



OFFICE OF WELD COUNTY COUNCIL

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WELD COUNTY COUNCIL 2019 – 4th Quarter REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

The Weld County Council is mandated in accordance with the Home Rule Charter of Weld County, Colorado, to report to the people of Weld County on a quarterly basis, those matters related to the council's review of Weld County government. This report summarizes the activities of the Weld County Council during the fourth quarter of the calendar year 2019.

October 21, 2019

Don Warden, Director of Finance and Administration

Jennifer Oftelie, Budget Manager, was also present. Mr. Warden said the budget process typically starts in May; and a presentation to County Commissioners is given in September. Final budget is adopted Dec. 11

Weld County is one of the few local governments in the nation with no debt and no sales tax. The county relies heavily on oil and gas production, currently under threat by Senate Bill 181. Mr. Warden said the full impact of the bill won't be known for a couple of years.

The 2020 budget continues to emphasize long-term planning and investment consistent with the Weld County Strategic Plan and the Strategic Investment Plan for the future of Weld County. The 2020 budget addresses:

- 1) Investment in the long-term
- 2) Continuing to strengthen financial management
- 3) Improving county operations
- 4) Investing in technology
- 5) Focusing on employee engagement and workforce development

2020 Highlights include:

- 1) Assessed value increased 34.13%, or \$3.939 billion primarily due to oil and gas.
- 2) Add 75.0 FTE in county departments to cope with growth and workload demands.
- 3) The new Department of Oil and Gas Energy will be staffed with 15 FTE to regulate oil and gas operations under SB 19-181 with full cost recovery through permit fees.
- 4) With the passage of HB 19-1278 there will be a Presidential Primary, and new election mandates increasing the costs of elections by nearly \$1.5 million in 2020.
- 5) Public Trustee function will move under the County Treasurer July 1, 2020, and no longer be a Governor's appointee.
- 6) The creation of two new District Court judges required increasing the staff of the District Attorney by 5 FTE, and the Sheriff by 6 FTE for a total cost of \$1,138,331.
- 7) Sheriff's Office will transition the management of criminal records and evidence from the Greeley Police Department contract to bringing the two functions in-house by January 1, 2021.
- 8) 29.00 FTE in the Sheriff's Office will be added in 2020.
- 9) Open a Southwest Weld Substation booking function to serve south county law enforcement agencies.

- 10) Fund increased salary adjustments for all sworn Sheriff officers to be competitive with other Front Range law enforcement agencies for recruitment and retention of officers.
- 11) The public safety information system (Spillman) will be updated or replaced.
- 12) Communications will phase in recovering 40% of costs through user fees versus 20%.
- 13) Fund the oil and gas revenue fluctuation reserve in the Contingency Fund at \$60.0 million.
- 14) Capital investment in the county's information technology infrastructure for data center storage and fiber redundancy total \$2,250,000.
- 15) The 2020-2024 Capital Improvements Plan for facilities is funded at \$75,275,000.
- 16) Complete construction of the \$45 million jail expansion.
- 17) Construction of a new Coroner's morgue.

Continued Discussion of Additional Signage Needed for CR 47

Councilmember Brett Abernathy presented a letter to Council to give to the Board of County Commissioners requesting signage at the intersection of CR 47 and Hwy 392.

Continued Discussion of Whistleblower Program

Councilmember Tonya Van Beber said a whistleblower program can be substantiated by looking at the number of lawsuits the county has faces in the last two years. She suggested simplifying language that already exists within the County's Charter. She said putting information on the Council's web page is one option, including language that states anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

She said it would be important to state Council is one place to voice whistleblower concerns, but it would also be important to list information for the Independent Ethics Commission.

Councilmember Abernathy said a program needs to exist in order for Council to help potential whistleblowers. He said Council has no punitive ability to make a change at this point. He said he would be in favor of adding language to the web site as Council's answer to a whistleblower program.

Councilmember Van Beber made a motion that information be added to Council's page on the web site that states if you are a constituent of Weld County and you have a concern about an elected official or employee, you may call Council at this number; or you may file a complaint with the Independent Ethics Commission at their number with their link. She said a disclaimer would be needed to the effect: Upon receiving information about a concern, the Weld County Council will make every effort to keep confidentiality, however, should an investigation ensue, anonymity may not be guaranteed. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Stille and passed unanimously.

November 18, 2019

District Attorney Michael J. Rourke

Also present was Mr. Rourke's Community Relations Director Krista Henery. Mr. Rourke is in his 15th year with the district attorney's office. He was appointed District Attorney in 2015 and elected to office in 2016. He has been a prosecutor for 23 years.

He discussed the general roles of the district attorney, with the main priority being prosecuting criminal offenses.

Mr. Rourke discussed the mass number of cases presented to his office and how plea agreements are necessary in order to handle that many cases. He said on average, nationwide, plea agreements are reached in about 97 percent of cases. He said Weld County typically meets that average.

He said it's important to keep in mind during sentencing, a defendant will typically not serve the full sentence. Violent criminals typically serve 75 percent of their sentence.

Mr. Rourke discussed the purpose of sentencing, the first being punishment to fit the seriousness of the offense. He said it's important to assure fair and consistent treatment.

Mr. Rourke said he's proud of his department's victim witness assistance programs. He has employees who assist victims at their "absolute worst." They provide support to victims and educate them about the step-by-step process they can expect of the judicial system.

The district attorney's office also has a duty to train law enforcement officers and to educate the

community. Mr. Rourke's office speaks to schools about the dangers of sexting, for instance.

Mr. Rourke said his office has 34 attorneys, five investigators, victim witness staff and other support staff totaling 78 employees.

Mr. Rourke said Weld County is one of five counties in Colorado that has its own district attorney. Trials are held Mondays and Wednesdays and juries continue to pose difficulties. Mr. Rourke said the percentage of citizens who show up for juror summonses is "pitiful." He guessed maybe 30-45 percent of people show up for jury duty even though it's mandatory. He said the courts retain the discretion to issue citations to those who do not show.

Livestreaming meetings

Council recognized several past requests that meetings be livestreamed. It was noted the board room may have recently been updated to livestream meetings. More research was to be done. The issue was tabled and set for discussion at the January 2020 meeting.

Whistleblower web site

Councilmember Nancy Teksten made a motion to change the text containing whistleblower information for the web site. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Van Beber, and passed as follows:

"If you are a constituent of Weld County and you have a concern about an elected official or employee, you may call the County Council at 970-400-4780. Council can also be reached by email at countycouncil@weldgov.com or by mail at 1150 O St., Greeley, CO, 80632.

Employees should first consider protocol set up by their department. In extreme cases, Council is available to address concerns.

If you are a constituent, you may also take your concern to the Colorado Independent Ethics Commission. They can be reached at 720-625-5697; by email at iecinfo@state.co.us; and by mail at 1300 Broadway, Suite 240, Denver, CO, 80203. You can also click this link to be directed to their web site: <https://www.colorado.gov/iec>."

December 16, 2019

Discussion Item Regarding Barbara Kirkmeyer's Award

Councilmember Gene Stille extended congratulations to Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer for being named the Commissioner of the Year Award. Ms. Kirkmeyer was awarded Dec. 3 during the 2019 Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI) Dinner and Awards Ceremony.

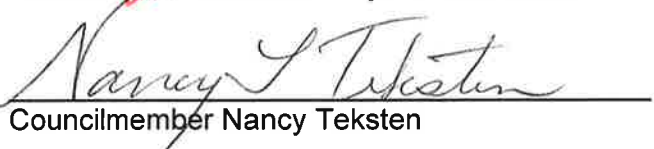
WELD COUNTY COUNCIL



Council President Brett Abernathy



Council Vice-President Tonya L. Van Beber



Councilmember Nancy Teksten



Councilmember Gene Stille



Councilmember James Welch

Date Signed: January 20, 2020