Wayne County Commission adopts $1.63 billion operating budget for 2019-20 fiscal year

Wayne County Commissioners on Thursday adopted a $1.63 billion county operating budget for the 2019-20 fiscal year. The new budget represents a decrease from the current year’s $1.66 billion amended budget, which expires Sept. 30.

The budget is balanced for the fifth consecutive year and includes a surplus of $5.7 million.

The 2019-20 budget reflects an increase of just under $11.5 million in property tax collections and an expected increase of $2.1 million in state revenue sharing.

“The good news is we are funding some badly needed programs. The better news is that we continue to show financial responsibility in doing so,” Wayne County Commission Chair Alisha Bell said.

Programs being funded under the new budget include a new countywide Violent Crimes Initiative that will include 10 sheriff’s department officers and three assistant county prosecutors, at a cost of $1.9 million.

“We made it a priority to take this strong stand against violent crime and to protect our residents,” Chair Bell said.

Other budget highlights include:

• An additional outreach officer to assist county military veterans.
• Accelerated road funding of $5 million, with an additional $3.5 million set aside for the township road initiative.

• Roughly $14.5 million for bonded debt service to help construct the county’s new criminal justice complex.

“We worked hard with Wayne County Executive Warren Evans, his staff and department heads to develop this new budget,” said Commissioner Ilona Varga, chair of the commission’s Ways & Means Committee. “All that hard work means that we are again providing the services our residents deserve.”

As has been their recent practice, commissioners also worked on a one-year projection for 2020-21 to guide future spending.

This year’s budget process included offsite Ways & Means Committee meetings in Dearborn, Detroit and Livonia. Videos of meetings held at the committee’s regular meeting room at the Guardian Building in downtown Detroit, have also been posted online at waynecounty.com.

“I am pleased that so many people were able to take part in this year’s budget process,” Chair Bell said. “This is a big part of our efforts to increase transparency and accountability.”

The new budget takes effect Oct. 1.