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Commissioner: County can't pay \$2 million 2011 communication systems payment

By [Michael Pitman](#) | Monday, October 18, 2010, 03:02 PM

HAMILTON — With a projected \$1 million shortfall in the county sales tax and a \$300,000 deferred payment to the 800 megahertz communications system, the county will have a \$2.1 million payment for 2011.

Butler County's 2011 budget is projected to be \$78.2 million, but departments have submitted \$84.9 million of requests.

"We weren't able to pay as much in 2010 and deferred some of the payment for 2011," Butler County Administrator Bruce Jewett said. "Now they have to make up that deferred payment in addition to making the regular payments."

An impassioned discussion happened about the 800 megahertz county communications system during the regular commission meeting in between county budget hearings.

Commissioner Don Dixon said there needs to be a countywide meeting on the 800 megahertz system, and said the communities with a dispatch center need to assume some of the costs — even though the county agreed to pay for the system start up and annual maintenance.

"We can't pay the \$2 million," said Dixon during a County Commission meeting. Commissioner Greg Jolivette said it's an easy fix: have each community that uses the system assume some of the costs.

"Then watch holy hell break out," he said.

Jolivette said in hindsight, the commission should have told each of the communities they needed to pay into the system.

"Each community is in the same condition as we are in, if not worse," Jolivette said. "It's going to be a tough sell."

ABOUT BUTLER COUNTY NEWS AND ISSUES



Michael D. Pitman reports about Butler County, Ohio, politics, county

government, county wide issues and Butler County people just like you for Cox Ohio Publishing (including the Hamilton JournalNews, Middletown Journal and several weekly papers in Butler County). He wants your suggestions and questions for more news stories. Leave a comment for him here or e-mail Michael at mpitman@coxohio.com

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The county is on the hook for \$1.2 million to Motorola for the communications system which took effect in 2009. There was also a \$400,000 carryover.

But Assistant Butler County Administrator Pete Landrum said there was an apparent \$300,000 payment deferred for 2011. He said it was believed they renegotiated the contract and that money owed for 2010 was eliminated.

For 2011, the county owes \$2.1 million to Motorola.

In 2007 a temporary half-percent county sales tax was enacted and it generated \$36 million to pay for the communications system. A permanent quarter percent tax was approved in 2008 to pay for the maintenance.

Income from the property tax in 2010 is down \$1 million from 2009 to \$14 million. It's projected to be \$14 million in 2011. Sales tax is up 1.25 percent from 2009, but it was down 8 percent from 2008 to 2009.

Jewett added that the county's investment income "is not what it used to be."

What do you think?

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Comments

By deano

October 18, 2010 10:56 PM | [Link to this](#)

Does this mean another foreclosure/ sheriff sale and I'll be able to buy it and resale it to M.Fox after his trial and he could sell it back to The County and we would all fill our wallets again?

By Resident

October 19, 2010 8:07 AM | [Link to this](#)

Isn't this the "communications" system that FAILED when they had the vote... And they did it anyway... The voters told you we couldn't afford it, with their votes... But, as usual, politicians know more than the public.

By Taxpayer

October 19, 2010 9:29 AM | [Link to this](#)

I was at the meeting when the Commissioners pushed to keep the quarter percent sales tax on. They said the quarter percent would be used to pay for the annual operation of this radio system. As I recall it was none other than Jolivet who was the cheerleader for keeping the tax on to do that. Wonder what they are spending the quarter percent on since they don't have it for what it was intended?

By 10-4

October 19, 2010 9:34 AM | [Link to this](#)

What happened is they turned this radio system over to the sheriff to operate and he turned it into an employment agency hiring more people than needed. Then came the remodeling of the communications building on Princeton Pike for a couple million. I wonder who got the no bid contract to do the

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remodeling work on the old agricultural building?

By Lewis

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Is Schwein talking on behalf of his current employer the city of Oxford or his employer after the first of the year the Butler County Sheriff?

By Township Resident

October 19, 2010 10:05 AM | [Link to this](#)

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When the dispatches are combined the county will then send a bill for that to the cities and townships. It looks like the county is wanting the townships and cities to bail them out of there bad spending habits.

By Where's the Beef

October 19, 2010 1:11 PM | [Link to this](#)

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The sales tax raised \$37 million for this radio system. The radio system cost only \$32 million. Question to Commissioner Dixon, where is the other \$5 million?

By Jim

October 19, 2010 2:01 PM | [Link to this](#)

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If the commissioners aren't going to use the quarter percent sales tax for what it was intended then they should remove the quarter percent. The county commission made a commitment back in 2008, they need to honor that commitment today and in the future. Then of course, Don Dixon isn't big on commitment.

By SAMEOLDBUTLERCOUNTY

October 19, 2010 3:52 PM | [Link to this](#)

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Get ready fellow citizens we are getting ready to take on more of the commissioners poor spending habits and inability to effectively manage a budget. Looks like we will be footing the bill for their poor decisions yet again

By Amazed

October 19, 2010 4:54 PM | [Link to this](#)

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Forget the countywide meeting Donnie, the commission is collecting a quarter percent on every dollars spent in Butler County to pay for the radio system up keep. What do you think the cities and townships are going to say? How stupid.

By still alive

October 20, 2010 10:14 PM | [Link to this](#)

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Let me see, the system was only suppose to cost \$24mill, but actually cost another 50%..Mary Swain's husband worked for motorola, who sold us the radios...the former county auditor told the commissioners and conklin to stop collecting the extra sales tax, because they were at the \$24mill they told the citizens they needed for the system...but they failed to tell the citizens they over spent on the system by 50%..where is the new Auditor on this over spending? Afraid to speak up Roger!

By fairy tale

October 22, 2010 1:34 AM | [Link to this](#)

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It seems like the stuff going on in Butler County is a fairy tale. Dixon as Rumpelstiltskin weaving straw into gold. Yeh, we really have alot of that laying around ole' Rumpel. Maybe quit being a miser and turn around the county back into gold. Look into your stone heart and make a difference again in Butler County.

By the shadow

October 22, 2010 10:55 AM | [Link to this](#)

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The system was not needed, radio system already in service was a good system. Just needed tweaked. The new system now is already out dated. Tax payers were scamed agin.

By Fire Chief

October 22, 2010 12:20 PM | [Link to this](#)

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As I recall the first estimate on cost of a new radio system was \$13 million. But when a chance came to do business with political cronies and a chance for the sheriff to hire more people and the bill jumped to \$35 million and still counting.

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