

Exercise 1: Public Affairs Reporting

911 Emergency: The Dahmer Tapes

Police officers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, found 11 mutilated bodies in an apartment rented by Jeffrey L. Dahmer. Dahmer, 31, confessed to killing a total of 17 people and pleaded that he was insane. One of Dahmer's victims was a 14-year-old Laotian boy, Konerak Sinthasomphone, whom the police might have saved. When he was finally arrested, Dahmer told police that two officers had been at his apartment two months earlier to investigate a 911 call involving the 14-year-old. The officers left the boy at the apartment, and Dahmer then killed him.

The police later released this transcript of the 911 call. It reveals that a Milwaukee resident named Glenda Cleveland called the police at 2 a.m. the previous May 27. Cleveland told a 911 dispatcher that her daughter and a niece had seen the boy naked on a street corner and that the boy needed help. In a follow-up call, Cleveland, 37, asked the officers if they were certain that the boy was an adult.

A week before the tape's release, the two officers were suspended with pay but not identified. A lawyer representing the officers said they had seen no evidence at Dahmer's apartment to suggest that anything was wrong. Also, they believed that the naked male was a man living with Dahmer. The officers' lawyer added that they tried to interview the boy, but that he seemed to be seriously intoxicated.

Assume that the Milwaukee police (1) have already found the bodies and interviewed Dahmer, (2) suspended the officers one week ago and (3) released the transcript today. Write a news story that summarizes the transcript's content. Because this is a verbatim copy of the transcript, you can quote it directly. Include whatever background information seems necessary.

DISPATCHER: "Milwaukee emergency. Operator 71."

WOMAN: "OK. Hi. I am on 25th and State. And there's this young man. He's butt-naked and he has been beaten up. He is very bruised up. He can't stand. He is . . . butt-naked. He has no clothes on. He is really hurt. And I, you know, ain't got no coat on. But I just seen him. He needs some help."

DISPATCHER: "Where is he at?"

WOMAN: "25th and State. The corner of 25th and State."

DISPATCHER: "He's just on the corner of the street?"

WOMAN: "He's in the middle of the street. He (unintelligible). We tried to help him. Some people trying to help him."

DISPATCHER: "OK. And he's unconscious right now?"

WOMAN: "He is getting him up. 'Cause he is bruised up. Somebody must have jumped on him and stripped him or whatever."

DISPATCHER: "OK. Let me put the fire department on the line. They will send an ambulance. Just stay on the phone. OK?"

WOMAN: "OK."

[The dispatcher transferred the call to the fire department, and the woman asked for an ambulance, saying a "butt-naked young boy or man or whatever" needed help.]

WOMAN: "He's been beaten up real bad. . . . He can't stand up. . . . He has no clothes on. He is very hurt."

FIRE DEPARTMENT DISPATCHER: "Is he awake?"

WOMAN: "He ain't awake. They are trying to get him to walk, but he can't walk straight. He can't even see straight. Any time he stands up he just falls down."

DISPATCHER: "25th and State? All right. OK."

[The woman hung up. The next part of the tape is a police radio transmission of a dispatcher reporting the woman's call to a street officer.]

DISPATCHER: "36. I got a man down. Caller states there is a man badly beaten and is wearing no clothes, lying in the street, 2-5 and State. Anonymous female caller. Ambulance sent."

OFFICER: "10-4."

[A Milwaukee emergency operator received information from the sheriff's department, checking on another call that reported a male dragging a naked male who looked injured.]

EMERGENCY

OPERATOR: "OK. We will get someone out."

[The next conversation involved an officer reporting back to the dispatcher over the police radio.]

OFFICER: "36 Intoxicated Asian, naked male. (Laughter.) Was returned to his sober boyfriend. (More laughter.)"

[An officer advised (C-10) that the assignment was completed (C-18) and the squad was ready for new duties (10-8). There was a 40-second gap in the tape, then:]

OFFICER: "Squad 65."

DISPATCHER: "65."

OFFICER: "Ah, give myself and 64 C-10 and put us 10-8."

DISPATCHER: "10-4 64 and 65."

OFFICER: "10-4. It will be a minute. My partner is going to get deloused at the station. (Laughter.)"

DISPATCHER: "10-4."

[A woman later called Milwaukee Emergency and told the dispatcher that 10 minutes ago her daughter and niece "flagged down" a policeman after they "walked up on a young child being molested by a male guy." She said the officers took no information from the girls, and the boy was naked and bleeding. The woman said further information "must be needed." The dispatcher asked the location of the incident, and the woman repeated that her daughter's and niece's names were not taken.]

WOMAN: "The fact is a crime was being committed. I am sure you must need, you know, some kind of information based on that."

[The call was transferred, and the woman repeated the squad number and the address of the incident. The woman asked if squad car 68 "brought someone in, a child being molested by an adult that was witnessed by my daughter and niece."]

WOMAN: "Their names or nothing was taken down and I wonder if this situation was being handled. . . . What it indicated was that this was a male child being raped and molested by an adult."

[The police agent referred the call to another district after getting the address of the incident. The woman repeated her story again to another official. Eventually, she reached an officer who was at the scene.]

OFFICER: "Hello. This is . . . of the Milwaukee Police."

WOMAN: "Yes. There was a squad car number 68 that was flagged down earlier this evening. About 15 minutes ago."

OFFICER: "That was me."

WOMAN: "Ya, ah, what happened? I mean my daughter and my niece witnessed what was going on. Was anything done about the situation? Do you need their names or information or anything from them?"

OFFICER: "No, not at all."

WOMAN: "You don't?"

OFFICER: "Nope. It's an intoxicated boyfriend of another boyfriend."

WOMAN: "Well, how old was this child?"

OFFICER: "It wasn't a child, it was an adult."

WOMAN: "Are you sure?"

OFFICER: "Yup."

WOMAN: "Are you positive? Because this child doesn't even speak English. My daughter had, you know, dealt with him before, seeing him on the street."

OFFICER: "Hmmm. Yea. No. He's, he's, oh, it's all taken care of, ma'am."

WOMAN: "Are you sure?"

OFFICER: "Ma'am. I can't make it any more clear. It's all taken care of. That's, you know, he's with his boyfriend and, ah, his boyfriend's apartment, where he's got his belongings also. And that is where it is released."

WOMAN: "Isn't this, I mean, what if he's a child and not an adult. I mean are you positive this is an adult?"

OFFICER: "Ma'am. Ma'am. Like I explained to you. It is all taken care of. It's as positive as I can be. OK. I can't do anything about somebody's sexual preferences in life."

WOMAN: "Well, no, I am not saying anything about that, but it appeared to have been a child. This is my concern."

OFFICER: "No. No. He's not."

WOMAN: "He's not a child?"

OFFICER: "No, he's not. OK? And it's a boyfriend-boyfriend thing. And he's got belongings at the house where he came from."

WOMAN: "Hmmm. Hmmm."

OFFICER: "He has got very . . . pictures of himself and his boyfriend and so forth. So. . . ."

WOMAN: "Oh, I see."

OFFICER: "OK."

WOMAN: "OK. I am just, you know, it appeared to have been a child. That was my concern."

OFFICER: "I understand. No, he is not. Nope."

WOMAN: "Oh. OK. Thank you. 'Bye."

Exercise 2: Public Affairs Reporting

School District Budget

Write a news story summarizing the statement from the superintendent of schools and the proposed school district budget that follows. The statement appears verbatim and may be quoted directly. Accompanying the budget are figures showing enrollment by grade and the number of people the district employs. As you write your story, you might want to use a calculator (or a computer spreadsheet program) to find some numbers the budget does not provide, such as the percentage by which spending will increase or the average annual salary for teachers.

STATEMENT ON THE PROPOSED BUDGET

By Gary Hubbard

Superintendent of Schools

The development of this budget for the coming year was a challenging process. The district staff had only one overriding premise: What educational programs will provide every student with the opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential and provide the community with contributing citizens? This is an important goal because if this community is to continue to grow, prosper and maintain its quality of life, we must have educated citizens. This community historically has committed itself to maintaining the quality of the school system, and we are sure it will continue to do so.

This budget proposal shows what the district staff thinks is necessary to maintain the quality of schools and is based on certain assumptions which should be made public:

1. We expect growth in the district's assessed valuation of 28% next year. The county assessor will not certify the final assessed valuation for the district until after the deadline for adopting this budget.
2. The Legislature changed the formula by which state aid is distributed. The impact of that change is not clear, but we expect that state aid will increase only slightly for the next year, but more substantial increases of \$700,000 to \$1 million may be coming in the two or three years after next.
3. Student spending will remain at about \$3,000 per pupil, and the district's enrollment will grow modestly.
4. The ratio of teachers to students will remain constant.
5. No new programs will be started.
6. No programs will be restarted.
7. Salaries and fringe benefits will not increase, but spending on nonsalary items will increase 2.5% in accordance with the consumer price index.

The General Fund Budget shows the staff's proposals for expenditures for most of the district's day-to-day operations, including all instructional programs. All expenses for operating the district's three high schools, nine middle schools and thirty-three elementary schools are in the general fund. It also includes all salaries for administrators, certified teachers and classified non-teaching employees.

The Building and Construction Budget shows spending on the construction of three new elementary schools and the work being done to renovate and remodel two middle schools. The district is nearing completion of the building program voters approved five years ago when they passed a \$54-million bond issue. Some of the construction and renovation work that had been budgeted for this year was delayed because of bad weather. Therefore, money the district had expected to spend last year has been included in this year's budget.

The Interscholastic Athletics Fund Budget covers expenditures on interscholastic sports, such as football, girls' volleyball, girls' and boys' basketball, boys' baseball and girls' softball. Salaries for full-time coaches come from the General Fund. The salaries paid from the Interscholastic Athletics Fund go to referees, parking attendants, concessions workers and security personnel.

The Debt Service Fund shows district payments on the principal and interest for the various bond issues outstanding.

Definitions of Budget Categories:

Salaries—Funds paid to employees under regular employment contracts with the district.

Benefits—Funds for the district's share of Social Security, retirement, unemployment benefits, health insurance and death benefits.

Contracted Services—Funds to pay for services provided by individuals or firms outside the district. Examples are attorneys' fees, consultant fees and maintenance agreements on equipment.

Supplies—Funds for consumable materials used in providing district services, such as textbooks, pencils, chalk, paper, floor wax, gasoline, etc.

Instructional Development—Funds allocated to improve instructional programs and for professional growth activities by employees.

In-District Travel—Funds paid to reimburse district employees who are required by their job assignments to travel within the district.

Repair Equipment—Funds allocated to repair equipment such as typewriters, film projectors, lighting fixtures and musical instruments.

Replace/New Equipment—Funds for the purchase of equipment to provide new services or enhance current programs. Examples are microcomputers, copying machines, vehicles, tools and furniture.

Fixed Charges—Funds allocated to purchase various kinds of insurance for the district.

Transfer—Funds transferred from the General Fund to support athletics, debate, journalism and other student activities.

Contingency—Funds budgeted for unexpected personnel and non-personnel items and which can be expended only with board approval.

SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

DESCRIPTION	LAST YEAR ACTUAL	THIS YEAR BUDGET	NEXT YEAR PROPOSED
GENERAL FUND			
Beg. Balance 9/1	14,727,807.00	17,552,056.00	14,174,366.00

Receipts

Property Taxes	91,798,484.00	91,485,010.00	102,793,572.00
State Aid	29,236,428.00	31,373,050.00	31,427,590.00
Other Local	5,785,741.00	5,847,000.00	5,971,000.00
County	857,522.00	1,000,000.00	841,000.00
State	18,744,139.00	21,566,000.00	21,451,000.00
Federal	2,950,850.00	3,457,000.00	3,625,000.00
Total Receipts	149,373,164.00	154,728,060.00	166,109,162.00
Total Revenue Available	164,101,335.00	172,298,116.00	180,283,528.00
Property Tax Rate	1.5571	1.6453	1.4126
Valuation	5,572,804,000.00	5,702,528,000.00	7,301,758,000.00

Expenditures

Personnel Expenses

Salaries

Administration	7,924,457.00	8,320,440.00	8,447,610.00
Certificated	76,144,423.00	80,556,450.00	87,034,960.00
Classified	19,413,780.00	21,297,550.00	21,982,000.00

Total Salaries	103,482,660.00	110,174,440.00	117,464,570.00
Benefits	26,117,570.00	29,405,560.00	30,723,020.00
Total Personnel Expenses	129,600,230.00	139,580,000.00	148,187,590.00
<i>Non-Personnel Expenses</i>			
Contract Services	1,716,125.00	2,588,010.00	2,570,590.00
Supplies	6,685,297.00	7,586,510.00	7,650,980.00
Utilities	3,081,556.00	3,036,980.00	3,566,700.00
Professional Development	386,739.00	384,430.00	391,930.00
In-District Travel	171,513.00	163,900.00	163,750.00
Repair Equipment	265,977.00	317,430.00	317,930.00
Replace/New Equipment	2,738,604.00	3,093,640.00	3,147,250.00
Fixed Charges	1,507,858.00	1,409,200.00	1,447,400.00
Transfers	395,380.00	363,650.00	348,150.00
Total Non-Personnel Expenses	16,949,049.00	18,943,750.00	19,604,680.00
Total Expenses	146,549,279.00	158,523,750.00	167,792,270.00
Contingency	0.00	100,000.00	0.00

Grand Total Expenses	146,549,279.00	158,623,750.00	167,792,270.00
Ending Fund Balance	17,552,056.00	13,674,366.00	12,491,258.00
BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION FUND			
Beginning Balance 9/1	3,383,807.00	54,536,777.00	46,633,343.00
<i>Receipts</i>			
Property Taxes	8,206,489.00	7,895,636.00	6,419,926.00
In Lieu of Taxes	241,790.00	260,000.00	260,000.00
Interest on Investments	97,280.00	1,550,000.00	1,730,000.00
Land Leases	5,024.00	10,000.00	5,000.00
City Reimbursements	510,898.00	580,000.00	75,000.00
Miscellaneous	42,394.00	50,000.00	50,000.00
Roof Replacement Fund	0.00	1,000,000.00	900,000.00
Motor Vehicle Taxes	28,578.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
Bond Proceeds	53,705,054.00	0.00	0.00
Tax Anticipation	0.00	5,828,700.00	3,198,344.00
Total Receipts	62,837,507.00	17,194,336.00	12,658,270.00
Total Available	66,221,314.00	71,731,113.00	59,291,613.00

Expenditures

Construction	8,535,662.00	29,923,852.00	55,390,460.00
Renovation	2,933,242.00	1,150,000.00	1,000,000.00
Connectivity	0.00	0.00	1,225,000.00
Roof Replacement	0.00	1,000,000.00	959,153.00
Purchase of Sites	7,883.00	0.00	0.00
Tax Collection Fee	75,892.00	80,000.00	82,000.00
Rating and Management Fees	131,858.00	0.00	0.00
Contingency	0.00	500,000.00	0.00
Not Completed Projects	0.00	3,545,348.00	1,000,000.00
Principal/Interest Accrual	0.00	0.00	335,000.00
Total Expenditures	11,684,537.00	36,199,200.00	59,991,613.00
Ending Balance	54,536,777.00	35,531,913.00	0.00

DEBT SERVICES FUND BUDGET

Beginning Balance 9/1	799,305.00	8,689,915.00	1,342,124.00
-----------------------	------------	--------------	--------------

Receipts

Property Tax	2,305,785.00	7,075,000.00	7,442,500.00
In Lieu of Tax	61,198.00	100,000.00	100,000.00
Motor Vehicle Taxes	7,578.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
Interest	159,196.00	218,660.00	100,000.00
Refunding	7,945,815.00	0.00	0.00
Total Receipts	10,479,572.00	7,403,660.00	7,652,500.00
Total Available	11,278,877.00	16,093,575.00	8,994,624.00
<i>Expenditures</i>			
Bond Principal			
4,280,000 Issued six years ago	325,000.00	3,225,000.00	0.00
5,000,000 Issued five years ago	345,000.00	4,005,000.00	0.00
3,500,000 Issued four years ago	240,000.00	380,000.00	415,000.00
4,220,000 Issued three years ago	110,000.00	180,000.00	190,000.00
8,020,000 Refunding two years ago	430,000.00	1,255,000.00	1,285,000.00
54,480,000 Issued last year	0.00	475,000.00	1,475,000.00

Total Principal	1,450,000.00	9,520,000.00	3,365,000.00
Bond Interest	1,091,477.00	6,096,168.00	5,529,489.00
Tax Collection Fee	21,455.00	70,000.00	70,000.00
Management Fees	26,030.00	33,241.00	30,135.00
Total Expenditures	2,588,962.00	15,719,409.00	8,994,624.00
Ending Balance	8,689,915.00	374,166.00	0.00

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS FUND BUDGET

Beginning Balance 9/1	71,272.00	72,303.00	72,229.00
<i>Receipts</i>			
Football	125,036.00	75,000.00	75,000.00
Basketball (Boys')	48,922.00	40,000.00	50,000.00
Basketball (Girls')	24,794.00	25,000.00	25,000.00
Other	104,148.00	100,000.00	100,160.00
Transferred from General Fund	294,120.00	238,390.00	228,230.00
Total Receipts	597,020.00	478,390.00	478,390.00
Total Available	668,292.00	550,693.00	550,619.00

Expenditures

Salaries, supplies, equipment	595,989.00	505,964.00	505,964.00
Total Expenditures	595,989.00	505,964.00	505,964.00
Ending Balance	72,303.00	44,729.00	44,655.00

SUMMARY OF ALL FUNDS

Total Available Revenues	242,269,818.00	260,673,497.00	249,120,384.00
Total Expenditures	161,418,767.00	211,048,323.00	237,284,471.00
Ending Balance	80,851,051.00	49,625,174.00	11,835,913.00

DISTRICT ENROLLMENT

GRADE	LAST YEAR	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR
Kindergarten	2,348	2,193	2,349
1st	2,367	2,347	2,225
2nd	2,378	2,377	2,347
3rd	2,415	2,371	2,373
4th	2,421	2,406	2,386
5th	2,326	2,424	2,398
6th	2,322	2,319	2,435

7th	2,292	2,367	2,302
8th	2,071	2,289	2,335
9th	2,118	2,082	2,265
10th	2,078	2,141	2,112
11th	1,969	2,015	2,089
12th	2,070	2,057	2,006
Special Education	296	367	367
Head Start	267	265	265
Total	29,738	30,020	30,254

DISTRICT EMPLOYMENT (FULL-TIME EQUIVALENCY)

CATEGORY	LAST YEAR	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR
Administration	127.95	131.30	132.30
Certificated	2,225.63	2,313.38	2,369.26
Technician	62.00	65.70	136.14
Office Personnel	270.60	274.55	263.05
Paraeducators	574.74	599.97	549.54
Tradespersons	435.13	467.50	467.55

Total	3,696.05	3,852.40	3,917.84
--------------	----------	----------	----------