ERIE COUNTY BUDGET COMMISSION DATE: August 4, 2026

MEETING MINUTES **2027 BUDGET WORKSESSIONS**

	Present:	Alternate Name:
Richard Jeffrey, Erie County Auditor	**X**	
Kevin Baxter, Erie County Prosecutor	**X**	Jason Hinners alternate - Huron Library
Caleb Stidham, Erie County Treasurer	**X**	Lindsey Lavey alternate - Vermilion Twp & Huron Library
Janice Baum, Fiscal Officer	**X**	

Others: Brenda Hurst, Chief Fiscal Officer, E.C. Auditor's Office

Mr. Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM to begin the day's 2027 budget work sessions with the following subdivisions: Village of Kelleys Island, Margaretta Twp, Erie County Health Dept, Vermilion Twp and Huron Library

VILLAGE OF KELLEYS ISLAND

Those present representing Village of Kelleys Island were Lisa Klonaris, Clerk Treasurer, Chris Kipfer, Scott Stevenson, Mary Gaither and Jason Divoll, Council Members, Andy Federle, Village Administrator, and Ron Ehrbar, Mayor

Ms. Klonaris began with reporting that the Village is in good shape, but have plans to spend all their funds. They will have carryover in the Fire Fund, but are saving for a new fire truck. Mr. Jeffrey inquired how much carryover was in their General Fund with Ms. Klonaris responding with approximately $1 million as of the end of July.

Mr. Jeffrey said that statutorily, the Budget Commission has to look at the revenues, expenses and how to manage the carryover amount. He stressed the importance of evaluating needs versus wants.

Mr. Stidham mentioned that the Village has a tremendous amount of need and has a small tax base and has been grateful of the communication he has had with the Village and Kelleys Island as a whole.

Mr. Jeffrey asked about the major sewer undertaking and inquired if they have set any money aside. Mr. Federle reported that they have a couple of million from the State that Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur wrote in the Federal budget. The Village is working on securing more grants and low-rate loans. He mentioned that the biggest challenge is due to the residents and workers leaving for the season, coupled with a high median income of the Island, will a lot of times disqualify the Village from certain funding opportunities.

On motion of Mr. Stidham and seconded by Mr. Baxter , to approve the budget as submitted.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	**X**	
Kevin Baxter	**X**	
Caleb Stidham	**X**	

Session adjourned at 1:15 PM .

MARGARETTA TOWNSHIP

Those present representing Margaretta Twp were Bob Day, Fiscal Officer and Gary Pooch, Diane Keegan and Ed Cullen, Trustees

Mr. Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM .

Mr. Day began by saying the Township has had overwhelming support of the community. The last levy was an additional fire levy that passed and made note that all but one of the firefighters are medics. The cost of the Fire Dept is extraordinarily high, with cost of salaries and benefits. The Township tries to pave their own roads - they purchased a paver from Erie Blacktop for a reasonable price and work together with Oxford & Groton Twps on a regular basis, along with the County and Perkins Twp on occasion. They do have approximately $850k in STAR Ohio for ongoing projects. Mr. Day said that the Township is in a good spot, but wages and healthcare costs continue to rise as they compete with other local jurisdictions with keeping valuable employees.

Mr. Jeffrey asked if they have a project list and to remind them that the Budget Commission is not in a position to tell local governments how to manage their money, but to evaluate needs versus wants. Mr. Day agreed and have a list of priorities.

The Township needs to expand the Cemetery and have long term plans for the 15 acres that abutts the cemetery that they were able to purchase. There is need for an ambulence replacement and a fire truck/tanker sooner than later. There are facility updates that need to be done, but the Township makes things work. He mentioned that the Park levy does have a carryover that has been increasing, but are waiting for the new school to be completed to see what needs will arise.

Mr. Stidham asked if the Township has been proactive about the possibility of the Township absorbing the Village of Castalia. Mr. Day reported that it has been discussed and the Village attends all of the Township meetings and have a good working relationship.

Mr. Stidham made note that the carryover is in line - just over 50%, but is a Township with large needs.

On motion of Mr. Stidham and seconded by Mr. Baxter , to approve the budget as submitted.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	**X**	
Kevin Baxter	**X**	
Caleb Stidham	**X**	

Session adjourned at 1:50 PM .

ERIE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Those present representing Erie County Health Department were Pete Schade, Health Commissioner, Melissa Keller, CFO and Joe Palmucci, SCFO

Mr. Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 1:51 PM .

Mr. Jeffrey began with stating that the Budget Commission is asking the local governments to review needs versus wants and stressed that the Budget Commission cannot tell entities what or how to spend their money, but to see if there is an appropriate carryover balances. Mr. Stidham added that the Health Department is a unique entity which makes it harder to make decisions. He asked what the revenue total for 2025 and if there was a way to split out what services levy dollars are spent on versus what is spent with the Federally Qualified Health Center. Mr. Palmucci stated that there is no way to determine that due to the amount of crossover and sharing of resources and employees. Mr. Schade mentioned that the FQHC could have a separate board and employees, but chose to share in order to be fiscally responsible and have saved taxpayers millions of dollars. Mr. Palmucci also stated that they are able to use grant funding to help offset a portion of salaries.

Mr. Stidham asked what the unencumbered balance was. Ms. Keller expects the unencumbered balance to be approximately $3.9 mill by the end of the year and will contintue to go down. Mr. Stidham said that they could look at it as having a $4 million carryover out of a $24 million budget or being able to save local taxpayers that much in local levy dollars. Mr. Schade said that they all have the same mission - public health - and why they were granted a co-applicant model. This requires a lot more reporting but saves money. Mr. Palmucci added that this essentially gave them money to fund programs that were already offered, while using levy funds to expand offerings such as the detox center and the dental clinic.

On motion of Mr. Stidham and seconded by Mr. Baxter , to approve the budget as submitted.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	X	
Kevin Baxter	X	
Caleb Stidham	X	

Session adjourned at 2:00 PM .

VERMILION TOWNSHIP

Those present representing Vermilion Township was Stephanie Johnson, Fiscal Officer and Keith Sexton, Trustee

Lindsey Lavey present as alternate for Caleb Stidham, Treasurer

Mr. Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 3:01 PM .

Ms. Johnson began the meeting with discussing that the Building Department had transferred to the City, but has now been transferred back to the Township - she added some padding in the 2027 budget to cover the transition period.

Mr. Jeffrey asked how the carryover amount was, with Mr. Sexton replying that there was good carryover, but unsure on total.

Mr. Jeffrey stressed the importance of a needs versus wants mentality. Mr. Sexton agreed and said the Township has done a road analysis and used that to put together a plan for re-investing into the roads, road drainage and safety enhancment. They will continue to work with the County Engineer with Knisel Road and the berm. In order to complete the plan, it will be costly and will have to reorganize, prioritize and go forward with what makes the most sense.

Mr. Jeffrey asked what the Township's capital projects are - Mr. Sexton said that they asked for a feasability study for the fire department. Fire department is costly to run, the taxpayers said no to a levy and need to figure out an alternative. Ms. Johnson reiterated the need, but have trouble keeping talent because of only offering part-time hours. Any aging equipment goes for repairs, due to no budget available to replace equipment. Mr. Sexton would like to see the results of the feasability study. Ms. Johnson said they asked the Blue Ribbon Commission and the possibility of regionalization, but all remains unknown. The Township is only able to collect approximately 40-60% of the billed rates, as the Township is not paid for all calls that they respond to, only for those that they transport patients to the hospital.

On motion of Ms. Lavey and seconded by Mr. Baxter , to approve the budget as submitted.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	X	
Kevin Baxter	X	
Lindsey Lavey	X	

Session adjourned at 3:24 PM .

HURON LIBRARY

Those present representing Huron Library were Jennifer Buch, Director and Laura Engleman, Fiscal Officer

Jason Hinners present as alternate for Kevin Baxter, Prosecutor

Lindsey Lavey present as alternate for Caleb Stidham, Treasurer

Mr. Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 3:32 PM .

Ms. Engleman began with speaking of the Library's biggest needs: continuing capital projects of renovating the interior of the older portion of the building. For the General Fund and operating expenses, the largest expenses are materials and programming needs for the public and for employee training and maintaining competitive compensation. They have experienced a large increase in freight costs and will dip into their contingency budget to help cover the higher costs. Ms. Engleman said that right now, the General Fund operations are running at a deficit of approximately $50-60k. The Library does have an endowment fund that is able to be used to help cover costs. Considering all funds together, the Library is running at a surplus. She made note that they do not want to continue to run with the General Fund at a deficit.

Mr. Jeffrey asked how much money is in the endowment with Ms. Englemen reporting that they are able to use about $445k of the $660k balance.

Mr. Hinners asked if the remaining in the capital fund will be used for future projects and Ms. Englemen said yes.

Mr. Jeffrey stressed the importance of reiterating that the Budget Commission has to have the mentality of needs vs wants and asked if there were any other needs besides the building. Ms. Engelman said it is just primarily the renovation. Ms. Buch said that over the years, the Library has updated what goes into circulation (magazines aren't as popular as a decade ago).

Ms. Engelman added that they building is starting to show age and need to take care of the issues before it becomes a bigger issue and also need to add accessability.

On motion of Mr. Hinners and seconded by Ms. Lavey, to approve the budget as submitted.

	AYE	NAY
Richard Jeffrey	**X**	
Jason Hinners	**X**	
Lindsey Lavey	**X**	

Worksessions adjourned for the day at 3:45 PM .