970	147,883
or authority over a county that hever approved it	2010	1,344,889	1,511,069	166,180
· Does not mean you are increasing taxes - only	2011	1,378,511	1,563,956	185,445
giving yourself the authority to do so if necessary	2012	1,412,974	1,618,695	205,721
giving yourself the authority to do so if necessary	2013	1,448,298	1,675,349	227,051
	2014	1,484,506	1,733,986	249,480
	2015	1,521,618	1,794,676	273,057
	2016	1,559,659	1,857,489	297,830
	2017	1,598,650	1,922,501	323,851
	2018	1,638,616	1,989,789	351,172
	2019	1,679,582	2,059,431	379,850
	2020	1,721,571	2,131,512	409,940
	2021	1,764,611	2,206,114	441,504
	2022	1,808,726	2,283,328	474,603



35

What are "Restricted Funds"

- Legislature has grouped various types of receipts together and labeled them "Restricted Funds"
 Property Taxes
 Motor Vehicle Pro-Rate
- Motor Vehicle Pro-Rate
 In-Lieu of Tax Payments (Public Power Districts)
 Prior Year Capital Improvements excluded, but not spent
 Motor Vehicle Tax
 Local Option Sales Tax
 Transfers of Surplus Fees
 Insurance Premium Tax
 Namealets Capacits Tax
 Namealets Capacits Tax

- Nameplate Capacity Tax
 Motor Vehicle Tax
 License or Occupation Tax

Calculation of Restricted	Funds			
Total Personal and Real Property Tax Requirements			(1)	\$
Motor Vehicle Pro-Rate			(2)	\$
In-Lieu of Tax Payments			(3)	\$
Prior Year Budgeted Capital Improvements that were excluded from Restricte	d Funds.			
Prior Year Capital Improvements Excluded from Restricted Funds (From Prior Year Lid Support, Line (18))	\$		(4)	
LESS: Amount Spent During 2020-2021	3		(5)	
LESS: Amount Expected to be Spent in Future Budget Years	\$	_	(6)	
Amount to be included as Restricted Funds (Cannot Be A Negative Number)			(7)	\$ _
Motor Vehicle Tax			(8)	\$ _
Local Option Sales Tax			(9)	\$
Transfers of Surplus Fees			(10)	-
Excess Tax Collections Returned to County (Statute 77-1776)			(11)	
Insurance Premium Tax			(12)	
Nameplate Capacity Tax			(13)	
Motor Vehicle Fee			(14)	-
Reimbursement of Indigent Defense Services			(15)	-
License or Occupation Tax (Statute 77-27,223)			(16)	\$ -

	Question: The County has no control over how much is received for several of the types of "Restricted Funds". Why are they included in the definition of restricted funds?
Restricted Funds	Answer: To force political subdivisions to reduce their property tax request if they are receiving other types of money.
	• Example: County is receiving Insurance Premium Taxes from the State of \$75,000. In order to stay within Restricted Funds authority, Property Tax Request must be decreased by \$75,000.

38

Exceptions to the Lid

- If Restricted Funds will be used for certain types of expenditures, those taxes can be "excluded" from the Lid
 in other words, restricted funds generated for these purposes are not subject to the limit.
- Common Exceptions to the Lid:
 Capital Improvements
 Purchase of Land
 Improvements to Land
 Improvements to Land
 Dees NOTI include sequipment
 Interlocal Agreements
 Exemption is only for the County portion
 Bonded Indebtedness

Must be using restricted funds to pay for the exceptions

Lid Exceptions				
Capital Improvements (Real Property and Improvements on Real Property)	\$	- (1	8)	
LESS: Amount of prior year capital improvements that were excluded from previous lid calculations but were not spent and now budgeted this fiscal year (cannot exclude same capital improvements from more than one lid calculation).				
Agrees to Line (6).	\$	(1	9)	
Allowable Capital Improvements		(2	(0)	\$
Bonded Indebtedness		(2	1)	
Public Facilities Construction Projects (Statutes 72-2301 to 72-2308)		(2	(2)	
Interlocal Agreements/Joint Public Agency Agreements		(2	(3)	
Public Safety Communication Project (Statute 86-416)		(2	4)	
Judgments			(5)	
Refund of Property Taxes to Taxpavers			6)	
Repairs to Infrastructure Damaged by a Natural Disaster			7)	
			8)	
TOTAL LID EXCEPTIONS (B)		15	(9)	•

Unused Restricted Funds Authority

- $\boldsymbol{\cdot}$ Must be a positive number to be in compliance with the Lid
- Represents the amount of restricted funds that $\underline{\text{could}}$ have been included in the County's budget, but weren't
- No benefit to taking exceptions you don't need to stay within your authority (as laws are currently written)
 Unused authority of \$1.000,000 is not any "better" than unused authority of \$0. Both are in compliance with the Lid.
- Unused Authority is not a good indicator of Financial Health - Be careful comparing to other County's may not have taken all exceptions available

41

Capital Improvements Exception

- Capital Improvement exceptions taken, but not spent, must be included as a Restricted Fund the following year.
- Example:
 County takes a \$1,000,000 Capital Improvement Exception on 2020-2021 budget.
 County only actually spends \$250,000 during the 2003-2021 fiscal year.
 \$750,000 to spent is added in as a restricted fund for the 2021-2022 budget
 Does the County have authority for this extra \$750,000?
 If not, may fore reduction in Property Tax Regular Capital

Strongly recommend against taking Capital Improvement Exceptions you do not need

Capital Improvements Exception

- Example:
 County budget is completed and Lid Computation Form shows Unused Authority of \$1,000,000 (Line 12)
- \$750,000 Capital Improvement Exception was taken on Lid Supporting Schedule (Line 18)
- \$750,000 Capital Improvement Exception was not necessary.
 Unused Authority would still be \$250,000 without Capital Improvement Exception
- $Remember-No\ benefit\ to\ taking\ Unused\ Authority\ larger\ than\ necessary-only\ needs\ to\ be\ positive\ number\ to\ be\ in\ compliance\ with\ the\ Lid$
- Not necessarily "wrong" to be taking Capital Improvement Exceptions that are not needed—But the County is unnecessarily obligating themselves to spend the money on Capital Improvements

43

What Qualifies for Capital Improvement Exception?

- · Purchase of land or improvements to land
- · Must be paid for with Restricted Funds

- Examples of allowable exceptions:
 Purchase of land for new jail paid for with property taxes
 Courthouse window replacement paid for with property taxes
 Construction of new road paid for with property taxes
- Examples of NOT allowable exceptions:

 Purchase of land for new jail paid for with Blond Proceeds
 Construction for new road paid for with Highway Allocation money
 Purchase of new vehicle
 Purchase of new office equipment
 Purchase of Notor Grader
 Purchase of New computers

44

Budget Amendments

Can reallocate budget authority within General Fund by resolution of the County Board

Does not require publication, hearing, etc. as long as total General Fund budget does not increase

If total budget of any County fund will not be sufficient – must follow amendment procedures of §13-511 $\,$ Publish Notice, Hold Hearing, Board adopts amended budget

Amendment must be approved PRIOR to the end of the fiscal year

Amended budget must be filed w/ State Auditor's Office
- Pages of the budget that changed
- Proof of Publication for Budget Amendment Notice
- Board minutes approving the amended budget



APA Website

- All budgets are uploaded to APA website for anyone
- o review.

 Local Government > Search Budgets
- Additional budget instructions and other guidance materials available $FAQs,\ Instruction\ Manual,\ Significant\ State\ Statutes,\ Budget\ Timeline,\ Sample\ Forms,\ etc.$
- Please let me know if you have ideas of anything that would help everyone through the budget
- process

 No guarantee it will be possible but open to input
- Updated Forms and other guidance materials should be available in June

46

Budget Submission to State Auditor

- Two options for submitting budget to State Auditor's Office:
- Hardcopy through the mail
- ${}^{\cdot}$ Electronic PDF copy submitted through APA's website
- · Submissions through website receive a confirmation of
- We do not provide confirmation receipts for budgets received in the mail $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) =\left(1\right)$
- No news is good news we do not contact you notifying you that the budget has been reviewed with no issues noted
 - Only contact you if corrections are needed, or if there are other items we need to bring to your attention.



47

2022 Legislative Changes

- LB SU/

 * Makes clear Non-Profit Historical Societies have two options to receive tax funding:

 * 1) Receive allocation of levy authority from County Board: Historical Society must complete separate budget and file w/ County Clerk and State Auditor (same as Ag. Society or other smaller governments in County)

 * 2) Receive a "funding request" from the County

 No separate levy will be set for Historical Society --instead will just be paid from General Punds of the International County of the Internation

 - County

 Requires Historical Society to make report to County Board within one year after receiving funding, and
 prior to payment of any future funding requests, regarding how funding request was used

2022 Legislative Changes

- Removes language regarding including Historical Society Budget and Audit
 with County Budget and Audit
 Not practical to include two separate entities in one audit and budget
- * Historical Societies already included in list of entities that are required to file audit report with APA annually (per $\S84-304$)

49

2022 Legislative Changes

LB 1165
 Clarifies that taxes can be levied for bonds that have been issued or authorized to be issued by the governing body or the legal voters of the political subdivision

- $^{\circ}$ Introduced as clean-up bill for LB 644
- $^{\circ}$ Originally introduced as LB 1250, then amended onto LB 927
- · More information in afternoon presentation

50



Questions?

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