

November 15, 2010

Honorable Hamilton County Commissioners  
138 E. Court Street, Room 605  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Honorable Commissioners:

The 2011 General Fund budget proposed by the County Administrator for the Hamilton County Auditor's office is inadequate to allow us to fully meet our statutory duties.

The proposed cut to our General Fund request would hit our Finance Department directly.

As the core of the critical financial infrastructure of County government, the Auditor's Finance Department provides accounting, financial reporting, payroll and accounts payable services, as well as staff support to the County Budget Commission and taxing entities throughout the County.

Meeting State audit requirements alone has been problematic in recent years due to inadequate staffing. There are as many as 11 State auditors on site on any given day requiring timely and detailed responses to their inquiries. It may be years before complexities associated with the special JFS audits are completely resolved, but as soon as next month, there could be additional audit work taking place related to those special audits.

And consider the fact that thus far in 2010 we have processed 430,516 documents through our accounts payable department. Transactions vary from refunds issued to citizens who have successfully contested their property valuations in the Board of Revision to payment for supplies purchased by County departments to mileage reimbursement for JFS workers and many others.

Managerial staff in Finance is working into the evenings and on weekends to make sure this work is accomplished. It is unfair to continue to ask this of them, let alone require them to absorb further cuts. And additional cutbacks are certainly not in the best interest of the citizens of Hamilton County who expect and deserve accuracy as well as efficiency.

Also crucial to Hamilton County citizens is the General Fund-supported Weights and Measures unit, which enhances responsible commerce and faith in the marketplace by inspecting gas pumps, computing scales and other devices that drive consumer transactions. When we took over operation for the city of Cincinnati in 1994, we had four inspectors and they had six. We now have only two field staff serving the entire County. Moreover, the State, with its own budget problems, has eliminated most of its help to counties.

We are the single largest Weights and Measures jurisdiction in the State of Ohio. Our Chief Inspector advises that jurisdictions inspecting one third to half as many devices as we have in Hamilton County have one or two more fulltime inspectors than we currently employ. In order to fulfill our obligations to Hamilton County consumers, we must hire one more inspector.

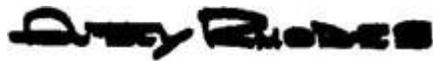
Gentlemen, we need an additional 2011 appropriation of \$92,856 just to be able to continue at our current level.

But that amount alone will not solve critical staffing needs in Accounting and Weights and Measures...

In order to properly serve the citizens of Hamilton County, \$120,000 to cover salary and benefits for a new accountant and a new Weights and Measures inspector should *also* be appropriated.

Your favorable consideration is requested.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dusty Rhodes". The letters are bold and somewhat irregular, with a cursive-like flow.

Dusty Rhodes  
513-946-4047