

**JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA**

**Planning Commission  
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JEFFERSON COUNTY  
PLANNING, ZONING AND ENGINEERING

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**To: County Commission  
Jefferson County**

**From: Planning Commission  
Jefferson County**

**RE: Annual Report and Budget Statement**

Chapter 8A of the West Virginia Code, Article 2, Section 11, provides in part that the Planning Commission shall make an annual report and prepare and submit an annual budget to the County Commission. In response to these requirements, the Planning Commission has reviewed the FY 2009 Budget Request and Narrative submitted by the Planning Department and Zoning Department, and offers the following statement.

Current Year Performance

The Planning Commission finds that FY 2008 decisions by the County Commission to restructure the functions of planning, zoning, and engineering; to recruit a Director with extraordinary professional credentials, extensive accomplishments, and proven executive leadership; and to add positions for a professional planner and a planning assistant to the Planning Department have lead to dramatic improvement in both the effectiveness and efficiency of county planning functions.

It is notable that functions previously performed through consultant services are now performed by county personnel; draft zoning and sub-division ordinances and a draft zoning map have been developed and publicly distributed; citizen participation in planning issues has never been greater, and citizen recommendations are currently receiving professional review and consideration. It is exceptional that so much progress has been achieved in such short order.

The Planning Commission wishes to specifically express its appreciation for the professional manner in which staff of the Planning and the Zoning Departments has responded to the organizational and personnel changes implemented during the current year. During a year of transition and ambiguity, Department staff has provided sustained and reliable service to the citizens of Jefferson County.

Proposed Organizational Structure

The Planning Commission has reviewed with care the proposed FY 2009 Table of Organization and allocation of personnel. It is the opinion of the Planning Commission that this proposal is primarily a reflection of reality – this is how the Planning and the Zoning Departments actually inter-face and

function. The County will be well-served by adopting the recommended organizational structure so that it may more accurately account for the actual costs of its planning and the zoning functions.

### Proposed New Staff Position

The Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed FY 2009 mid-year addition of the position of Site Plan Review Chief. The Planning Commission supports the addition of this position for the reasons provided in the Department's budget narrative. The Planning Commission believes that it is very important while development pressures are relaxed to begin developing specific planning analyses and policy guidelines that can well inform county decision making in growth and development.

The Planning Commission also wishes to express its concern that at present there is very little professional staff "reserve" capacity in the Department of Zoning. Simply stated, should the County experience an increased volume of development applications, unanticipated absence of existing personnel due to illness or staff vacancy, or an urgent request from the County Commission for assistance with a zoning issue, there is scarce professional support for assigned tasks. This fact takes on special urgency given the short deadlines imposed on the County's review of development applications by Chapter 8A – unless these deadlines are met, development applications are automatically approved.

Given the importance of sound economic development by the County Commission, the Planning Commission recommends approval of the mid-year addition of the position of Site Plan Review Chief as support for the Zoning Administrator.

### Proposed FY 2009 Work Plan

Consideration of the annual budget of any County department is the foremost opportunity for the County Commission to review the performance of the Department and to make policy decisions about the priorities and performance measures the County wishes to adopt for the department in the forthcoming year. It is this policy direction that provides context for subsequent consideration of department staffing and expenditure decisions.

The department budget narrative and financial request for the Planning and the Zoning Departments contains a list of 19 potential planning initiatives for Jefferson County, and the department budget request for personnel and services funding provides resources to initiate development of three of these planning initiatives. In the opinion of the Planning Commission, all 19 initiatives are important – and many are long overdue.

The Planning Commission has no quarrel with the department recommendation that priority be given to development of a new County Comprehensive Plan, the Route 340 Gateway Corridor Enhancement Plan, or to the Jefferson County Heritage Tourism Plan. The Planning Commission wishes to make clear, however, that we could be equally enthusiastic about other selections. The decision concerning planning priorities rests with the County Commission.

In sum, the Planning Commission urges your very careful consideration and decision of the FY 2009 work plan for the Departments of Planning and of Zoning. As citizen volunteers we look forward to a successful completion of current efforts to revise our zoning and sub-division ordinances and implementing a zoning map and to moving forward with new planning initiatives per your direction.

### Proposed Salaries

In reviewing the proposed salaries for positions in the Departments of Planning and of Zoning, the Planning Commission specifically did not conduct performance evaluations of specific individuals. Instead, the Planning Commission review was based on a structural analysis of the positions proposed and the responsibilities assigned to each position. Restated, the review sought to determine if the salary budgeted was consistent with the salary that should be paid to any individual performing the duties assigned.

In the absence of a Countywide position classification system and accompanying salary schedule, this was not an easy task. In sum the Planning Commission finds that the Departments of Planning and of Zoning employ individuals in four distinct personnel classes, namely Executive Management, Senior Professional, Professional, and Administrative Support classifications. In most civil service systems each classification would have a wage band, and individuals would be compensated commensurate with the experience within their classification.

The important consideration is that individuals with greater levels of responsibility be rewarded with appropriate salary differentials. While the Planning Commission did not have available for this analysis wage bands for each classification, we did our best to determine if the salaries recommended were consistent with a reasonable wage band.

The two essential questions were:

- a. does the wage band for each position classification differentiate between classifications with greater or lesser responsibility?
- b. does the wage band within each classification permit differentiation between individuals with greater or lesser experience?

For example, there are two positions budgeted within the Professional classification. While they are not budgeted at the same salary, the salaries recommended are consistent with the salary band for the classification. The difference in recommended salary is consistent with the difference that would be expected for individuals working within the Professional classification with differences in work experience within the classification.

At first glance the recommended budget salaries might appear to be arbitrary and unfair. In the opinion of the Planning Commission, this is not the case – the salaries requested are within the salary bands appropriate for each classification. In the first year following a major reorganization it is not unusual to find discrepancies between salaries and responsibilities, and it is important to take corrective action to establish an equitable salary schedule.

Based on the criteria that salaries should be commensurate with responsibilities, the Planning Commission endorses the salary requests contained in the department's requested FY 2009 budget.

### Proposed Services and Supplies

The basic question addressed by the Planning Commission in assessing the adequacy of the department budget request for services and supplies was "Does the budget request funds consistent with a work program to initiate 3 new planning initiatives?"

Director Tony Redman reports that with \$30,000 for consultant services and the addition of the mid-year Site Plan Review Chief the budget is adequate. The Planning Commission believes that this might be optimistic – but believes Mr. Redman should be given the benefit of the doubt. However, should the County be unable to provide \$30,000 for consultant services in the FY 2009 budget the Planning Commission advises that the County Commission should also make appropriate reductions in the FY 2009 work program for the Departments of Planning and of Zoning.

### Overall Findings

Following its review of the FY 2009 Narrative and Budget for the Departments of Planning and of Zoning, the Planning Commission finds the following:

1. In spite of challenging circumstances, the Departments were remarkably productive in FY 2008.
2. Department staff should to be commended for the professional manner in which they performed their duties during the year.
3. The proposed table of organization reflects the reality of current Department operations.
4. The requested new staff position for the Department provides important safeguards for the County in view of time constraints imposed by Article 8A.
5. The selection of planning initiatives for FY 2009 is a critical budget policy decision for the County Commission.
6. The personnel salaries recommended in the Department budget are consistent with the responsibilities of personnel in each position classification.
7. The request for services and supplies in the Department budget is frugal but acceptable for a work plan with three planning initiatives.
8. The overall 6.5% requested increase in the Department budget is responsive to the exceptional performance of the Departments in FY 2008 and critical to the expansion of planning initiatives in FY 2009.

This Annual Report and Budget Statement was adopted by the Planning Commission during its regular meeting on March 11, 2008, 7 in favor, 1 opposed.

Respectfully submitted,



John Sidor  
President  
Jefferson County Planning Commission