



**TSCC Regular Business
Meeting**

**Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 26, 2022
11:30 a.m.**

Chair Harmony Quiroz, Commissioners Ofsink, Norton, Wubbold, and Donahue were present, as were Executive Director Allegra Willhite and Budget Analyst Tunie Betschart, all via Zoom meeting.

Absent: None

REGULAR MEETING

Chair Quiroz called the meeting to order at 11:30.

Executive Director Willhite Updates

TSCC Budget Contingency Transfer Request for Fiscal Year 2021-22¹

- **Background for contingency request**

Executive Director Willhite requested a transfer of \$19,000 from contingency to the operating budget in personnel services and Materials & Services. This action would leave \$5,000 in contingency.

- Personnel Services - \$12,000: The fiscal year 2021-22 is half over and Executive Director Willhite has assessed the work for the upcoming budget season. She anticipates having Craig Gibbons help out about 120 hours during the busy budget season. She explained that the cost was updated from earlier estimates because the cost of fringe salary expenses is just as much for an on-call employee as a regular employee.
- Materials & Services - \$7,000: As discussed previously, the charge for computers was supposed to come out of the FY21 expenditures and it did not. Consequently, it is showing as an expenditure this year. This is causing the materials and services expenditures to be very close to exceeding the budgeted amount. Executive Director Willhite anticipates \$7,000 for expected expenses such as technology support, needed supplies, and training on the Datacuity database to avoid going over the budgeted amount for materials and services.

Commissioner Wubbold asked if TSCC has a contingency policy.

¹ TSCC Budget Contingency Transfer Request for Fiscal Year 2021-22 emailed January 19, 2022

Executive Willhite said she is not aware of a policy in place addressing contingency in TSCC's budget. She said that brought up an excellent topic for discussion. In the legal sense of the word, TSCC's budget does not have contingency since the budget is embedded in the Multnomah County budget. The actions taken here today are to address the internal operational budget for TSCC. A policy could be drafted to state under what circumstances contingency will be used. How do the commissioners want to address contingency in the TSCC budget in the future?

Commissioner Norton explained that with TSCC's budget, commissioners struggle with the fiscal year expenditure expectations and the statutory limits that Multnomah County uses for TSCC's budget. The Commissioners want TSCC staff to indicate what they plan to spend using the "in-house" budget. This allows the commissioners to hold TSCC to the same standards as their member districts, budgeting what they plan to spend. Because of the uncertainty this year, they included \$24,000 in contingency in the "in-house" budget. During the budget development earlier this year, the commissioners decided that if they needed to access contingency, the executive director would come to the commissioners with a request to move it to spendable authority. This could become the policy.

Commissioner Ofsink asked if now would be a good time to develop a contingency policy.

Commissioner Norton suggested waiting until next year to establish a contingency policy during the development of the TSCC's "in-house" budget; since this is the first year they have experienced using contingency, they may want to.

Commissioner Ofsink moved to approve the contingency transfer of \$19,000, as presented. Commissioner Norton seconded the motion, which carried with a unanimous vote.

- Presentation of the Proposed Budget²

Executive Director Willhite gave an overview of the TSCC budget, highlighting a few points. She wanted to display clearly the change from FY22 to FY23. When preparing this budget, she anticipated using the \$12,000 contingency. Under personnel services, the line item "Permanent" represents current staff; line item "Temporary" includes all one-time costs such as the overlap with the former executive director and the anticipated cost for the upcoming budget season.

These one-time costs will be included in next year's budget. The commissioners will want to discuss some expenditures for either temporary help or hiring a part-time budget analyst. In years past, TSCC has had 2.4 FTE positions in the budget. The commissioners could use the \$50,000 amount under Temporary to add 0.4 FTE to the budget. Using money for a permanent 0.4 FTE or temporary help does not have to be decided but was included for the commissioners' discussion. The dollar amount needs to be available, so it is included in this proposed budget.

Executive Director Willhite explained that she based all line items on Multnomah County's calculations and what they are seeing for increases in costs for next year. For

² FY 2022-23 TSCC In House Budget emailed January 19, 2021

Professional services, she used pre-pandemic expenditures to decide on next year's estimates.

She said she left the contingency line item open for the board to decide on the amount to include.

Commissioner Wubbold stated that with the uncertainty experienced throughout all organizations, including TSCC, maximizing flexibility may be the best approach to how TSCC spends the personnel dollars. He recommends using temporary help.

Executive Director explained that when talking to Multnomah County staff, suggested budgeting for a permanent position if there is any chance TSCC may want that option. Budgeting the dollars for a permanent position does not mean the TSCC must spend it in that manner, the dollars could be spent on a temporary position instead. If a permanent position is not added through the budget process and TSCC decides to add a permanent position mid-year, staff must go before the County Board of Commissioners to include additional FTE. At this point, Allegra said that she is not comfortable making a recommendation on staffing structure since she is unsure of the staffing needs at this point. In terms of flexibility, adding a permanent position to the budget now gives TSCC the option to hire either temporary staff or a permanent position.

Commissioner Norton said that including \$50,000 as a line item for temporary staff is equivalent to adding \$50,000 to the contingency line. She went on to say if this is included for a temporary position, she would not be amenable to adding the difference between the estimated in-house budget and the maximum budget into contingency. When the commissioners discussed adding staff, it was for administrative type work, minutes, office management duties. She thought this might be a change in thinking. The position filled by Shannon Turk has been vacant since FY 2019. For the current year, the budget includes 120 hours for Mr. Gibbons to come back and help during the budget season. She believes this is to help the current executive director get up to speed on what it takes to complete the budget reviews, arrange the hearings with the districts and complete the budget review process. She is not prepared to say what will be needed in the FY23 until they know how it goes during this budget season.

Multnomah County Human Resources staff shared information with Allegra on options for adding a part-time position to TSCC. Currently only two job classifications, executive director and budget analyst, are assigned to TSCC. HR recommended to put any added part-time FTE positions in as a budget analyst. Allegra emphasized that she is not at this point recommending using a part-time FTE position. This may not be the model best suited for TSCC, and a staffing plan will need to be completed before determining the best course.

Commissioner Ofsink added he was interested in what would be most helpful to the executive director. He said he feels if the executive director anticipates a need for a temporary or permanent position to accomplish the work of TSCC, he supports that. The executive director is in charge of the administration of the organization. They are happy to discuss the benefits and costs, but the decision is hers.

Executive Director Willhite said she appreciates hearing the board members' opinions on this subject. She said she is approaching this from what presents the most flexibility in the long term.

She said what she is hearing is the commissioners feel more comfortable following the temporary position model. After trying this for a year, the decision may be to add a permanent position or maybe not. A decision does not have to be made at this time. She can put together a staffing plan, and if it is decided that a permanent position is the best fit, that could be included in that budget.

She expressed that if any FTE were added to the budget, that could create the perception of growth in the organization. This may not be the desired message to send to the members.

Commissioner Donahue asked how difficult is the budget to change once the commissioners adopt the budget? And if the TSCC does not use the maximum amount allowed by statute, does that money stay the county's budget?

Executive Director Willhite said TSCC could not carry over any unused portion of the maximum allowed by statute. A critical consideration along this line of thinking is that the districts' payment for TSCC's services is based on each year's actual expenditures. That is why the organization's expenditures matter to each member district.

In answer to the changing the budget, to add FTE mid-year the Executive Director would need to go before the Multnomah County Commissioners and request an FTE change, explaining the reason and justifying the change. This action is doable if needed.

Chair Quiroz asked about bringing on someone during budget season to support staff during this busy time with data entry and other areas.

Executive Director Willhite said this needs to be a part of the staffing plan. She said she could see where full-time support could be beneficial in the communications work, updating training materials, and a variety of projects could be accomplished if help was available. She said she has considered exploring hiring from a temp agency. Next summer, TSCC staff and the commissioners need to explore the needs and possibilities for staffing the organization. These decisions do not need to be made today. Today's focus needs to be directed toward how much flexibility will be required next year in the budget.

Commissioner Norton asked the county's policy for the time necessary to receive benefits. If a 0.4 position does not receive benefits, there is no advantage to making it a permanent position. She suggested \$25,000 be set aside for temporary staffing and the other \$25,000 put into contingency. Chair Quiroz agreed with this plan, as did Commissioners Wubbold and Donahue.

With this suggestion, Executive Director Willhite said she would:

- Update the proposed budget,
- Change the temporary staffing from \$50,000 to \$25,000,
- Put \$25,000 in contingency.
- Create a comparison showing the In-House Budget and the Maximum Budget per Statute

- Email the updated version, including the side-by-side comparison, for their approval

Once the commissioners have received the budgets and have voted on approving them, Executive Director Willhite will deliver TSCC's official maximum budget in the amount of \$479,640 to Multnomah County. This needs to happen by February 3.

Executive Willhite will include these results in the agenda packet for the next business meeting to record the board's action.

Schedule & Progress for 2022 Budget Season

Executive Willhite shared the Draft 2022 Budget Hearing Dates³ with the commissioners. Considering the newest commissioner, Matt Donahue, she included a detailed diagram explaining the budget review process for the large municipal districts in Multnomah County since this will be his first year to experience this procedure.

She explained the previous procedure for preparation for hearings, staff and commissioners' duties and the timeline.

During the budget review process in the past:

- Staff would prepare the review and develop questions for the hearing.
- Staff emailed the commissioners the budget packet prepared by staff at least four days before the meeting to discuss the district's budget
 - Included in the packet:
 - Spreadsheet
 - Staff's review
 - District Budget message and Budget document
 - Draft Questions for the hearing
 - Draft Certification Letter
- Commissioners would meet to discuss the districts' budgets at least 8 days before they held the hearing for larger districts and at least a couple days before the smaller districts were scheduled to hold their hearing
- Meetings were held at 12:00 noon to accommodate commissioner's schedules
- Commissioners would review the budgets, ask questions of staff and develop the final questions for approximately two large districts at each meeting, and small districts as time allows.
- Immediately following the meeting, staff would edit the questions to include the commissioners' suggestions and send them to the districts that day, so they have a minimum of seven days to prepare responses for the hearing.
- Staff would also notify the district if there were any anticipated recommendations or objections included in the Certification Letter.
- Staff would send the Certification Letter to the small districts the same day so the letter could be discussed at their hearing.
- Staff would prepare minutes for each meeting.

³ Draft 2022 Budget Hearing Dates

Planning for this year's budget review process:

Executive Director Willhite asked the commissioners their preferences for the discussion meetings' schedule and format. Commissioners shared the following preferences:

- Commissioners would like to have meetings at noon and virtual meeting as of now, but this could change and possibly have one meeting in person.
- Commissioners said they would rather have two sessions than have too many districts to consider at one meeting.

The basic reviewing procedure will be similar to previous years' procedures and timing. Commissioner Norton suggested that commissioners address ways to improve their portion of the review process at the next business meeting. One suggestion she gave was sending their draft questions for the hearing to Executive Director in advance of the district's review meeting. She also suggested adding Gresham-Barlow School District to the list for discussion since they recently became a TSCC member.

For the larger districts' hearing venues:

- Commissioners agreed TSCC should follow the district's protocol.
- If they hold their public meetings and hearings online, commissioners can expect the budget hearing to be virtual as well.
- If they are in-person, the TSCC commissioners have no objection to this format and will accommodate the district's choice of venue.

As in the past, each district will choose the application they want to use if the hearing is virtual.

Commissioners approved a suggestion made by Executive Director Willhite to meet late in February or early March to discuss Commissioner Norton's tips on streamlining the budget review process.

Review and finalize draft Communication Plan

Agenda item discussion went longer than expected, and commissioners were scheduled to meet in Executive Session following the meeting, so the discussion on the TSCC Communication Plan–2022 was moved to the next regular meeting.

Member Audit Report⁴

At this time, there were no questions or comments received or actions required on the memo sent to the commissioners regarding the audits received from member districts. If commissioners have questions or comments, they will be addressed at the next meeting.

⁴ Memo dated January 19, 2022 to TSCC Commissioners Re: District Audits for FY 20-21

January 4, 2022, Regular Business Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes for January 4, 2022, TSCC Regular Business Meeting Minutes were accepted as presented.

Executive Session

With that, the regular meeting was recessed for Executive Session to discuss the Executive Director Willhite's evaluation.

Regular Business Meeting Reconvening

Chair Quiroz reconvened the Regular Business Meeting. The commissioners decided to delay the compensation conversation for the executive director until the end of the fiscal year. They will meet in May to consider the compensation piece. They will be exploring implementing a complete evaluation process that will involve discussions on service provided customers and staff's opinion on performance.

Next Regular Business Meeting

Executive Director Willhite will send out a poll to determine the date for the next meeting.

Attachments (4):

1. TSCC Budget Contingency Transfer Request for the Fiscal Year 2021-22 emailed January 19, 2022
2. FY 2022-23 TSCC In House Budget emailed January 19, 2021
3. Draft 2022 Budget Hearing Dates
4. Memo dated January 19, 2022, to TSCC Commissioners Re: District Audits for FY 20-21