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Boone expects balanced budget

BY PAUL MCKIBBEN • PMCKIBBEN@NKY.COM • FEBRUARY 17, 2010

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Boone County government should end the current fiscal year on June 30 with a balanced budget, despite the Great Recession and some revenue being down.

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"We are spending less and we couldn't be doing it without all of our departments and the sacrifices they're making," Judge-Executive Gary Moore said.

The county expects to survive about a \$1.2 million revenue shortfall with several money-saving moves.

County Administrator Jeff Earlywine told the Boone County Fiscal Court on Feb. 16 with the cost-cutting measures in the Boone County Sheriff's Department, the county is forecasting it will have to contribute \$250,000 less to it at the end of the fiscal year. Sheriff Michael Helmig has indicated he expects to be under budget in 2010.

Other measures the county is taking to save money that Earlywine discussed:

* The county won't have to spend \$190,000 for a new heating, air conditioning and ventilation system for the Boone County Administration Building because of the agreement with Energy Systems Group and federal stimulus funds.

* The county has reduced its workforce. The county began the fiscal year on July 1 with 195 positions in the budget. It now has 189 employees. That's down from 213 workers in fiscal year 2007.

* The county won't be upgrading a computer software system. That will save \$140,000.

"So when you package those reductions together just with the day-to-day line item management of our budget, we're confident tonight as we sit here that we can make up that \$1.179 million revenue shortfall with simply spending less out of our budget that you all have appropriated," Earlywine said.

Earlywine also said the county will have a balanced budget. He said the county won't have to dip into any reserve funds nor will it reduce or eliminate any program or service.

Revenue is down in several areas as explained in a memo from Earlywine and County Treasurer Lisa Buerkley. Those are:

* Real and tangible property tax income will be down by about \$357,000. That's because the Fiscal

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Court adopted the same tax rates in 2009 as it did in 2008. Lower real property valuation is a factor, too.

- * Automobile tax revenue will be about \$87,000 less because of tax rates and lower valuation.
- * Payroll tax income will be down by about \$900,000.
- * Building permits will be about \$136,000 less.
- * Interest income will be down by more than \$60,000.
- * Deed transfer tax will be off by about \$20,000.

However, officials expect miscellaneous revenue to be about \$280,000 more than projections and franchise tax revenue will be \$86,000 more than what was predicted.

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