County budget draft goes over $30 million mark

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
**PCC EDITOR**

FORT MADISON – The Fort Madison City Council spent about two hours after Tuesday's regular council meeting gridding out ways to possibly begin to rebuild the city's general operating fund.

City Manager David Varley indicated at the meeting, that the city's working capital will be so low going into the next fiscal year that it may not cover a month's worth of work and expenses for the fiscal year 2020, beginning on July 1, has expenses for the county at more than $30 million.

Lee County Budget Director Cindy Renstrom submitted the proposed budget at a workshop following the regular meeting of the Lee County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday.

The budget shows total revenues at $28.5 million and expenses at $30.5 million. However that amount would likely slide back under the $30 million mark, as a bridge replacement project has been budgeted heavily due to unknown contributions.

The Mental Health - Development Disability fund, which has to be spent down to 20% of expenses, is showing an ending balance at the end of the 2020 fiscal year of $301,894. The fund had $1.5 million in it, and no new revenues are allocated to the fund.

The $301,894 represents 25% of expenses, so the county has almost met obligations under Iowa law requiring the spend down.

Renstrom has the county levy preliminarily set at $10.388/$1,000 assessed valuation, which is the same property tax rate for the current tax year. The levy will generate $13.56 million in the fiscal year off a county valuation of $1.48 billion and a debt service valuation of $1.52 billion. The county is allowed to assess a levy for debt service on valuations abated by tax increment financing, which represents the difference in the two figures. The levy remains at its lowest rate in at least the past 15 years.

Renstrom said the county has seen some substantial increases in rural valuations with the Iowa Fertilizer Co. and the Dakota Access Pipeline.

“(IFC’s) taxable valuation is now $63,516,825. The year before it was $60 million so that went up and the year before it was $6 million so that went up and the

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County’s assessed valuation up more than $158 million

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See **VALUATIONS**, page 5
ETHYL M. MONTGOMERY

Ethyl M. Montgomery, 98 of Keokuk, IA died Sunday, January 13, 2019 at River Hills Village in Keokuk. She was born February 25, 1920 in Roswell, S.D. the daughter of Harry and Flora Andrews Kohlmorgan. On June 25, 1945 she was united in marriage to Richard Montgomery in Keokuk. He preceded her in death on November 30, 1981. Ethyl was a member of First Christian Church in Keokuk.

Ethyl enjoyed being outdoors gardening and planting flowers. She loved pets and had several fox terrier dogs over the years. Above all, Ethyl loved watching her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and made a lifetime of treasured memories that will last forever. She is survived by three sons, John Montgomery of Maplewood, MN; Keith Montgomery, of Wayland, MO and Hal Montgomery (Betty) of Land-O-Lakes, FL, three daughters, Pam Katsumes (Ted) of Keokuk, Soni Montgomery of Keokuk and Julie Montgomery (Larry Helfrich) Keokuk. Fourteen grandchildren, eighteen great-grandchildren, one brother, Wilbur Kohlmorgan of Keokuk, one sister, Arlene Young of Mesa, AZ, many nieces and nephews and one special friend, Anna King (Don) of Keokuk.

Besides her husband, she was also preceded in death by her parents, two brothers, Harry and Earl Kohlmorgan and three sisters, Wilma Kohlmorgan, Hazel Lemon and Pearl Kohlmorgan.

A funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m., Thursday, at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk, IA with Pastor David Turner officiating. Burial will be held in the St. Patrick Cemetery in St. Patrick, MO at a later date.

Visitation will be held after 1 p.m., Wednesday, at the funeral home with family meeting with friends from 6-8 p.m.

Memorials may be made to the Keokuk Humane Society.

Online condolences may be left for the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

LOUISE MARIE SHULTZ

Louise Marie (Walkowiak) Listebarger Shultz, 90, of Fort Madison, Iowa died Tuesday morning, January 15, 2109 at her home. She was born on June 6, 1928 at Elba, Nebraska, a daughter of Michael J. and Agnes (Janochn) Walkowiak. On January 30, 1955, she married Billy Kirk Listebarger in Fort Madison, Iowa. He preceded her in death on October 16, 1979. On May 28, 1983, she married William Arthur Shultz in Fort Madison, Iowa. He preceded her in death on August 1, 2007.

For over 30 years, she worked for Western Union Telegraph Company. She enjoys crafts and ceramics. She was a member of the Fort Madison United Methodist Church.

She is survived by one son, Kirk Listebarger of Harvard, Illinois; one daughter, Mary Ann Gomez of Chesapeake, Virginia; two sisters: Irene Peters of Nebraska; LeAnn Ayres of Gladstone, Illinois; five grandchildren, 2 step-grandchildren, three great-grandchildren (plus one on the way) and numerous nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, both husbands, three brothers: Hubert, Arthur and Leonard, two sisters: Margaret Svoboda and Lorraine Walkowiak, and one granddaughter, Erica Listebarger.

Per her wishes, her body has been cremated. A graveside service and burial will be held at a later date at the Hillcrest Cemetery, Fort Madison, Iowa. Online condolences to the Shultz Family may be made at www.barrmemorialchapel.com. Barr Memorial Chapel is in charge of arrangements.
Fort Madison Police Report
01/10/19 – 8:32 p.m. – Lee County Jail and held.
01/11/19 – 12:51 p.m. – Fort Madison of Lee County on warrant for probation violation.
01/11/19 – 1:18 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Justin Burris, 25, of Keokuk, in the 21000 block of 330th Avenue for violation of a no-contact order, for no violation of a no-contact order and domestic abuse assault. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
01/14/19 – 1:39 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Chad Michael Vice, 43, of Fort Madison on charge of drug trafficking – 5 grams, to 100 kilograms of methamphetamine. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
01/14/19 – 10:45 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies responded to one-vehicle rollover on Perkins Road. A vehicle driven by Ricky Allen Ridenhour, 63, of Vevay, slipped into a ditch on snow conditions and rolled onto it’s side. No injuries or citations were issued at the scene.
01/13/19 – 8:45 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Adrian Cayle Elliott, 18, of Keokuk, at the sheriff’s office on a warrant for failure to appear. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
01/13/19 – 3:38 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Christina Inez Adams, 30, of Wayland, Mo., on warrants for contempt of court, voluntary absence of custody and a judgment hold.
01/14/19 – 5:37 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Payton Wragge Vann-Pelt-Verte, 23, of Fort Madison, at the sheriff’s office on a judge- ment hold. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
01/15/19 – 11:00 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Whispy Ray Brown, 26, of Fort Madison, in the 21000 block of 330th Avenue on charges of no violation of a no-contact order and domestic abuse assault. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
01/15/19 – 2:56 a.m. – Deon- troy Jakerion McClenan, 25, of Washington, in the 2100 block of 330th Avenue in Fort Madison, on a charge of violation of a no-contact order, and domestic abuse assault. Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue report
01/12/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to four medical calls, 01/13/19 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to two medical calls, one carbon monoxide check, one false alarm, and one lift assist.

Lee County

For the Record

For the Record

Pen City Current - Wednesday, January 16, 2019 - 3

IOWA LOTTERY WINNING NUMBERS

WINNING NUMBERS

IOWA LOTTERY

1/14 EVENING
11 13 18 29 42
Lucky Ball: 3

LUCKY FOR LIFE

Pick 3 – Midday
Pick 3 – Evening

Pick 4 – Midday
Pick 4 – Evening

1/14 MID-DAY
5 4 1
1/14 EVENING
9 5 6

5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

Pen City Current encourages you to play responsibly.

1/14 MID-DAY
1 7 5 6
1/14 EVENING
2 2 7 3
Chateau Apartments Extra Clean & Quiet Apartments for Rent


APARTMENTS FOR RENT

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Elks Hoops winners

Winners of the annual Elks Hoops Shoot were announced this week. From left to right: Dayonna Davis (girls 10-11); Natalie Randolph (girls 12-13); Gailey Louck (girls 8-9); Dane Butler (boys 12-13), Reece Huey (boys 8-9), and Layne Rung (boys 10-11). The students qualified at their respective schools before advancing to Sunday’s shoot at Holy Trinity Catholic. The winners will now travel to the district shoot in Keokuk Saturday.

City’s revolving fund may be on the chopping block

“I don’t like to borrow money,” Varley said. “But if we did do it we should do it very short term and it might be best to borrow it from the Highway 61 fund and then pay ourselves back. It would be a little cheaper that way as we could save on interest and bonding costs.”

Mohrfeld said he liked that idea, or event working with local banks to secure a short-term loan with a good rate.

Another idea kicked around included instituting a 3% franchise fee on city utilities. Councilman Bob Morawitz said a franchise fee isn’t fair to the low income people because they don’t have the resources to keep those rates down.

Varley said the franchise fee would eliminate the Local Option Sales Tax. “If we did it, it would have to be one percent less because we can’t levy both taxes,” Varley said. “If we do a franchise fee, the Local Option Sales Tax has to go away.”

City Finance director Peggy Steffensmeier said the franchise tax would have to be proposed at 2 percent, if the local sales tax were to still be collected.

Another idea was to eliminate the city’s revolving loan fund, that was set up as an incentive to encourage business growth in the city. The fund has about $176,000 in it, and the maximum loans available are $25,000.

“In that fund there is a $176,000 sitting there and it was established by council so we would take council approval to get it back and I’m recommending we grab that money-back. It’s with Southeast Iowa Regional Planning (Commission), and we, for the time being, shut that program down because of it’s infrequent use,” Mayor Brad Randolph said. “Then take the lion’s share or all of that money and restrict it back for beautification and nuisance abatement.”

Varley said he would like to rebuild the general fund’s working capital to a minimum of $800,000, but said it may be four or five years. He said a strong budget would have working capital of closer to $1.2 million to help with sudden drops in revenues or emergencies.

One of the problems the city is facing is sharp drop in sales tax revenues. He said the city revenues from the Local Options Sales Tax, which is administered and distributed by the state, dropped about $300,000 this year.

Mohrfeld asked if the state provided any information as to the specifics of the drop. Varley and Steffensmeier both said the state not forthcoming with specifics about what sector of the economy is suffering so the city can’t point to where the problems are.

Morawitz also suggested the city may look at eliminating the 3-year tax abate-ments on improvements to property within the city.

“It was a incentive for people to do the work, but I think they’re going to do the work anyway. When I’m doing a remodel I’m not going, ’Let’s see what kind of tax abatement can I get if I do this,’ I’m thinking I’ve got this project to do and I’m going to do it.”

The city will have another budget strategy session in February before having to certify the budget to the county and state.

Rural valuations give county a bit of a boost

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