

September 15, 2015

Karen Schmidt
Ward 6 Alderwoman
City of Bloomington
109 E. Olive Street
Bloomington, IL 61701

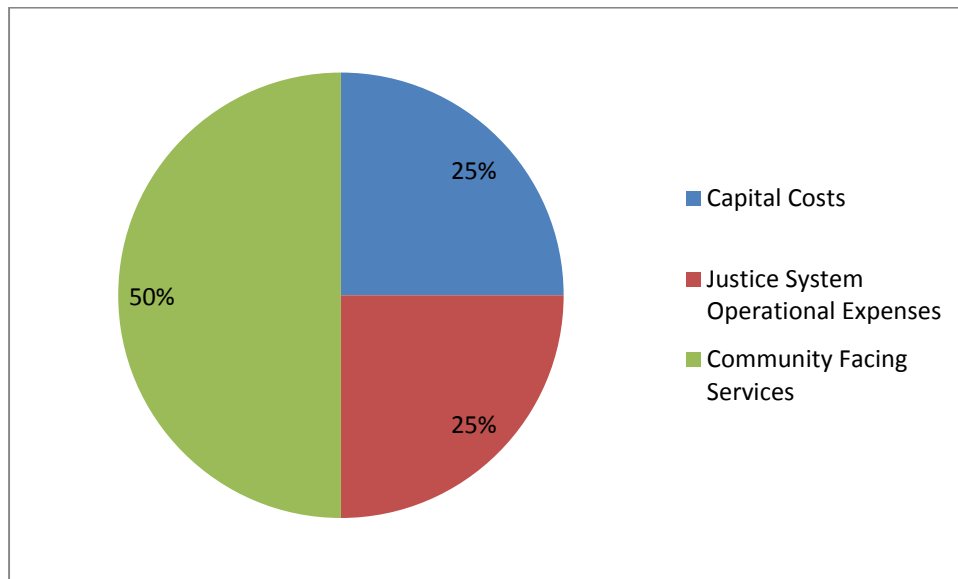
Karen,

First, I want to thank you and the other members of the Bloomington City Council for the serious consideration and discussion related to the need to provide a permanent funding mechanism to Mental Health / Public Safety in our community. I appreciate the sincere interest shown by everyone to help find solutions to this present and growing problem.

In response to your specific question related to how the dollars from a ¼ cent sales tax in Bloomington and Normal would be allocated, we have prepared this response.

Estimated Revenue: \$3.6 - \$3.9 Million

High-level allocation model for new revenues for Public Safety / Mental Health



Of course, there is still some uncertainty related to the exact amount of funding that a new Home Rule sales tax will generate on an annual basis, so the below numbers are estimates. We will have some fixed annual financial commitments attached to elements of the Mental Health Action Plan, as such the high-level model may be adjusted each year to provide required funding that is non-negotiable in a given fiscal year.

Below is an attempt to provide some examples of the types of costs and expenses that we anticipate budgeting for in each of the three allocation categories shown in the graph.

Capital Costs: (Approx. \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 annually)

- Expenses associated with the renovation and addition to the McLean County Jail specifically required to address the care of and program requirements for detainees and inmates who suffer from mental illnesses, and who require non-standard services. The County anticipates the overall project to cost about \$45 Million. The County is planning to manage 2/3rds of this project within the framework of our largely property tax supported general fund budget, we would look to new revenue provided from the ¼ cent sales tax for the balance of the annual debt service requirements of the project.

Justice System Operational Expenses: (Approx. \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 annually)

- Operational expenses associated with the specialty care and services required in the care and custody of mentally ill detainees and inmates in the McLean County Jail.
- Cost of medications for mentally ill detainees and inmates in the McLean County Jail, while they are in the jail, and as they are transitioning out of the jail into community based treatment programs.
- Enhanced training and staffing (if required) in non-corrections departments of the McLean County Justice system. These initiatives will be targeted at making sure that the overall Justice System in McLean County is focused on moving individuals onto the most appropriate path. In some cases that path may include incarceration, but in other instances the most appropriate path may be community based programs, other jail diversion programs (i.e. Recovery Court, Mental Health Court, etc.).

Community Facing Services: (Approx. \$1,800,000 to \$2,000,000 annually)

- Maintain and if appropriate increase funding to community mental health programs that show positive results. In some cases these dollars will represent necessary “gap filling” as the State of Illinois continues, reduce funding.
- Venture funding to implement new services that have been successful in other communities. As an example – we anticipate starting a Mental Health Co-Responder program where a mental health professional will be dispatched on selected calls to meet more traditional First Responders (Police and Fire) on scene. If appropriate, the Mental Health professional may take control of the situation returning the First Responders to other duties more quickly. This is just one example, the McLean County Mental Health Action Plan expands in great detail dozens of very specific program recommendations.
- Coordination & Collaboration of services and information. Throughout the McLean County Mental Health Action Plan there is an overarching theme that our community must do a better job of coordinating the information and services of Public and Private agencies and entities. This initiative will require a substantial investment in technology as we work to enhance or replace the current integrated justice system (currently used by all Public agencies in the County- initial cost of system was \$13 Million, paid for by McLean County). In addition it is recommended in the action plan that we need to implement a Countywide Case Management system for the public facing entities that provide services, this was identified as a best practice and supports the “no wrong door” strategy for getting people to the help and services they need as quickly and efficiently as possible.

As always, if you have any follow-up or additional questions, please feel free to contact me, or the McLean County Administrator’s Office.

Sincerely,

Matt Sorensen, Chairman
McLean County Board

CC: Mayor Tari Renner
Honorable Members of the Bloomington City Council
David Hales, Bloomington City Manager