



County of Ottawa

Fiscal Services Department

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Ms. Pamela Fisher, Editor
Holland Sentinel
54 W. 8th Street
Holland, Michigan 49423

Dear Ms. Fisher:

I am responding to an article entitled *Filling a \$3.6 million hole, Jobs, programs are proposed Ottawa County cuts for 2010 budget* which was published September 9, 2009 in the Holland Sentinel. The article in question contained several inaccuracies which I believe are important to correct to ensure your readers have accurate information.

The article stated that tuition assistance would be cut. It is important to note that the tuition assistance is being suspended in the 2010 budget, but is not being cut permanently. The County believes it is important to assist employees with continuing education to enhance their knowledge and skills in the workplace.

The article also incorrectly stated that I “advised cutting six custodian jobs.” If the budget is approved by the Board, the County would contract for housekeeping services which would eliminate 5.25 full time equivalent positions, but the custodial staff would not be affected.

Further, the article stated that “one-time infusion of \$2 million from the general fund, jail pay phones, building rent and the stabilization fund” would fill the remaining budget gap. However, in actuality, the proposed budget will utilize \$500,000 of fund balance from the General Fund fund balance, \$500,000 redirected from the Public Improvement Fund and the Telecommunications Fund, and \$1 million from the Stabilization Fund. The redirected funds from the Public Improvement Fund and Telecommunications Fund will revert back to those funds on an incremental basis to provide funding for future projects. This is an allowable practice by state statute which permits the use of the Stabilization Fund to assure the continued financial condition of the County and provide flexibility to deal with unexpected occurrences that have the potential to negatively impact finances of the County.

Finally, I was quoted as having said “it’s a short term solution.” I read a prepared statement at the Board meeting as follows: We believe this option results in the greatest benefit as a long term strategy to ensure the fiscal stability of the County.

Sincerely,

June Hagan
Fiscal Services Director