BUT...our county commissioners have put an additional tax proposal on the ballot, yet don't fully understand the costs, the revenue, nor the model they will ultimately attempt to implement.

Watch and listen to https://www.youtube.com/live/K-WrfomiKFg Fast forward to ~29:15 on the clip for where this topic starts. Key to your understanding of the issue and our commissioners' level of knowledge as of July 14 is at 30:15 through 37:20

Facts:

- We need an ambulance service for the county.
- We have an ambulance service for the county
- The current extension with the private company supplying that service goes through Sept.
- We are funding that ambulance for the entire county
- There is budget at the county level for the next fiscal period to continue funding the ambulance (see next page for a summary). The fear-mongering going on by some on social is irresponsible.
- Towns and Tribes may need to ante up a bit per Mike Jones at the 35 min mark on the video above. Seems reasonable.
- We do not need a new additional tax on the entire county to fund ambulance, commercial air service and ground bus/transport surface.
- We should not add a new tax to fund commercial air service and ground bus/transport services that are providing limit county coverage.
- We should at some point reconsider a 1/2 % tax to ONLY fund the ambulance long term. But, first pick a model, prove that it can work and be semi-self-sufficient, tweak as needed, THEN figure out what dedicated taxing level is needed to sustain it.

Fremont County commissioners approved a $32.9 million budget for the fiscal year that carries a total tax requirement of just over $7.1 million. The plan pauses broad employee raises pending a compensation study and utilizes reserves to stabilize revenues amid ongoing statewide property tax pressures. [1]

The Riverton Ranger has detailed the following key aspects of the budget process:

- **Revenue & Tax Requirements:** The general fund accounts for nearly $5.1 million of the total tax requirement. The county used $685,000 from its mineral stabilization fund to navigate a one-time revenue shift. [1]
- **Economic Development Funds:** Commissioners directed $500,000 of the remaining economic development fund toward ambulance services and $400,000 to RiverPeak Health. The rest was left uncommitted pending an August ballot measure to fund ambulance, air service, and transportation. [1]
- **Employee Compensation:** Broader employee raises and cost-of-living adjustments were paused to await the results of a compensation study, which will compare county compensation with neighboring governments and the private sector. [1]
- **Statewide Pressures:** The budget was shaped by a fluctuating valuation and ongoing statewide policy discussions regarding property tax measures, which required department heads to "hold the line" on spending. [1, 2]

Full article:

County OKs $32.9M budget

- By Austin Beck-Doss, Features Reporter

- Jul 15, 2026

Despite a stronger-than-expected finish to the fiscal year, Fremont County commissioners postponed making a decision on across-the-board employee raises while unanimously approving Tuesday a $32.9 million budget.

The adopted fiscal year 2026-27 budget includes approximately $29.8 million in general fund spending and maintains about $14.5 million in general fund cash reserves. Overall, the county’s budget carries a total tax requirement of just over $7.1 million, with the general fund accounting for nearly $5.1 million of that total.

The unanimous vote capped a budget process that unfolded much differently than last year’s. In 2025, commissioners asked county departments to prepare for 10% reductions amid declining revenue projections, ultimately approving a budget that included a $300,000 reduction to the Fremont County Library System and cuts to several outside organizations.

This year, while department heads again presented largely flat budgets and commissioners remained cautious about inflation, other factors also drove funding decisions. Rising operating costs and uncertainty surrounding property taxes; higher-than-expected revenues; and lower-than-anticipated spending left the county in a considerably stronger position by the time the budget was finalized.

Most departments also sought to preserve existing services without adding staff or launching major new initiatives, reflecting what many department heads described throughout the budget process as a continued effort to do more with limited resources.

“We always go back over everything again and again just to be sure, which is always a good thing,” County Clerk Julie Freese said before commissioners approved the budget.

Several factors improved the county’s financial outlook during the final weeks of the budget process, Freese said. Most departments finished the fiscal year below budget, she said, and the county received approximately $1 million more than anticipated in federal Payments in Lieu of Taxes, or PILT, revenue.

“You should commend your departments for doing a really good job this year,” Freese said. “We literally did not have that many people looking to be over budget this year, or even close.”

The county also used $685,000 from the third year of its mineral stabilization fund, established after changes to Wyoming's mineral property tax system created a one-time revenue shift. Other final revisions included previously approved salary adjustments, updates to juvenile treatment court and circuit court budgets, $10,000 for predator management, $14,000 for a countywide compensation study, and $95,000 for previously approved information technology purchases. The county also updated year-end fund balances, incorporated previously approved wage adjustments and carried forward funding for several unfinished projects.

Although commissioners entered the final meeting with a healthier financial picture, they declined to approve across-the-board employee raises, opting instead to reduce employee retirement contributions while waiting for additional salary data.

Commissioners unanimously approved lowering the employee share of retirement contributions to 5%, a change expected to increase employees' take-home pay while leaving Fremont County among the state's more competitive public employers.

“I know you can't eat benefits,” Freese said, “but they are super important when you want to leave here.”

Commissioners discussed several options for broader employee raises, including a flat increase for employees who had not previously received salary adjustments and a countywide cost-of-living increase. Instead, they agreed to wait approximately six to eight weeks for the results of a compensation study comparing county compensation with similar public employers. Commissioners said the study would provide a more complete picture of how county wages compare with both neighboring governments and the private sector before any broader adjustments are considered.

“My thing is that we could wait until we get the study information back,” Chairman Larry Allen said. “Then we can have our discussion about our department heads and about adjusting that as well.”

Allen also noted the county retained $300,000 in the budget for wage adjustments, allowing commissioners to continue considering individual salary requests while awaiting the study. Commissioner Jennifer Wilson said she wanted to ensure county employees continued to be treated fairly, while Commissioner Clarence Thomas cautioned against delaying action too long.

The adopted budget also incorporates several major funding decisions made during the budget process.

Commissioners directed $500,000 from the county's remaining economic development fund toward ambulance services and another $400,000 to RiverPeak Health to help complete the nonprofit hospital's commercial kitchen. They left the remainder of the approximately $1.6 million fund uncommitted as the county continues working toward a locally governed ambulance system and awaits the outcome of an Aug. 18 ballot measure to collect a new three-quarter-cent sales tax to fund ambulance service, commercial air service and public transportation.

After incorporating the latest revisions, Freese said the county still had roughly $1.3 million in remaining budget capacity before exhausting its available fund balance.

After a motion by Thomas and a second by Wilson, commissioners unanimously approved a resolution adopting the fiscal year 2026-27 budget.