

## Countywide budget advances to board

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JEFFERSON — The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors Finance Committee concluded its week of budget hearings on Friday by approving the final proposed 2017 property tax levy.

The Finance Committee will be recommending a countywide tax levy of \$27,068,827, of which \$1,134,343 is debt, to the full Jefferson County Board of Supervisors next month. The proposed levy represents a 1.2-percent increase over this year's \$26,743,522.

Not included in the tax levy are funds of \$838,207 for the Jefferson County Health Department and \$1,070,311 for the county library system.

Including the noncountywide funds, the total tax levy is \$28,977,345.

The total tax levy is calculated by adding together estimated expenditures of \$72,138,040 and subtracting estimated revenues of \$38,867,672 and other finance sources of \$4,293,023.

If adopted, it would result in a countywide property tax rate of \$4.2969 per \$1,000 equalized valuation, translating into roughly a 3-cent-per-\$1,000 decrease from last year.

"I think it's a very responsible budget," Finance Committee Chair Richard Jones said. "We went down 3 cents. That's not a big number, I understand, but we covered fixed costs and still supplied the services that our citizens need and ... our future looks sound."

Also approved on Friday were general revenue and expenditures, the 2017 fee schedule, the county debt service, capital projects and the capital budget.

Looking at general revenue and expenditures, the county is expecting total revenues of \$8,025,659 for 2017 and \$928,682 in expenditures, which will provide a \$7,409,580 in tax levy reduction.

A tax levy reduction reduces the overall tax levy by offsetting property taxes as a whole.

"The property tax is basically a tax levy reduction of \$7,409,480," finance director Brian Lamers said, adding that it might be adjusted.

The general revenues is where the county accounts for things like sales tax and shared revenue. Sales tax revenue increased by \$100,000.

Contingency funds are at \$251,482, which does not include a contingency line-item of \$28,000 pulled directly from the expected reduction in the contract with the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Jefferson County Administrator Ben Wehmeier explained to the committee.

The expected reduction is based on the 133 contract between the county and the UW System for paying for the UW faculty.

Approximately \$20,000 of that is recommended to be used as seed money for the 2019 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days investment. Jefferson County will be hosting the statewide event in 2019.

No capital projects were budgeted for 2017.