

BUDGET COMMISSION

The Geauga County Budget Commission met in special session on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 10:03 a.m. in the Auditor's office at 215 Main Street, Chardon, Ohio. Present: Geauga County Prosecutor James R. Flaiz, and via WebEx: Geauga County Auditor Charles E. Walder, Geauga County Chief Deputy Treasurer, Caroline Mansfield representing Geauga County Treasurer C. P. Hitchcock, Chief Deputy Auditor Ron Leyde, and Chief Compliance Officer and Administrator, Kate Jacob McClain
Also Present: Deputy Auditors, Tammy Most and Kristen Sinatra

Meeting was advertised: Discuss Undivided Local Government
Regular Business

Public Library and Undivided Local Government Fund distribution**Public Library**

Burton and Geauga Public Libraries have modified their Public Library Fund allocation agreements in 3-year increments, with the most recent modification in 2019. The agreements indicate that parks' distribution of these funds:

“...will be equally divided amongst the eligible park districts that the Geauga County Budget Commission has determined have demonstrated sufficient need as demonstrated by their annual budget submission.”

Undivided Local Government

The Local Government Fund, however, may be allocated either by a statutory R.C. 5747.51 method or an alternate R.C. 5747.53 method. Geauga County has elected the alternate method since 1981. After much digging and laborious research, the allocation criteria it was located in the Budget Commission minutes dated July 24, 1981. Subsequently, it was discovered that this allocation method must have been changed at some point more recently than 1981 as this method did not match our current calculations. Therefore, more time was devoted to reviewing past minutes, which uncovered that the allocation method was again revised on August 7, 1989. This is the method which is still utilized today.

Mr. Flaiz recommended that the Commission take a 2nd look at the allocation method. Mr. Walder agreed, given the fact that the method has not been revised in over 30 years. The formula needs to be modernized. The question was raised as to whether Parks should be included in the distribution. Perhaps it would be better if the subdivisions made the decision as to how they would like to allocate the distribution to the parks located within their borders. If the revenue is generated by the Townships shouldn't the discretion of allocation to park districts within their townships be up to them? Additionally, if a subdivision is not wholly located in Geauga County and does not submit an annual budget, such as Hunting Valley, perhaps they should receive a more proportionate allocation.

It was mentioned that any alternative method of apportionment adopted or approved under this division may be revised, amended, or repealed in the manner as it was previously adopted or approved. Therefore, should the current method be amended it would require a vote by Townships, Villages, City and County.

Executive Session

Motion by James Flaiz, seconded by Charles E. Walder to enter into executive session pursuant to ORC section 121.22(G)(3) as it pertains to matters relating to the pending litigation before the BTA involving Russell Township 1545 Park District.

Roll Call vote: James Flaiz: Aye, Charles E Walder: Aye, Caroline Mansfield: Aye

The Budget Commission entered in Executive Session at 10:23 a.m.

The Budget Commission ended Executive Session and resumed special meeting at 10:36 a.m.

General Discussion:

Next meeting will be May 25th. Special training session (virtual) is scheduled for May 18th at 11:00 a.m.

The Budget Commission requested that the budget staff draft a skeleton addendum (amending the calculation and language for alternative method) for the distribution of Undivided Local Government revenue. Once a formal document is created, the Budget Commission will vote to submit to the following governmental units for review and passage: the Board of County Commissioners and the legislative authorities of municipal corporations (Geauga County Townships, Villages and City).

Items of consideration: Maintaining the current floor of \$15,000 as long as the entity is wholly located within the county, otherwise a consideration of a \$1.00 per capita located within Geauga County, elimination of park districts’ distribution, with the balance of revenue being redistributed under the current formula. Additionally, language should be included allowing the Budget Commission to exercise discretion based on the proof of the entities demonstration need.

The Chief Deputy Auditor will prepare a current and proposed comparison of the of the methods and provide calculation estimates to the governmental units for consideration.

Undivided Local Government – Alternate method

Motion by Charles E. Walder, second by Caroline Mansfield, to modernize the alternate distribution from the 1989 methodology for the “Undivided Local Government” revenue distribution and submit to the Townships, Villages, City and County for vote.

Voice vote: Three ayes Motion carried

Being no further business to conduct it was moved by Caroline Mansfield to adjourn the special meeting at 10:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles E. Walder, Auditor
Secretary/Budget Commission

