

# Budget Rules

1. Our roles, duties and authority are intentionally constructed to ensure checks and balances in local government.
2. There's never enough money to do everything.
3. The Sheriff's Budget will ALWAYS be the biggest.
4. When one of us looks bad, we all look bad. Look at state and federal level government and recognize our offices (and each of us by position) bear the stereotype and perceptions people have that have nothing to do with us.
5. When one of us looks good, we individually look good. If we look good at the detriment to another office, refer to Rule #4.
6. The Budget Process is constant, and budget decisions are made outside the annual or bi-annual cycle.
7. We know our office roles and needs better than anyone else in the county, as do other elected officials and department heads.
8. The community chooses who is elected and who we are required to work with for four years.
9. What gets us elected isn't what necessarily helps us do well in our job.
10. We need to show our value and values all the time, not just when we need something. Educate, lobby, repeat!



## Desired Outcome or Dynamic:

Think about what you like and want to keep, and be clear about what you don't like.

What do you want? If you could design it, what would it look like?

It's different for different people, counties, communities,  
organizational structures and county culture.

Personally, I want to:

1. Be informed or know where to find Information
2. Have input where relevant
3. Have a relationship
4. Covid issues affect ability to communicate informally – so pick up the phone and chat sometimes.
5. Have everyone know what my office is involved in so that they consult me when discussing policy or legislation that affects my office.
6. Be a part of an organization that plans ahead, anticipates issues, solicits input so that any unplanned and urgent issues have a base of collective knowledge that will consider my stance and/or make sure to consult me if I'm a stakeholder.
7. Be able to have hard discussions where we disagree but know any contention is issue based and not personal.



## What I can do:

1. Show interest. Ask them what issues they're dealing with, and offer support and/or explain how my office is involved in the issue.
2. Ask to be on interview committees for positions that involve my department and/or ask for input to describe what that position needs to do well with your office.
3. Provide unsolicited updates on things going on in your office that might be interesting or useful to the other offices.
4. Consider Commissioners and other county employees as my advocates, and give them talking points about my office that you'd agree with.
5. Make clear the consequences of not approving a budget ask.
6. Create reference information to share when new people enter office and upon request.
7. Meet with candidates prior to election and afterward to review resources available in your office. Describe what I do that is beyond what a Commissioner might see in day-to-day work.
8. Be the expert for what involves my office learn as much as possible about other offices.
9. Advocate for other offices when furthers public interest.
10. Maintain professional courtesy. Know who else needs to know things, and keep them informed.
11. Suspend conviction sometimes to make room for learning. They might change my position or they might help refine or better explain my position.
12. Reach out – call, email, make an effort to connect given Covid has made in-person interactions less frequent or non-existent. It's now necessary to be more intentional to interact.
13. When conflict occurs and egos get bruised (mine or someone else's), find ways to mend relationships and rebuild.
14. Benefit from the LEAN approach. Solicit input and coordination for changes and challenges in my office even when it's my call to make. It's team building, and results are better.
15. Understand some people want to determine outcomes while others trust the process. Stay true to my values.
16. Learn how different people respond well and work it in to my message. Each person, Board composition, and preferences are different. Notice what works and doesn't work.
17. Set people up for success. Remember their time and stressors aren't mine. If I want them to care, I need to make it easy for them to locate any relevant information they need.



18. Give things forethought and show up prepared.  
Earn a reputation as expert.
19. Set people up for success. I'll provide background, links and resources with communications.
20. Be forthcoming: Provide others with statutes, information and opposition, so they know they can trust me to tell them everything I know and think matters.

### **Build relationships: Connections:**

21. Find an ally, have a confidante to discuss issues I'm having to see if they know anything and have suggestions for resolving.
22. Find or create opportunities to connect.
23. Provide people with draft work to get their perspective. It makes the product better and builds relationships. People are busy, but they also like being informed and involved. Advance notice is good professional courtesy and grants me time to make corrections before the final product.
24. Be prepared and give all the information before meeting so there aren't surprises. Often the conversation are richer.

### **Tools for staying informed:**

25. Monitor local, state and national news
26. Look at the Board's agenda for the week. Notice every ordinance, resolution and proclamation made.
27. Sign up to social media accounts for community, county and local business events and news

### **What I can ask of others:**

28. Invite them to come see my office, receive a tour, and get an overview of what my office does.
29. Request more scheduled opportunities for everyone to gather and connect.
30. Request the timeline changes if needed to allow other departments/offices to have advance review time of policies and budget requests.
31. Ask the commissioners to remember we are experts at customer service. Be wary of thinking one complaint represents everyone's experience with our offices. We hear plenty about the commissioners, and we recognize there is usually more to the story.



# Jefferson County Budget Tactics

**Budget Committee Meetings** Monthly Jan – Nov, Take Dec off.

- Review monthly revenue and expenditure reports, budget status and issues affecting budget
- Budget history brought up periodically to inform new people of past budget decisions that affect where we are today. Talked about what was done in the last recession, what worked, and what we learned.
- Some desire to add to the agenda to discuss a different topic each month that would increase our individual and collective knowledge on topics.

**Annual Budget Adoption process:** The process is prescriptive with submittal, hearings & adoption, but it's lots of variations among counties.

- Each department has an **individual meeting** with the County Administrator and Central Services Director (Budget Manager) to review the budget request. Discussion as preferred by those there. I like to discuss the impacts to my office for pending budget decisions and long-term direction for the office.
- **One-on-one Q&A** As needed (like when an item is complex or we're concerned our message isn't getting through within the standard process), we'll schedule time with individual Commissioners to discuss any budget items we're lobbying for and answer questions. We try to be sensitive and exhibit professional courtesy while advocating for our office's needs in the best interest of the county.
- **Budget Hearing:**
  - We don't as common procedure each attend the Budget Hearing and publicly advocate for our own offices.
  - We do have the option though if we feel we aren't being heard and our budget needs aren't being met reasonably. And experience has proven that a department head who speaks up in a group setting will usually get some support from other elected.
  - Commissioners have expressed a benefit that it seems items are addressed among departments before they see them, and it avoids public arguments.



**Quarterly Budget Appropriation Process:** Last year we requested and had the process change to have quarterly appropriation requests shown to other departments prior to going to the Commissioners and public. We had concerns that approvals were being done outside of the budget process with somewhat of a first-come first serve approach. Adding some transparency and advance review allows us to ask questions and express any concerns prior to the public hearing.

**Elected and Department Head meetings w/Commissioners:**

**Quarterly:** These have been done for years. It's during lunch and a public meeting. It's short and difficult to get too in depth.

**County Coordination Meetings:** They started as weekly and are now biweekly meetings to discuss county issues. It started with Covid issues and has grown to include other big issues like Institutional Bias/Racism. It's somewhat the only time we all get together, so I've had a desire to add other items that affect all of us. I've really liked this a lot more than waiting to meet quarterly.



**Community Outreach Meetings** with Commissioners, other Electeds, Department Heads and key staff. A series of five meetings all over the county to talk to citizens and hear from each other. Done in "off years" 2017, 2019

**Courthouse "blocks"** who coordinate more together – know each other's roles and needs more fully and advocate together.

- Financial - Assessor/Auditor/Treasurer,
- Law & Justice - Clerk/Superior & District Courts, Juvenile Court, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff
- Appointed Department Heads - Health/Public Works/Community Development/Central Services/WSU Extension

**County Social Events:** Tax Blues Breakfast, Halloween, and Summer Awards Picnic. These are more difficult with the pandemic, and we need to find some substitutes.

