

PHELPS COUNTY
2017 BUDGET MESSAGE

Now on this 31st day of January, 2017, comes Pamela K. Grow, Clerk of the County Commission, as budget officer, and presents for the records of the County Commission information and estimates for the year 2017 as required by the County Budget Law (Sections 50.525 to 50.745, RSMo.)

I appreciate the care and sincere diligence taken by the elected officials and department heads in supplying their budget estimates and requests for 2017, as well as the care taken to adhere to budgeted costs in the operation of their offices.

There are an infinite number of possible expositions that could be made about Phelps County's budget and the budgeting process; the financial software used, after all, contains a chart of accounts of some 95 pages and approximately 3,800 lines in length. Several salient points, of the many which could be made, follow.

County Revenue Fund and Road and Bridge Funds ended 2016 with significantly larger balances than when they began: \$1,049,826 versus \$550,869 (Road and Bridge), and \$1,344,771 versus \$1,089,534 (General Revenue.) This allows for a 2% raise in employee salaries after no cost-of-living adjustments for several years. This is added to the 15% increase in the county's outlay for its share of employee health insurance coverage during the third year of the partially self-insured program adopted in 2015, just over \$900 annually for each employee covered. Governments, as with the private sector, are learning how affordable care can be.

Sales tax revenue for 2016 increased less than one percent (i.e., 0.8%) over 2015. Property tax revenue to the General Revenue Fund increased 11%, though with a very small decrease in the county's General Revenue levy. Most of this increase was in the collection of current real and personal property taxes. Anticipated sales and property tax revenues were left flat for 2017.

A tumultuous year of elections, in 2016 mention was made of the "Forgotten Man." I believe it appropriate to acknowledge the intellectual giant, William Graham Sumner (b. 1840) who is believed to have first used the expression in an essay in 1883, which phrase was later distorted by others:

"As soon as A observes something which seems to him to be wrong, from which X is suffering, A talks it over with B, and A and B then propose to get a law passed to remedy the evil and help X. Their law always proposes to determine what C shall do for X or, in the better case, what A, B and C shall do for X. ... [W]hat I want to do is to look up C. ... I call him the Forgotten Man. Perhaps the appellation is not strictly correct. He is the man who never is thought of. He is the victim of the reformer, social speculator and philanthropist, and I hope to show you before I get through that he deserves your notice both for his character and for the many burdens which are laid upon him."

May we always be mindful of the precepts laid out in "The Forgotten Man."

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela K. Grow
Phelps County Clerk