

Budget

Written by Christina Dimeo, Correspondent

Thursday, 04 February 2016 19:44 - Last Updated Friday, 05 February 2016 12:41

County administrator unveils “lean” new budget

Though various office budgets will be lean, day-to-day operational requirements are adequately provided for in his proposed fiscal year 2017 (FY17) budget, County Administrator Steve Nichols told the Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors Wednesday night (Feb. 3).

The proposed budget uses tax rates that hold steady from last year – a real estate tax rate of 89.9 cents per \$100 valuation and a personal property tax rate of \$4.35 per \$100 valuation. Nichols’ budget “would result in almost no tax increase for the average homeowner,” he said.

At \$76.7 million, Nichols’ budget “maintains what we’re doing now,” he said, but does not include funding for most new positions requested by various department heads and county agencies. Nor does it include any pay raises or cost of living increases.

But Nichols did recommend funding two new positions in a noteworthy change from previous years. He requested that the county hire its own county attorney and paralegal rather than contracting out the services. Currently Fred Payne is the county attorney, but he works by contract rather than directly for the county. The new county attorney, who would make \$110,000 a year, and the new paralegal, who would make \$40,000 a year, would be employees of Fluvanna County.

Nichols’ budget could only be an approximation, however, because the School Board hasn’t yet passed along its funding request to supervisors. The School Board is set to adopt its budget on Feb. 17 and will come to supervisors Feb. 24 to present its budget and request funding. Nichols’ budget estimated local funding to the schools of \$16.2 million, up 0.6 percent from last year’s amended budget of \$16.1 million.

The FY17 capital improvements plan (CIP) proposal totals \$9.1 million. County staff had to make difficult decisions to recommend only a few essential capital projects for funding, said Nichols. Some of the larger CIP items include \$4 million for the Zion Crossroads water system, \$2.25 million for the James River Water Authority project, and \$500,000 for E911 computer-aided dispatch and records management system expenses.

Budget

Written by Christina Dimeo, Correspondent

Thursday, 04 February 2016 19:44 - Last Updated Friday, 05 February 2016 12:41

“The cost of doing business is not getting cheaper,” warned Nichols. In the future supervisors won’t be able to “hold the line on taxes” and keep what they have, he said. Something will need to be cut.