

State of the County
Rick House, County Administrator

On Tuesday evening December 6, the Wayne County Board of Supervisors met for two public hearings regarding the 2023 Final County Budget and the creation of a local law for the establishment of salaries for certain public and elected officials. Business also included the approval of resolutions involving the salaries for Board of Supervisors members; Memorandum of Understanding with the CSEA union for double-time holiday pay for Nursing Home and 911; levying taxes and assessments; adopting special district tax rates and allocation of County sales tax revenues to town and villages.

After public comment the Board unanimously approved the local law authorizing the salaries and adopting the 2023 Final Budget.

The salaries adopted were for the 11 public (appointed) and 4 elected officials of the County, which includes the County Clerk; County Treasurer; Sheriff; District Attorney; Public Defender; County Administrator; Director of Real Property Tax; Human Resource Director; County Attorney; 2 Election Commissioners; Commissioner of Social Services; Superintendent of Public Works; County Auditor and County Fire Coordinator. All the 35 hour per week appointed officials under the Board adopted Managerial/Confidential Pay Plan will now be required to work 37.5 hours per week and will receive an increase in salaries corresponding to the additional 130 hours that they will be required to work. The percent increase is the same as provided to all union 35 hour a week employees who in 2023 will also be required to work 37.5 hours per week. The increased hours and corresponding pay affects a total of 416 County employees. The additional salary costs will be offset in 2023 by a reduction in New York State Retirement payments, due to reduced rates. The move to additional hours was done by the Board in July business in an effort help recruitment and retention efforts and bring more parity between County departments. The Board resolution adopting the move is posted on the County website: web.co.wayne.ny.us.

Regarding the County Budget, total appropriations in all funds decreased by \$7.2 million from the 2022 budget. The tax levy stayed flat and the Board of Supervisors dropped the tax rate by 67 cents per thousand (\$6.50), which is a 9.4 percent decrease. The tax rate has now dropped by 21 percent over the last 5 years and 2023 is the first time in the last five years that the County did not increase the tax levy. The Final Budget is the culmination of a Team effort involving the Finance Committee, full Board of Supervisors, County Administration and the County treasurer.

Questions and Answers

Q. I'm seeing on Facebook that management, including the County Administrator got large raises but the deputies cannot get a contract, is that true?

A. 416 Union and management employees as stated above, received 7.14% pay increases plus their normal annual increases (approximately 2.5%). The 7.14% increase is due to the additional 130 hours annually that employees will be required to work starting in 2023. Over 90% of the 416 affected employees were in favor of the increased hours. The additional mandated hours will allow for increased efficiencies in the departments. Those employees already working 37.5 hour weeks (Nursing Home) and 40 hour employees (Sheriff's Office, Highway Department and Emergency Medical Services) are not affected.

The deputies stopped negotiations with the County in September and declared impasse. The County negotiation team continues to work on potential proposals. I must note that the County has been working with all the unions on various labor matters, including staffing shortages and scheduling issues. Numerous memorandums of agreement have been successfully put into place this last month with the unions to address the issues.

Q. Why did the County declare impasse with the deputies during contract negotiations?

A. Again, the County did NOT declare impasse at sheriff's negotiations. On August 24, 2022, after 9 negotiation sessions, the Teamsters union filed a declaration of impasse with the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) (**the impasse documents are posted on the County website: www.web.co.wayne.ny.us under press releases**). Once impasse was declared by the Teamsters, the matter was put in the hands of PERB and PERB assigned a mediator. A mediation session with the Teamsters union is scheduled to commence on January 12, 2023.

Q. Who is on the County negotiation team?

A. The Sheriff's negotiating team consists of 4 non-voting members: Sheriff Milby, Undersheriff Ryndock, HR Director Kalinski and myself along with 3 voting members of the Board of Supervisors. A labor specialist is also part of the team. Sheriff Milby and Undersheriff Ryndock are present as the "co-employer" and act as advisors to the group.

Q. Is the County negotiating with any other unions?

A. Yes, the County recently ratified a contract with the Teamsters Corrections Unit and will shortly be entering into negotiations with the Sheriff's Court Security Officers union. The County also initiated Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) with all the collective bargaining units to help with employee retention and other staffing related issues. In advance of upcoming negotiations in January, the County has also been working with CSEA labor relations specialist Paul Markwitz, focusing on pay, recruitment/retention and other issues.

Q. Why is the County not spending money on Public Safety?

A. The County is spending a large amount of tax payer money on public safety. In 2023, Wayne County has budgeted \$33,746,412 for Public Safety, which is the second largest County budgeted area at over 17% of the entire budget. This amount has grown by nearly 12% over the last 5 years and there will be a significant increase again next year with the start-up of the County-Wide Ambulance program (critically needed), which is estimated to cost up to \$10 million. The following are the Public Safety Departments and their 2023 budgets:

Sheriff's Office	\$20,792,198
E911	\$4,033,920
Emergency Mgmt	\$1,908,282
ALS	\$1,827,948
Probation	\$3,152,742
Other	\$2,031,322
TOTAL	\$33,746,412

A full listing of this month's Board resolutions can be found on the County website,
<https://waynecountyny.gov/>

A listing of all public employee salaries, including Wayne County employees, can be located at
seethroughny.net/ (wages shown are for the state fiscal year, which is April to March.)

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate contacting me at my office;
rhouse@co.wayne.ny.us or 315-946-5480.

Have a safe and Happy Holiday season!