

**“It’s mainly a status quo budget,” Western District Comanche County Commissioner Don Hawthorne said of the fiscal year 2014-2015 estimate of needs approved by the Comanche County Excise Board [Wednesday morning](#) during its regular monthly meeting.**

**Hawthorne, who drafted the budget after consulting with all of the county department heads, presented it to the excise board for final approval Wednesday. The Comanche County Board of Commissioners approved the preliminary budget at its weekly meeting [Monday morning](#).**

**The annual budget of \$8,565,598 is balanced to match the county’s projected revenue for the same period.**

**The budget for 2014-2015 is \$218,598 more than the budget for the previous fiscal year.**

**“We only had enough revenue increase to keep us current,” Hawthorne said.**

**One way Hawthorne said he was able to balance the budget was moving all capital improvement projects out of the county’s general operating fund. He said the county has three other sources of money that can be used to pay for capital improvements, such as repairs and upgrades at the courthouse.**

**The county Contingency Fund has around \$820,000, the Capital Improvement Fund has about \$300,000 and the Use Tax Fund has approximately \$650,000, Hawthorne said.**

**He said needed courthouse improvements like new air conditioner units, improving the fire safety system, external security cameras, and improved doors and**

**elevators can be paid for from those three sources, freeing up money for daily operations.**

**There weren't a lot of major changes to the budgets for individual departments, although many of the departments did receive modest increases over the previous year's allocations.**

**The Comanche County Sheriff's Office is slated to receive \$17,708.56 more than last year. Most of that change is due to safety awards and longevity pay increases for employees.**

**Hawthorne said \$1,000 was added to the Sheriff's budget to help the department meet a state requirement that they properly care for stray livestock that deputies round up until the animals are returned to their owners.**

**The General Government budget increased by \$33,543. Hawthorne said most of that amount is due to improved courthouse maintenance.**

**The combined city/county emergency 911 center will receive \$56,619.50 over last year's budget. That amount is due to changes in what the City of Lawton pays for the center and overall costs. The county is obligated to pay 20 percent of the center's costs, said Hawthorne.**

**The Juvenile Detention Center is scheduled to receive an increase of \$55,897.96. Hawthorne said that is primarily due to the county paying the department's worker's compensation insurance premiums out of the general budget in one lump sum, instead of being prorated among different sources. He said the Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma prefers to have the premium paid the way it has been budgeted for the this year.**

**The County Assessor's Office is budgeted to lose \$10,874 from last year's budget, due to minor reductions in capital outlay, travel and maintenance and operations, said Hawthorne.**

**The Court Clerk's Office is slated to have \$20,036 less than last year. Hawthorne said the savings is due to personnel**

**changes.**

**Hawthorne said this is the third year he has been involved with budget creation for the county and he's been pleased with how cooperative the department heads have been.**

**"It's really kind of a painless process," he said.**