



September 15, 2015

Thurston County Board of County Commissioners

Dear Commissioners,

In accordance with RCW Chapter 36.40, we submit to you the 2016 Preliminary Request Budget.

Development of this budget has been a joint effort. Together, staff in the Auditor's Financial Services Office and the Commissioner's Budget Office have offered support to offices and departments county-wide as they budget for the coming year, and to produce documents which communicate their requests.

The tables in the preliminary budget book reflect the maintenance level budget – the amount necessary to continue the current level of services. You may notice some departments made an effort to anticipate their beginning fund balances, while others chose to wait. Actual ending fund balances will be known when the fiscal year closes, with close estimates in the final budget document.

Major changes in maintenance level include:

- Adjustments for anticipated revenue from taxes, fees and other charges.
- Changes in both revenue and expenditures for federal and state grants.
- Increases in expenditures to allow for salary and benefit changes, including an assumed two percent cost of living salary adjustment, and five percent medical benefit inflation.
- Changes in expenditures for internal service rates.

The total maintenance level expenditures increase from 2015 to 2016 is \$2.7 million in the general fund, \$1.9 million in other funds.

In the back of the book, you will find information on each county fund. All but two – the Fair Fund and the 24/7 Sobriety Fund - are anticipated to have financially responsible and sustainable fund balances in 2016. In some funds with restricted revenue sources, such as Public Health, there is capacity to address additional needs in the community.

We are pleased to announce that in addition to a printed book, the Preliminary Request Budget maintenance level information has been entered into OpenGov. All of the details by fund, office and program are available. The link is on the county budget website.

Offices and departments have also submitted for your consideration Policy Level Requests. These proposals address deficiencies and enhance services to citizens. Policy level funding requests total \$8.3 million from the general fund, \$23.2 million from other funds and would add 59.25 FTEs to the county workforce.

While other funds may be able to accommodate many of the policy level requests, the Board will not be able to approve all of the requests for general fund increases. You have an opportunity to discuss the needs of each office and department during budget presentations, September 21 - 25, 2015. Even though the county is experiencing economic growth, you face difficult decisions for the 2016 budget.

Staff in the Auditor's Office and your Budget Office stand ready to assist you as needed to complete the 2016 final budget.

Sincerely,



Mary Hall
Thurston County Auditor



Cliff Moore
County Manager