

Budget reductions by the departments... what does it all mean exactly?

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

The following departments were either partially, or fully, funded out of the Carroll County general fund and lost funding in the recent budget reduction measure. It was necessary to reduce appropriations to more fully align with expected income and the expectations of the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance, the state agency which approves each county's budget annually.

Although DLGF will hold hearings May 8 at 9 a.m. in the commissioners' meeting room on the second floor of the courthouse, the smoke has almost cleared and the reductions have mostly ended for the 2008 budget, however there could be additional adjustments.

Some numbers on the chart accompanying this story are self explanatory and some beg for an explanation.

This article is an attempt to help readers understand where the county was in the summer of 2007, when some departments made reductions voluntarily, and what the county financial picture looks like today. Not everything each department lost is listed - only the highlights are noted.

*The chart can be found on the Comet Web site at www.carroll-county.comet.com under the "Government Meetings and Agendas" link. Scroll down to "County Council" to view.

Clerk: Total budget reduction - \$30,268.51, 25.4%.

"This means I have no part-time person," clerk Laura Sterrett said. "When my full-time person left, I chose to fill that position with part-time to save the county money. Now, the part-time position is gone."

Sterrett will also use the clerk's perpetuation fund, a funding mechanism from court costs, for expenses not covered by the budget.

Also, \$4,825.50 was eliminated from the second deputy salary. However the income was replaced with money from the IV-D Child Support budget.

Election Board: Total increase - \$37,800. Sterrett explained more funding was requested and appropriated due to the fall general election. However, funding for poll worker training was eliminated for 2008.

4-H Building: Total reduction - \$2,000, 9.0%.

Ambulance/EMS: Total reduction - \$321,909.10, 25.85%. Administrative assistant and three paramedics positions eliminated, director's salary reduced by \$14,088, \$9,000 reduction in pay for a medical director, ambulance equipment and AED responder equipment budget eliminated.

Animal Control: Total reduction - \$60,698, 100%.

Assessor: Total reduction - \$113,642, 95.8%. Salaries were shifted from the general fund to the reassessment account, which has a separate tax rate. This is a temporary solution. The tax rate was

shifted to the general fund and the money currently being utilized was not otherwise dedicated. Something closer to the 2007 appropriation will have to be taken from the general fund in 2009.

Auditor: Total reduction - \$11,592, 7.9%. One part-time position eliminated.

Carroll Manor: Total reduction - \$190,358, 42.11%. No direction was given for the reduction. However two full-time cook positions became part time and the line items for vehicle fuel, furniture/fixtures and vehicle maintenance were zeroed out.

Circuit Court: Total reduction - \$27,550, 30.2%. Lost emergency part-time, per diem court reporter, per diem bailiff, equipment repairs and continuing education funding. An additional \$20,000 was deducted from the budget and left to the judge to adjust line items.

Commissioners: Total reduction - \$438,973.92, 20.5%. Group insurance, the cost of keeping juveniles, building liability insurance, examination of records and burial of solders funding were decreased significantly. No funding was reserved for drug testing or fire/life support equipment.

Coroner: Total reduction - \$2,684, 11.34%. No funding for morgue maintenance. Funding for transportation and annual meeting were significantly decreased.

Courthouse: Total reduction - \$45,665.84, 25.1%.

One full-time custodian was reduced to part-time, building repairs and funding for utilities were significantly decreased.

Drainage Board: No actual reduction- error correction. Total - \$55, .62%.

Emergency Management Agency: Total reduction - \$7,447.52, 13.6%. Deputy director position de-funded. Mileage, radio electronic repair and emergency equipment were decreased significantly. Computer line item was zeroed.

Extension Office: Total reduction - \$29,211.70, 19.43%. Loss of program assistant position and full-time first clerk position was made part-time.

IV-D/Child Support: Total reduction - \$5,619, 10.55%. Clerical position eliminated. Books and journal line item eliminated. Office supplies significantly reduced.

Jail: Total reduction - \$69,524.79, 11.34%. One dispatcher and two jailer positions eliminated. Utilities, and meals for prisoners significantly reduced. \$6,000 equipment repair to be paid out misdemeanor fund.

Joint Courts: Total reduction - \$121,742, 43.87%. Cost of chief probation officer and secretary's salaries shifted from general fund to the probation fund (funded with user fees). Funding for petit jurors and grand jurors per day plus juror postage shifted to jury fund. An additional \$50,000 was eliminated from the budget. Reductions in line items left to judges' discretion.

Museum: Total reduction - \$54,074, 100%.

Park Board: Total reduction - \$11,957, 67.66%. Most funding allowed for Deer Creek Park eliminated.

Prosecutor: Total reduction - \$17,243.50, 30.66%. Part-time clerical funding was reduced. Mileage and service contracts were eliminated. Telephone/cell phones/blackberries funding was reduced by two-thirds.

Recorder: Total reduction - \$6,068.64, 9.63%. Office supplies, mileage/meetings and printing were eliminated. [The part-time worker in the recorder's office is paid out of the office's perpetuation fund under the sole discretion of the recorder and not under the control of the council per state law.]

Sheriff: Total reduction - \$153,643.05, 17.68%. Three deputy positions eliminated. Sheriff reserves, emergency deputy, grounds maintenance, guns and flares/ammunition funding to be taken from other accounts.

Soil and Water: Total reduction - \$9,298.10, 23.86%. A part-time technical position and printing costs eliminated.

Superior Court: Total reduction - \$28,925, 27.67%. A part-time secretary position and compensation time eliminated. An additional \$20,000 was deducted from the total budget. Line item adjustments to be made by the judge.

Surveyor: Total reduction - \$27,876, 33.54%. Full-time

second deputy position made part-time. Postage and blue line copier supply costs eliminated. Surveyor-specific costs shifted to surveyor's perpetuation fund [not under council control per state law.]

Trash Transfer Station: Total reduction - \$18,595, 12.85%.

Treasurer: Total reduction - \$7,914, 10.04%. Clerical

part-time funding decreased 50 percent.

Veterans Office: Total reduction - \$9,096, 26.64%. Full-time position reduced to part-time. Clerical position and service officer school de-funded. Mileage and office supplies significantly reduced.

Carroll County General Fund Departments	2007 Adjusted Final Appropriations	2008 Commissioner Approved Dept. Requests	2008 Appropriations Submitted last September	Proposed Revised 2008 Appropriations as of 4/3/08
4-H Building	\$20,200	\$21,150	\$18,950	\$18,200
Ambulance-EMS	\$1,245,093	\$1,439,291	\$1,099,872	\$923,183.99
Animal Control	\$60,698	\$76,448	\$13,000	\$0
Assessor	\$118,642	\$129,832	\$9,000	\$5,000*
Auditor	\$147,306	\$151,305	\$140,944	\$135,714
Carroll Manor	\$452,058	\$461,884	\$408,538	\$261,700
Circuit Court	\$91,281	\$100,431	\$87,161	\$63,731
Clerk	\$119,322	\$112,628	\$102,431	\$89,053.49
Commissioners	\$2,143,177.93	\$2,244,695	\$2,124,323	\$1,704,204.01
Coroner	\$23,670	\$27,791	\$24,411	\$20,986
Courthouse	\$182,117	\$194,794	\$163,162	\$136,451.16
Drainage Board	\$8,952	\$9,087	\$8,937	\$8,897
Election Board	\$23,565	\$73,310	\$66,615	\$61,365
EMA	\$54,755	\$61,884	\$53,539	\$47,307.48
Extension Office	\$150,333.56	\$160,647	\$146,872	\$121,121.86
IV-D (child support)	\$53,238	\$58,795	\$53,736	\$47,619
Jail	\$613,008.83	\$704,288	\$628,889	\$543,484.04
Joint Courts	\$277,519	\$318,645	\$274,198	\$155,777*
Museum	\$54,074	\$63,672	\$0	\$0
Park Board	\$17,672	\$15,397	\$5,715	\$5,715
Prosecutor	\$56,233	\$67,830	\$52,881	\$38,989.50
Recorder	\$62,986	\$70,260	\$59,589	\$56,917.36
Sheriff	\$868,943.55	\$979,827	\$822,262	\$715,300.50
Soil and Water	\$38,969	\$46,766	\$38,137	\$29,670.91
Superior Court	\$104,540	\$117,598	\$100,337	\$75,615
Surveyor	\$83,115	\$75,837	\$63,348	\$55,239
Transfer Station	\$144,669	\$144,556	\$136,844	\$126,074
Treasurer	\$78,805	\$80,014	\$75,640	\$70,891
Veterans Office	\$34,141	\$33,836	\$32,886	\$25,045

Figures provided by Carroll County Auditor's Office *some or all salaries taken from other funds for some reduction

Total budget reductions as of this report: \$1,268,544.24. Total proposed amended budget: \$5,543,382.30.

Commissioners will be asked to defer \$350,000 of the \$675,000 inter-fund loan from cumulative bridge account for six years, no interest, and first payment to be made in June 2009. If they grant the request, the proposed budget will be \$5,193,382.30.

Commissioners will be asked to repay \$150,000 to the general fund from a 2003 highway department expenditure for salaries out of that fund. If they grant the request, the proposed budget will be \$5,043,382.30.

Failure of the commissioners to grant one or both requests could result in added department appropriation decreases. There could be additional personnel loss and service reduction for the county.

Although the numbers, services and personnel could change, this is an attempt to respond to readers' requests for up-to-date information concerning county finances. The Comet cautions readers that this information is subject to change.

Carroll County Commissioners will meet Monday, April 7 at 9 a.m.

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Dear Dr. Wise: I know when spring time rolls around my cat will again battle the fleas. What can I do?

Answer: Anyone who has suffered through an infestation of fleas knows these parasites are programmed for survival. In ideal conditions, fleas can complete their life cycle in just 12 days, adding thousands of offspring. Understanding how to control this life cycle and killing adult fleas helps your pet - and your home - remain flea-free!

Flea Myth #1: Fleas go away during winter months. Although a good part of the country sees a decrease in flea cases during colder months, fleas can survive by taking advantage of our human comforts. Fleas thrive at temperatures above 65 degrees, making our homes a perfect winter refuge. The cocoon stage can actually survive up to five months in cooler temperatures - allowing the next generation of fleas to hatch and attack our pets in the spring!

Flea Myth #2: Natural remedies like brewer's yeast and garlic are safe and effective flea control methods. For many pet owners, avoiding man-made chemicals and "going green" is important. Garlic, for example, is purported to kill fleas, but the only study conducted showed no effect. Organic and natural remedy products are not only often ineffective at controlling fleas, but sometimes even cause illness in pets.

Flea Myth #3: Chemical pesticides are harmful to pets and to the environment. Historically, this is true! The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) banned organophosphates like Diazinon due to cancer risks and environmental impact. Advances in pest control provide us with environmentally safe products that can be used on pets. Your veterinarian has both oral and topical products providing effective and immediate flea kill. Additionally, these products are harmless to both pets and children. Flea Myth #4: Fleas are resistant to these new chemicals - even their products my veterinarian carries. Flea Myth #5: There is no difference between flea products purchased from grocery stores and your veterinarian. Unfortunately, this myth is the cause of many emergency room visits -and pet deaths. Grocery store products may contain older insecticides and chemicals like permethrin. This could mean that they are simply less effective, but in some cases, these products have actually killed pets - especially cats. In an attempt to save money, well-meaning owners have used dog products on their cats, causing the cat to potentially fatal emergency.

Your veterinarian can recommend what's best for your dog or cat.

If you have a question, write Dr. Wise, Indiana Veterinary Medical Association, 201 S. Capitol Avenue, Suite 405, Indianapolis, IN, 46225, or www.invma.org.

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