

## 2017 ADAMS COUNTY BUDGET

### County Narrative

As 2017 unfolds, we will be moving into a new era of County operations. Our foot print in rented space will progressively diminish as we move into the County acquired Herff Jones building. This building will be renovated for County operations throughout 2017. As sections of the building are completed, County departments will begin moving into their designated quarters as they leave their rented space. The renovated facility will be known as the Adams County Human Services Building and will also provide a completely new service, Mental Health Services. The inclusion of Mental Health Services not only provides a new and needed service, but it also brings outside funding to support the building renovations. Additionally, the space that Mental Health Services will be occupying will be rented from the county by York/Adams Mental Health Joinder. This financial support helps to make the entire project a more affordable venture. By relocating operations to the Human Services Building (HSB), we have achieved numerous operational benefits as well as future cost savings and cost containment. This great opportunity for cost containment comes at a crucial time when it becomes more and more difficult to balance a budget without a tax increase. Putting this in perspective, our challenge is to meet the greater and increasing expenses with insufficient current tax revenues and a flat tax base.

For calendar year 2017, Adams County government will have the resources to address this scenario without a tax increase. How is this to be accomplished? Our reserve funds and 2016 carry over funds are adequate within fiscal protocols to cover the 2017 projected revenue short fall. We also plan to establish a line-of-credit to protect our reserves knowing that the funds will be needed if the PA state budget approval process is delayed. Obviously, a continual use of reserve funds to balance a budget cannot be sustained year after year; otherwise reserve funds would eventually be depleted and would adversely affect our fiscal position. Additionally, having reserves is seen as good financial management; they are also an excellent source of funds for unforeseen emergencies.

The solution to leveraging a balanced budget with reserves year after year is easily stated, reduce or cut spending, increase revenues, or a combination of both. Whatever the course, the implementation is challenging especially in the face of increasing unfunded mandates and unforeseeable emergencies. Reducing expenses in 2017 will focus upon rent reduction, over-time reduction, right-sizing operations, contracting services, or reducing liability. We must also look at all revenue sources to assure they are maximized.

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County Narrative (continued)

Some people think that a shortfall in revenues can be solved by simply raising taxes. That solution, however, is not very popular. To help counter the need to raise property taxes, the Commissioners will continue to look for areas to reduce spending and maximize revenues, while advocating with our state legislators for elusive property tax reform and relief.

A more popular and longer-term solution to producing increased revenues is to increase the property tax base through economic development. Commercial and Industrial growth provide the greatest source of new tax revenues. Economic development in Adams County is and has been a difficult path with more stumbling blocks than stepping stones. Obviously, economic development is one of our greatest priorities. We will continue to keep economic development moving forward by bringing stakeholders together to forge both countywide and regional visions for Adams County. Recent economic assessment and research along with soon-to-be completed regional comprehensive planning will help shape our vision.

It is interesting to note that the first year of each term of the present board of Commissioners has led to landmark projects. The 911 Emergency Radio Project began in 2012 and the new HSB project began in 2016. It is a pleasure to report that the radio project has been a true success as noted by many residents, community leaders, and first responders. In a similar vein, the decision to move forward with the HSB project has brought forward numerous remarks commending the decision. Not only will this project release the County from spiraling rents, but will provide modernization of operations to better serve the county residents. At this juncture, the Human Services Building is on schedule, within budget, and experiencing only minimal change orders.

The next project that will be moving forward is a public/private venture to construct a shooting and training firing range. It will be constructed on County property at a strategic location beside the 911 Center and comes at no cost to tax payers. Funds for the project will be provided by the Adams County Law Enforcement Association. This facility will provide training and practice opportunities that are not presently available to Adams County law enforcement. The Board will also continue to support efforts like the Fruit Belt Study and the facilitation of broadband as a necessary component of economic development.

All the projects that have been mentioned not only represent improved services, but they represent employment provided through local contractors and new employees locating to Adams County. These projects plus other capital improvement plan for 2017 have a threefold purpose; to improve the efficiency of county operations, to elevate the quality of life, and to encourage greater investment in Adams County.

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County Narrative (continued)

Our predication is that Adams County government, in 2017, promises to be both exciting and challenging. With the success of the 911 Radio Project behind us, and the completion of the Adams County Human Services Building and the Law Enforcement Training Range ahead of us, we hope to continue our record of operational effectiveness and fiscal responsibility; combined with a vision toward the future. We invite any residents to contact the Board or any Commissioner with your ideas, thoughts or concerns. It is an honor for us to serve the residents of beautiful Adams County and thank you for that privilege!