BUDGET COMMISSION

The Geauga County Budget Commission met in special session on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 11:00am a.m. in the Auditor's Office 215 Main Street, Chardon, Ohio. Present via WebEx: Geauga County Auditor Charles E. Walder, Geauga County Prosecutor James R. Flaiz, and Geauga County Chief Deputy Treasurer Caroline Mansfield representing Treasurer Christopher P Hitchcock, Chief Deputy Auditor Ron Leyde, Chief Compliance Officer, Kate Jacob McClain and Geauga County Fiscal Office Manager, Pam McMahan.

Also Present: Deputy Auditor Tammy Most and Deputy Auditor Kristen Sinatra.

Meeting Advertised: Training and Regular Business

Training

The Budget Commission felt a training session on Budget preparation might be helpful for the subdivisions within the County. Given the past year and the unprecedented shifts in revenue and expenses due to the COVID 19 pandemic, there are some issues that may be occurring that haven't in the past. The invite was sent initially on May 4th. The response was affirming that this training would be beneficial. The training was meant for Fiscal Officers but also for Trustees, Mayors, Council Members, and Department Heads to help all understand the process, benefits, and importance of a properly tested budget.

Below is an excerpt from the reminder sent May 17th:

This training is meant to assist in preparation of the annual budget.

Among other topics, the training will cover:

- o the role and reach of the Budget Commission
- o distributing Undivided Local Government Funds in Geauga County
- o specific budget best practices and explanations of related forms
- o reserve balance options
- o preparation and pre-tests for annual budget hearing
- what happens after the budget hearing
- o different levy options
- o and much more....

Presenters: Auditor Charles Walder and Prosecutor Jim Flaiz

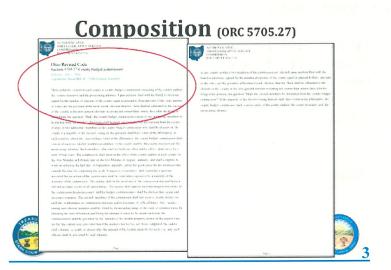
The Budget Commission

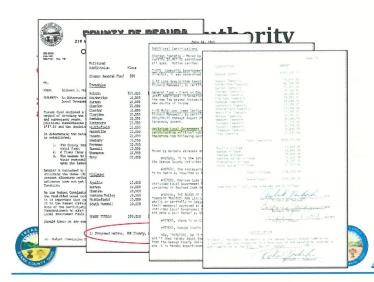
It is the responsibility of the County Budget Commission to annually review the tax budgets, unless waived, of all taxing districts within the county and to determine that all tax levies are properly authorized and allocated to the county, cities, villages, townships, libraries, parks, fire districts, solid waste districts, recreational districts, health districts, schools and other taxing authorities.

The County Budget Commission approves the distribution of the Local Government Fund and Library Fund and ensures that levy monies are collected and properly spent, and that carry-over balances are monitored and reasonable.

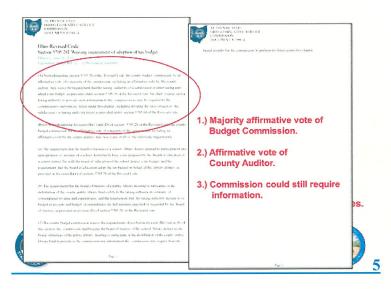








4 This slide illustrated a bit of the history of the Undivided Local Government distribution method. The alternate method currently used will be evaluated and likely updated in the coming months.



Budget Commission Oversite

1) ORC 5705.341

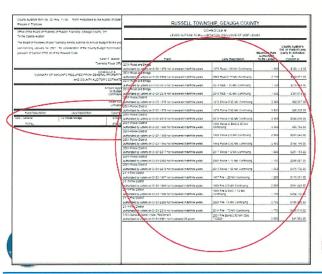
- Issues relating to the fixing of uniform rates.
 Any person who pays real, public utility, or tangible personal property tax.
- Appellant required to deposit \$500 to cover costs, refunded if victorious.

2) ORC 5705.37

- Issues relating to the dissatisfaction of any action
 Taxing authorities of subdivisions, library, nonprofit, or park.
 Decision of the Board of Tax Appeals is substituted for the actions of the Budget Commission.

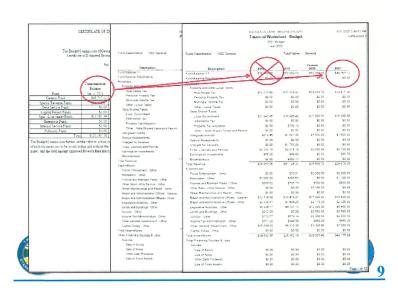


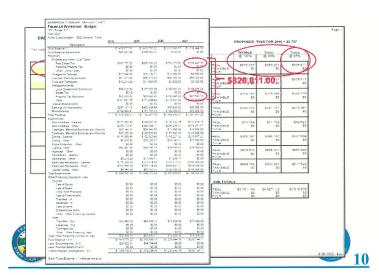


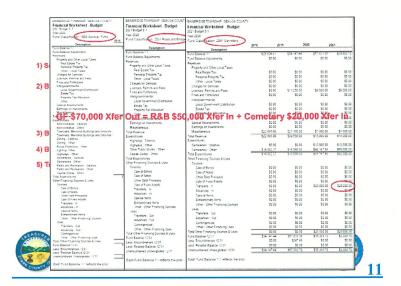




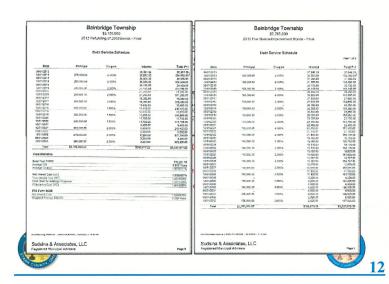


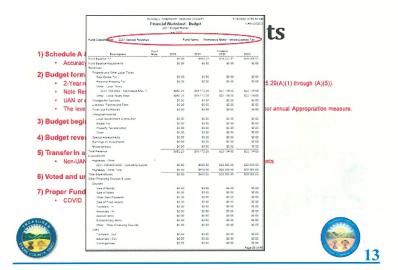






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Pre-Hearing Tests

- Accuracy and completeness
 udget format per ORC 5705.29.

 2-Year retrospective of actuals, current year, 1-year forward Budget (ORC 5705.29(A)(1) through (A)(5)).

 Note Reserve Fund provisions ORC 5705(F).

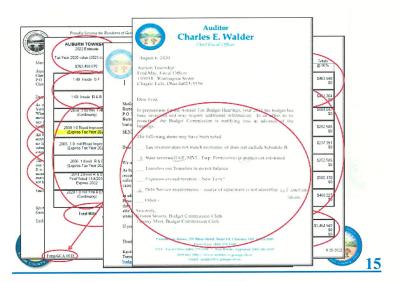
 UAN or other computer generated (Excel is not recommended).

 The level of detail of your Budget submission does not have to mirror that of your annual Appropriation me.
- 3) Budget beginning balance tests to Certificate.
- 4) Budget revenue tests to County Schedule B (GCA-001E).
- Transfer In and Out tests.
 Non-UAN entities should provide spreadsheet identifying Transfer sources/targets
- 6) Voted and un-voted debt tests and amortization schedules.
- 7) Proper Fund creation and utilization tests.

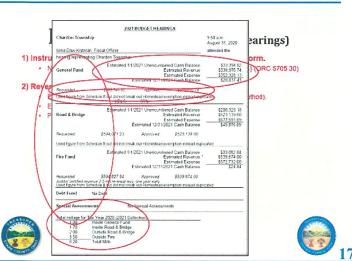
 COVID. Permissives, etc.

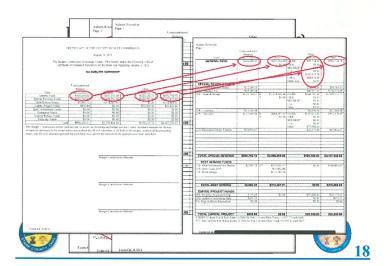


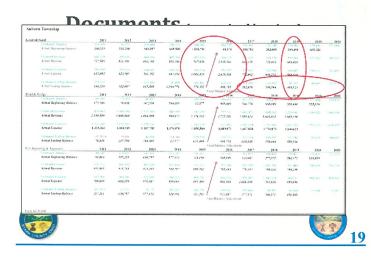


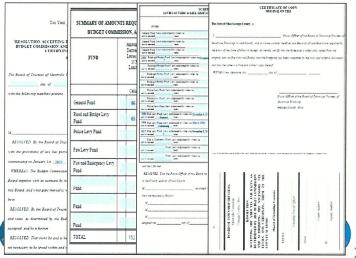












Documents (non-waived hearings)

1) Instructions, letters, Schedule B (GCA-001E), and feedback form.

No LGF distribution if submission is after July 20th (Jan 20th – schools) (ORC 5705.30)

2) Revenue requests and Revenue Certification form.

- Establishes Local Government Fund distribution (using alternative method)
- Establishes Library Fund Distribution (Parks).
 Provides total millage.

Among other things, used to determine compensation of electeds.

4) Spreadsheet of Historical Balances, Revenues, and Expenditures.

- Provide justification for variances in Revenue and Expenses
 Identify business anomalies (COVID, incidents, retirements, etc.).
 Remain calm and composed. You know your model better than we do. Articulate your message.



Rate Resolution, adopted by legislative authority, due by October 1.
 If a November ballot issue is passed, you will receive an Amended Rate Resolution.
 Rates are sent to the state only after the election results are certified by the BoE.



The Hearing

- 1) Cash carryover justification.

 40% of expenditures is typical, 25% is minimal.

 Over 40%, have logical reasons.

 COVID

 Carcelled or personned projects

 Unarpacted revenue or revenue acceded County estimates.

2) Reserve Fund documentation.

- ORC 5705.13 and 5705.29. Have documentation and independent reserve study.
 Note ORC 5705.29(F).
- 3) Fund assignment verification.

· Are you using the correct Funds?

4) Continuous vs. fixed term levies.

Continuous levies will draw more scrutiny

- 5) Estimated vs. actual Expenditures and balances.
- Do not panic, stay focused, you know your entity better than we do.
 Know what events cause these variances and calmly explain them in detail.





Levies

1) Qualified vs. Non-Qualified Levy consideration.

- Qualified saves taxpayers approximately 12.5% and costs you nothing.
 Recognize the temptation to replace Qualified Levies to refresh revenue to today's values.

2) Continuous vs. fixed term Levies.

- Presidential election years are least costly to put Levies on
 Off election years are the most expensive to put Levies on.
 You share election costs with other ballot parties.

- 4) Limitations of Levy revenue on your budget.

 You can ONLY budget a sure thing, not just because it is on an upcoming ballot. Have contingency plans for Levy revenue should they fail.





This presentation will be uploaded to the Auditor's website within a few weeks so those who could not attend will have access.

Being no further business to conduct it was moved by Caroline Mansfield to adjourn the May 18, 2021 - regular meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles E. Walder, Auditor Secretary/Budget Commission