The Standing Committee on Public Services met to review the FY 2016 proposed budgets of the Registry of Deeds, Facilities, and the Dredge on March 11, 2015, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Chairman Marcia King, James Killion, Edward Lewis, Brian O’Malley, and Linda Zuern.

1:00 PM: Registry of Deeds

Register of Deeds Jack Meade and Dave Murphy met with the committee to discuss and review the department’s proposed FY 2016 expense and revenue budget.

The overall budget request is slightly less than FY15 and there are no significant changes to the FY16 proposed budget. Salaries and wages decreased due to staff retirements and a decrease in workload due to improvements in technology. E-filing began and has been in place for about a year and is working well. The Group Insurance line account stayed level even though costs are projected to increase County-wide by 10%. This could be due to changes in staff and staff selections. In 2003 there were 44 staff positions versus 29 in 2015.

The last time the Registry raised fees was in 2003 and it was substantial. The County does not receive all of the revenue generated by these increases.

Overall projected revenues for FY16 as compared to FY15 have decreased. However the projected Excise Tax revenue portion for FY15 will meet projections. The revenue figure projected for FY16 is realistic and attainable in the opinion of Jack Meade. This number is more reliable than previous years and will probably remain level for the next several years.

Edward Lewis motioned, and it was seconded, to recommend the Registry of Deeds budget as proposed for FY16 to the Standing Committee on Finance. Motion carried. 5-0-0.

1:30 PM: Facilities

Facilities Director Steve Tebo and Donald Reynolds met with the committee to discuss the proposed FY 2016 department budget. The first year, of a five year capital plan, is included in the budget. The remaining years will be part of the County’s five year plan once a determination has been made regarding the status of County buildings on the complex. A Building Space Needs Committee has been appointed to assist with this process and information will be submitted to the Commissioners within a few months.

Salaries have increased by steps and COLA. A new custodial position is proposed for the FY16 budget but is reimbursed by the State under their lease agreement. This new position is needed to meet the building maintenance needs of the new spaces that were added to the County over the past several years (lab, old jail, and Open Cape). It is based on a square foot calculation from the State for maintenance purposes. A request for an additional custodian has been made for the past several years but not granted.

On average, electric and heating costs are increasing due to higher use.

A clerical error found in FY15 was corrected which resulted in an increase of a line item from $300 to $3,000.

A $72,500 building addition is planned for Children’s Cove. Other than the foundation, the Facilities Department will do the construction and this will result in a significant savings to the County. Capital improvements listed for FY16, with the exception of a few adjustments that are coming forward,
can all be completed during FY16 if funded by the County. Capital projects that involve State leased buildings receive a reimbursement that goes back to the County’s general fund.

Edward Lewis motioned, and it was seconded, to recommend the Facilities budget as proposed for FY16 to the Standing Committee on Finance. Motion carried. 5-0-0.

2:15 PM: Dredge
Dredge Superintendent Wayne Jaedtke met with the committee to discuss the proposed FY 2016 dredge budget.

A second dredge will be purchased but will not be a smaller dredge as was originally planned. The Dredge Advisory Committee did not see a demand for a smaller dredge.

The Resource Development Office is investigating grants for the dredge purchase and this purchase will probably require bonding. The estimated cost will be approximately $1,300,000. Important to note is the fact that the Dredge is an Enterprise Fund.

Work requests have increased and there is sufficient work to keep two dredges busy. A new dredge will have more capabilities. The current dredge will be refurbished and used until such time as it is no longer needed or cost effective to repair.

Dredge fees have increased from a range of $7 to $11 per cubic yard to $9 to $13 per cubic yard. The dredge schedules work from September until June and repairs are done during the summer months.

A budget request for two new employees is included in the proposed budget for FY16 to handle the increased work load and staffing of the second dredge.

Edward Lewis motioned, and it was seconded, to recommend the Dredge budget as proposed for FY16 to the Standing Committee on Finance. Motion carried. 5-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Submitted by:
Janice O’Connell, Clerk
Assembly of Delegates