

## 2022 Special Budget Report

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers writing to you from Cheyenne on March 9, 2022, Day 18 of the 66th Budget Session. This special budget report outlines a few key provisions from the final budget bill, which passed the Legislature on Monday, March 8, and has moved to the Governor's desk.

We took a balanced, conservative approach with the 2023-2024 budget. The final budget bill of approximately \$2.645 billion in traditional state funds appropriated for spending is dollar-for-dollar ten percent lower than a full decade ago – and that's not considering inflation. Funding for education is essentially flat for school year 2022 and school year 2023.

### **I have heard some interest in the following few budget amendments which all made it into the final budget bill that is before Governor Gordon:**

The Legislature appropriated \$3,000,000 in General Funds to the Department of Revenue to fund the state's Property Tax Refund Program. Separately, the Legislature adopted a bill (SF 19) which would allow counties to develop programs that could refund up to half of residents' prior year tax bills.

- The Legislature appropriated \$7,500,000 in General Funds to the Community College Commission to address funding shortfalls for the state's community colleges.
- The Legislature appropriated \$75,000,000 in General Funds to the Governor's Office to serve as a required state match to federal funds to qualify for federal infrastructure funds to repair roads, airports, bridges, dams, and build out broadband, as well as provide for other infrastructure needs in Wyoming towns and counties.
- The Legislature appropriated \$478,654 in General Funds to the Department of Health's Aging Division to match up to \$7 million in federal funds. The Aging Division supports services for older adults and disabled individuals in Wyoming Communities. It also operates three community facilities: the Wyoming Pioneer Home in Thermopolis, the Wyoming Retirement Center in Basin, and the Veterans' Home of Wyoming in Buffalo. These funds would benefit senior citizen centers across the state for such things as nutritional services.
- The Legislature appropriated \$2,250,000 in General Funds for the stabilization, reform and expansion of community juvenile services boards. These boards identify and work with children who are at risk of entering the juvenile court system, and seek to prevent juvenile delinquency. Funding for the board was reduced originally due to state budget cuts in 2020.
- The Legislature will hold back \$250,000 in General Funds to the University of Wyoming and the Business Council until the Shop Wyoming website and its credit card companies allow for the sale of firearms on this state-funded website that highlights Wyoming-made products.

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- The Legislature appropriated \$9,300,000 in other funds to retain the External Cost Adjustment to address rising costs for energy and educational materials for education funding.
- The Legislature appropriated \$75,000,000 to the Permanent Wyoming Mineral Trust Fund Reserve Account and \$75,000,000 to the Common School Permanent Land Fund.
- The Legislature added \$10,800,000 in General Fund dollars to increase the employee compensation program put forth by the Governor for the Executive Branch, University of Wyoming, Community Colleges and Judicial Branch.

**The following budget amendments did not pass muster with the conference committee and did not make it into the budget bill:**

- A provision to add a total of \$10 million in General Funds for the State Parks and Cultural Resources Department and the Department of Transportation to develop trail systems in Wyoming towns and counties.

### Next Steps

Before any bill passed by the Legislature becomes law, it must be presented to the Governor. If he approves the bill, he signs it. If he disapproves it, he returns it to the body of origin with his objections. With the budget, the Governor has line-item veto authority, which allows him to send back specific budget items instead of the whole bill.

If both bodies then wish to pass the bill again, it may be passed over the Governor's veto by a vote of two-thirds of the members elected to each body.

If any bill sent to the Governor is not signed by him and is not returned within three days (Sundays excepted) it becomes law without his signature.

The Legislature awaits further action by the Governor.

I can be reached at [albert@albertsommers.com](mailto:albert@albertsommers.com) with questions or comments.

Thank you.