

Bradford County Commissioners' Office



Chairman's Report to the Taxpayers on the State of Bradford County

By: Mark W. Smith
Chairman
Bradford County Commissioners
November 29, 2010

Bradford County Commissioners
301 Main St. Towanda, Pa 18848
Office Phone: 570-265-1727
Fax: 570-265-1729
www.bradfordcountypa.org

Introduction

Three years have passed since being elected as County Commissioner. As I have done in previous years I am taking this opportunity, upon the release of the proposed 2011 budget, to share with the citizens the progress by your county government over the course of the past year and discuss some of the issues that your county government will be facing and dealing with over the course of the next year.

Proposed 2011 Budget Summary

The 2011 Bradford County budget is built on previous year's budgetary decisions. As with budgets of the past few years this represents positive decisions to move the county forward on numerous fronts. This proposed budget includes the proposals to improve county infrastructure, modifications of staffing and salaries to keep the county budget sustainable over the long term, and provide the necessary services to the residents of the county.

As with any local government budget there are financial challenges to be addressed year after year. The cost of health insurance continues to have a significant impact on the budget in 2011. Impacts of state budget cuts, mandated services, increasing health insurance costs, correctional facility expenses, and necessary improvements to county infrastructure are the largest cost drivers in the 2011 budget.

As a major part of the 2011 budget there are two county bridges under construction. The guaranteed energy savings project will be completed and improvements in use of technology will progress in 2011.

Throughout the coming year the county will address many new and outstanding issues that are affecting our county government and continue to strive to make improvements. It is my hope that this explains in some detail the challenges we faced and the investments made within the 2011 Budget.

The Bradford County budget for the fiscal year of 2011 is **\$58,724,348**. There is no tax increased proposed in this budget.

The complete county budget can be viewed in its entirety on the county website at www.bradfordcountypa.org

Budget Summary

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| \$26,442,625.00 | GENERAL FUND |
| \$12,619,484 | MANOR |
| \$3,989,773 | LIQUID FUELS |
| \$8,442,145 | HUMAN SERVICES |
| \$894,830 | DOMESTIC RELATIONS |
| \$1,892,350 | CAPITAL PROJECTS |
| \$747,323 | FUNDED DEBT |
| \$2,155,000 | RETIREMENT |
| \$633,425 | LIBRARY |
| \$907,393 | AIRPORT |
| \$58,724,348 | Total |

The 2011 Agenda

County Infrastructure

Projects that were undertaken in 2010 included renovating a building for county offices at 200 Main St. in Towanda and a roof replacement and bathroom renovations at the Bradford County Library. The 2011 budget provides for several infrastructure projects, they are as follows;

Guaranteed Energy Savings- Throughout 2011 we will be working through the implementation phase of the Bradford County Guaranteed Energy Savings Project. This has been a lengthy process and took the whole year of 2010 to review contractors, define the exact scope of the project, acquire financing and move forward with the final project implementation. The complete total financed project was \$3,060,000. This project includes the replacement of a heating system in part of the courthouse, new windows in the courthouse and a partnership with Northern Tier Solid Waste Authority to utilize energy generated at the landfill for use at the Bradford County Manor and the Bradford County Correctional Facility. A new chilling unit has already been installed at the Bradford County Manor as a part of this project.

We have recognized that with rising energy costs and aging county infrastructure that we need to ensure we are both responsible for the cost to the taxpayers and be environmentally responsible as well.

To learn more about Bradford County's Guaranteed Energy Savings project and how it works please visit: <http://www.bradfordcountypa.org/Images/PDFs/Open-Meeting-IGA-Presentation.pdf>

Courthouse Roof Repair- In 2011 another portion of the courthouse roof needs to be replaced. This copper replacement is estimated to cost the county \$130,000. This is a necessary project to keep the courthouse a viable building for county use.

Courthouse Chiller Unit Roof Repair- The chilling unit located on the Bradford County Courthouse is also in need of a roof repair. The cost of this repair is estimated at \$10,000.

Courthouse Chandelier Repair and Retrofit- The Bradford County courthouse chandelier is in need of a new mechanical system to replace the wooden hand-crank system. This system supports raises and lowers the chandelier for cleaning, bulb replacement and general maintenance. The cost of the engineering and repair of this is expected to cost \$30,000. The current system is a danger.

Bradford County Parks

The Bradford County Parks Committee has met consistently over the past year to further the planning and development of the county parks. The parks' master planning process is completed. The plan was developed by YSM Inc. and was led by the Bradford County Parks Advisory Committee. The plan includes not only new layouts and options for use of each park, but also addresses on-going maintenance and costs associated with improving the county parks.

The Parks Committee has selected several projects that are a priority. The largest of which includes the development of a water system, signage, and other improvements on Mt. Pisgah County Park that will begin in 2011.

The county will utilize the previous appropriation from the money received for the county gas line right-of-way as part of the funding for this year's projects. The county has also allocated 50% of the shared revenues from the Northern Tier Solid Waste Authority which has provided it from the profit they are making taking in material from the gas drilling industry. This yearly allocation is expected to reach an estimated \$50,000 for improvements in the county parks system.

Human Services

In comparison to previous years, Human Services funding has held steady. However, as the new governor and the new legislature take office in January the county does anticipate funding and administrative changes throughout many of the state funded and state mandated programs. The county's Human Services Development Fund allocation from the state has been decreased by another \$12,664.

Health Insurance

The county joined a health insurance cooperative to stave off the immense increases in premiums, however; the county is still faced with another increase in rates in 2011. At an 7.5% increase it equates to a \$207,000 negative impact on the budget. This cost remains a significant burden to both the county as the employer, taxpayer, and the employee. Health insurance costs increased from an estimated \$3,600,000 to \$3,807,000.

Information Technology

In 2010 Bradford County hired a consultant to evaluate the county's computer network and systems. Recommendations garnered through this process were implemented over the course of the past year.

Over the last three years the county has been engaged in converting to new computer software in various departments. Software conversions that are completed or near completion include accounting, treasurer, sheriff and assessment. However, the Prothonary's Office has yet to select

a new software package and the county will once again budget \$150,000 to cover the cost of an impending decision to move forward from the Prothonotary's Office.

In 2011 the county will be restructuring the county employee email service. The county will be contracting all email services and retention of emails. This will provide consistent email services for all county employees and allow off site access to work related email and information. This will also provide all emails to be retained efficiently and accurately in accordance with an electronic retention policy.

Assessment

New computer software was purchased for the Assessment Office and work to convert to the computer system has been underway throughout the year. Once the system is in place the information from the Assessment Office will be open to the public and be available through internet access. This information is expected to be available by the spring of 2011.

Bradford County Correctional Facility

The 2011 agenda for the correctional facility will include needed security upgrades, building improvements, and staffing changes. The video security system will be upgraded to include more cameras throughout the facility as well as provide for an offsite back-up system.

The correctional facility implemented the Community Workforce Inmate Program to enhance communities across Bradford County and put inmate time to good use. Inmates have performed over 2,000 hours of community service as a result of the program. Local governments have utilized inmate labor in all corners of the county to accomplish projects such as installing new road signs for 911 readdressing, painting buildings, and community and park clean up. This program will continue in 2011.

With a changing community the correctional facility is experiencing different challenges in incarceration. However management and staff have responded by working hard and cooperating with courts and law enforcement to keep the population at a yearly average of 150.

Bradford County Manor

Building upon the success of last year, 2010 has proven to be a positive year at Bradford County Manor. Quality of care for our residents continues to be the focal point of all that is done. The attention to quality care has produced an increase in the number of residents that are served. The Manor is now recognized as the leading rehabilitation facility in the area with a significant increase of rehabilitative patients during 2010. Overall occupancy for 2010 has also seen a significant increase over the corresponding period for 2009.

Through an improving financial position and a grant from CCAP (County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania) we have enhanced the facility by adding Electronic Medication Administration and oversight. A Wander Guard system that allows residents to move about the facility without restraints and a wireless Nursing Call System for residents on 1 East have been added. Laptop computers and wireless internet access for residents and their families was a much needed improvement. Renovation of the bathing facilities on 2-East and 3-East, as well as room renovations on 2-East and wall mounted Flat Panel TV's for each of the lounges have brought convenience and comfort to residents.

Planned improvements for 2011 include a new Medical Health Record system that will provide electronic documentation for all residents and give the resident's doctor secured access to his/her medical record 24 hours per day from any location.

We expect 2011 to continue the trends of the past few years.

Emergency Management/Response

The Bradford County Emergency Management Agency will have a busy year in 2011 with call volumes anticipated to increase by over 30%, and the demands on the 911 center and the needs of local emergency responders also expected to rise. The county will be moving ahead with three very important communication infrastructure additions.

The first item will be to update the fire dispatch simulcast system. This will include the replacement and upgrade of the control boards and radios. The upgrade will improve our current system by reducing interference and standardizing all of our equipment. The second item would be an upgrade to our current Microwave system located on the Round Top tower. The current system is obsolete. The third item is an upgrade to the phone system and hardware and software, which are used for emergency dispatch. The proposed upgrade will enable new web interface and statistical reporting software.

The department will continue to enhance training and public awareness in regards to the developing natural gas industry throughout the county.

911 Readdressing

The last three regions of the county to receive addresses will be receiving them before the end of 2010. However the project is likely to carry over into 2011 to ensure each resident has the proper addresses and any issues residents may have are satisfied. To keep up to date with progress on the 911 readdressing project visit the county's website at:

<http://www.bradfordcountypa.org/911-readdressing/>

NTSWA Grant Program Implementation

The Northern Tier Solid Waste Authority has provided a revenue share from the profit they are making taking in material from the Marcellus Shale activity. In part, these revenues have been allocated to two different grant programs set up by the Bradford County Commissioners. In 2011 these programs will be implemented and money will be awarded as follows:

The Bradford County Conservation District will administer a program for educational and outreach efforts in relation to the environment and Marcellus Shale.

The Bradford County Emergency Management Agency will administer a grant program to provide funding to local emergency volunteer responders for the purpose of aiding in equipment and training purposes.

Grant Applications will be available for these programs in January.

Bradford County Staffing Changes

A few of the major staffing changes proposed in this budget include; The Bradford County Register and Recorders Office will be reorganizing positions to better accommodate the needs of that office. An added position is proposed for the Accounting Office to keep up with demand. A position is also being proposed for the Bradford County Planning and Grants office to keep pace with the demands on that office. The Planning and Grants office has had two positions eliminated over the last few years because of funding issues.

Bradford County Bridge Replacements

In 2011 Bradford County will be working to complete three county bridge projects. All three projects total an estimated cost of \$3,730,000. These three projects, located in Leroy Township and Wells Township, include two bridge replacements and one demolition. The replacement in Wells Township is 80% funded by PennDOT. The other two projects are funded 95% by PennDOT.

Conclusion

It is my intention that you use this document to get an understanding of the 2011 budget and how it relates to the progress that we intend to make in this coming year. As last year, we have met the challenge of the state budget cuts to the best of our ability. The agenda for 2011 is again an aggressive one that requires much hard work from employees and elected officials alike. I submit this report and agenda to you, the taxpayers, for your review and understanding.

Respectfully,

Mark W. Smith
Chairman, Bradford County Commissioners
301 Main St. Towanda, Pa 18848
Office Phone: 570-265-1727
Fax: 570-265-1729