

March 5, 1979  
7:30 to 9:30 a.m.

INFORMATIONAL MEETING WITH  
DEPARTMENT HEADS AND THE  
BUDGET COMMITTEE

Cafeteria  
Conf. Rm.

The Board of Lane County Commissioners met with the Department Head Group and the Budget Committee at a morning informational meeting on the above date. All Commissioners were present; Vance Freeman, Gerald H. Best, Jr., Harold Rutherford, Otto t'Hoof and Archie Weinstein. Others in attendance included Peter Bartel, David Buchart, Bud Reiner, Jerry Durbin, Gerry Mackie, George Kramer, Charles Snell, Fred Koch, Larry Lutz, Chuck Moore, Sam Miles, Stewart Burke, Pat Horton, Janet Chappell, Dick Briggs, Ed Driver, Dick Gentry, Jim Schneider, Bill Seis, Mike Terry, Barb West, Wanda Hanson, Jim Shirley, Margie Hendriksen, Paul Lenarduzzi, Dick Hayes and Peggy Peterson. Lois Gault and Janet Walsh served as recording secretaries.

The Department Heads had asked for clarification on five questions. These five questions were as follows:

1. What has the Board of County Commissioners recognized as mandated services and what has the Board set as an acceptable level for those services, i.e. what services are necessary and what services are added?
2. What will be the Budget Committee's role in deciding budget cuts? There is a concern that the budget staff will be making program priority decisions rather than the Board or the Budget Committee.
3. What is the policy of the Budget Committee on budget cuts concerning short-term vs. long term-savings?
4. In considering cuts for the budget, will the Committee recognize the necessary balance between direct services and support services? For example, the level of funding for data processing necessarily impacts the delivery of mandated services.
5. If the present expenditures policy of the Budget Committee is found to be unworkable, is the Committee willing to reconsider revenue levels?

There was a discussion on each with Best, Rutherford and Wanda Hanson emphasizing the need for Department Heads to make recommendations to the Budget Committee on areas where reduction could be made. Best referred to a consistent approach being needed to these questions and asked for a "road map" on priorities, Rutherford adding the importance of short-term vs. long term savings. Miles next discussed the concern over definition of mandated services. What the Board considered a mandate might be different than the state or federal mandates; the Board should give some definition of the mandate per se. Best indicated the Board was interested in making revenue charging fees that would eventually be 100 percent for support services. Rutherford expressed the need to keep all charges to other agencies at present level, not getting anywhere from 75 to 95 percent from those other agencies. Best talked about the experimental program in water pollution control that was not mandated but was a responsible service to Lane County. He found the success of this program. Freeman said he was in favor of supporting existing programs and new programs would have to be strong to be cost justified. Hanson was

asked how many new departments had been created in the last four years; the answer was nine. Horton asked that the Board examine whether these new departments should be kept, abolished or cut back and justifications made for them. Freeman indicated the new General Administrative Officer would probably look at restructuring departments. Rust talked about the increase and expansion of County services and the need to go to the public to plead for increases. He stated that the projected impact of a short haul seems to be around \$5,000,000. Bain emphasized the need for a team approach in solving the problem; Freeman felt that Department Heads were already running a "tight ship." Rust mentioned the possibility of increasing the tax base but Weinstein said they should forget about asking voters for a higher tax base. Instead they should ask why they were \$5,000,000 short; he stated he could talk at length about the waste of the previous Board. It is time to run the County on a business basis, he said. Henson said she was seeking positive steps and Terry suggested it was difficult to make any cuts in isolation, rather they should examine the ripple effect of one department's cuts in another department. Further discussion followed on possibility of asking the voters to decide on services. Henson suggested that some Department Heads were concerned about possible manipulation of budgets and cuts by other Department Heads. Again Bain emphasized the need for a team approach saying he was not there to see A&T survive but to see the County survive. They should not be placed in an adversary position here. t'Hooft next mentioned the zero base budget workshop in Nevada and on the County's lack of a system to get at the concern. "Threshold level" was the minimum level at which a department could operate, he said, and added he did not feel an approach to the voters would be successful.

Bain remarked that the County would have to consider a range of services and a range of revenues to meet those services. He also talked about the possible need of going to the voters. Lenarduzzi spoke on the unfortunate impact, the "psychology of cutting" on such factors as morale, productivity, turnover, etc. He asked if there was not a way to try to get an indicator on expected revenues at a more helpful time. t'Hooft mentioned the selective hiring freeze recently discussed and also discussed the need for "preventive medicine." He felt the Department Heads could not throw the whole thing into the laps of the Board for decision, their expertise was needed to make decisions.

Biles then made remarks, citing the necessity for his department cutting 15 positions out of personnel and budget. He felt there was a need for program priorities from above. He also discussed ways to more accurately predict County revenue, the need for early knowledge of the O&C monies, the necessity for coinciding the County budget with that of the Federal government.

Terry talked about justifying jobs, saying there was no God given right of employees to maintain these government jobs unless they meet current needs. Pat Horton asked if they could please discuss the Budget Committee's role in deciding cuts; he expressed his concerns and his strong opposition to the process they were entering for technicians were being forced into the role of decision makers superceding that of Department Heads. Henson discussed Horton's past role in budget deliberations and some problems they had had. Dick Hayes also made comments on the team approach and Shell confirmed that cuts made in one area often deeply affect another area. Burks also commented on the need for long-range planning, saying they went through the same process yearly and each year it got a little worse. There was a need to decide on

what is mandated and what was not. Bain closed the meeting by using an analogy of the County in its present efforts to solve this problem with a basketball team in the dressing room. What was needed was action leading to a victory. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Lois Jones  
Recording Secretary

Janet White  
Recording Secretary