

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET WORKSHOP
FRANKLIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX
AUGUST 21, 2006
5:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Cheryl Sanders-Chairman, Russell Crofton, Vice-Chairman, Noah Lockley, Jimmy Mosconis, and Bevin Putnal

Staff Present: Alan Pierce-Director of Administrative Services, Marcia Johnson-Clerk of Court, Ruth Williams-Clerk's Finance Director, and Connie McKinley-Board Secretary

Call to Order

Chairman Sanders called the Workshop meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

Alan Pierce explained the procedure to be followed in discussing the budget items, and he reported there was no dispute on the requests from **Bay Cares** for \$3,500, **The Lanark Village Association** for \$3,687, or the **Soil & Water Conservation District** for \$9,064.

Anita Grove, Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce, appeared before the Board and withdrew their request and advised the Board they would turn back over to the County their economic development and disaster relief services. The Board deleted this \$10,000 budget item.

Sheila Hauser, Carrabelle Chamber of Commerce, appeared before the Board and withdrew their request. The Board deleted this \$10,000 budget item.

Apalachee Center, Inc.'s request for \$24,400 which reflected no increase from last year was tentatively approved although nobody was present from that organization.

Sue Reed, Bessie Robinson, and Audrey Messer, Senior Citizens Council, were present. The Board tentatively approved their request for \$30,000.

Bert Ivey, Elder Care Services, Inc., was present. The Board tentatively approved their request for \$32,000.

Camp Gordon Johnston's request was brought into discussion. **Commissioner Crofton** suggested the Board look at enacting a policy on agencies that receive Tourist Development Funding; however, the Board did go ahead and tentatively approve funding an amount of \$5,000.

Paula Sapp and Liz Sisung, Literacy Program, were present to discuss their request for \$68,000. They pointed out no increase was included in the amount requested and said the school board funding received in the past may not be forthcoming. The Board tentatively approved the request.

The Humane Society's request was tentatively approved at the same amount as last year of

\$62,000.

Mr. Wesley Tice and **Janice Hicks**, were present to answer any questions regarding the **Health Department's** budget request, and announced the budget request had been decreased by \$3,000. The Board tentatively approved their request for \$203,022.

Mr. Moore with the Dog Island Conservation District appeared. With no questions, the Board tentatively approved their request for \$10,000.

Mr. John Croom and **Mr. Robert Davis** appeared on behalf of **Croom's Transportation**. There was much conversation regarding a question about Croom's being able to transport senior citizens from Apalachicola to Carrabelle for Thursday activities at the Senior Citizens Center. Mr. Croom said Elder Care Services should be providing this support; however, **Mr. Burt Ivey** representing Elder Care Services stated he'd received a bill in an amount they couldn't afford from Crooms. Mr. Davis reported there was a fee of \$85.00 per day to provide transportation to Carrabelle. The Board requested a solution to this problem be forthcoming. **Mrs. Ann Harper**, St. George Island, appeared to inquire if Croom would have to submit bills or if the County just cuts them a check. Mr. Davis stated part of the request was for a State match. The Board tentatively approved the request for \$39,696. Mr. Larry Poston questioned how it could be approved until the misunderstandings were resolved. **Chairman Sanders** replied the problem is how to get the seniors to Carrabelle and it will be resolved.

Ms. Marilyn McCann, Refuge House, appeared in regard to their request for \$12,500 which wasn't increased. She reported she'd provided services to over 100 clients, and said she also had a program with the inmates at the jail facility. The Board tentatively approved the request.

Mr. Jerry Hall appeared on behalf of the **Dixie Theater**. He explained the Tourist Development funds they received was used for events and the money being requested from the Board was for operations and movies for the citizens' enjoyment. **Mr. Thomas Day** expressed opposition to this request and pointed out he'd paid admission to the Dixie Theater. **Commissioner Mosconis** responded this may be one item the Board needs to discuss when setting policy with regard to entities that receive Tourist Development funding. The Board cut the amount requested and tentatively approved an amount of \$12,500.

The Board tentatively approved moving \$12,500 from the **Health Council** to the **Hospital Board**.

Mr. Joe Hayes, Boys and Girls Club, appeared before the Board, regarding their request for \$75,000, a new budgetary item. He advised the Board of the numbers of children enrolled in the after-school program at the various school sites. **Ms. Westi Jo DeHaven**, Alligator Point, inquired who had operated the program last year. **Mr. Pierce** explained the Board had contributed to the summer program with the Boys and Girls Club, and further said there was another after school program called "Project Impact" not funded by the County. **Mrs. Ann Harper**, St. George Island, inquired if the Cities were providing any funding to the Club. **Mr. Hayes** replied the Club had requested \$10,000 from the City of Carrabelle but not from the City of Apalachicola. **Commissioner Mosconis** asked if the School Board provided any funding to

the Club. **Mr. Hayes** stated the school facilities are used and the school board helps with the snacks, books, and curriculum. **Mr. Alan Feifer**, Alligator Point, expressed his opinion that the Club needs to provide a financial statement with their funding sources listed. **Ms. Kathy Swigler** expressed concern about accountability being provided and wanted to see figures on paper. **Mr. Hayes** responded he had no problem with providing that information. Another lady stated all the non-governmental agencies should be required to provide documentation on their sources of income as well as the percentage of funding being requested. **Mr. Hayes** said it's 1/8th of their salary. **Mr. A. J. Smith**, an ex-administrator for the Club, spoke in favor of the funding request. **Ms. DeHaven** stressed the Board should see a breakdown of the budget request. The Board tentatively approved the request for \$75,000.

Sister Jean, a Catholic Nun, and **Clarice Powell**, appeared on behalf of **Franklin's Promise Coalition**, and explained they operate a food pantry and meet federal guidelines to determine whose needs are met within the program. The Board tentatively approved this new budgetary item request of \$15,000.

Mrs. Lynn Wintons, Apalachicola Community Development Corporation, was present to discuss a new budgetary item request for \$25,000. She explained the money was requested for a county-wide community band for those children not involved with the Boys and Girls Club. **Mr. Jerry Cook**, St. George Island, stated he'd understood from an earlier meeting that the county attorney had not recommended this funding. **Commissioner Lockley** replied the money will run through the County's Parks and Recreation budget and the County will buy the equipment. **Chairman Sanders** stated she wanted to see the band throughout the entire County, and **Mrs. Wintons** assured her it would happen. The Board tentatively approved the request for \$25,000 to be a part of the Parks and Recreation budget.

Marcia Johnson, Clerk of Court, appeared and reported she'd decreased her budget. She also reminded the Board she'd been able to turn over \$469,000 to the County that had been used to further the hospital operations from last year's budget. The Board tentatively approved the Clerk's request for \$391,674.

Doris Gibbs, Supervisor of Elections, appeared and explained her increase of \$5,852 was due to equipment mandated by the government and increases in retirement, and she reported she'd decreased her capital outlay. The Board tentatively approved the Supervisor's request for \$276,557.

Doris Pendleton, Property Appraiser, appeared and reported her only increase was for raises. The Board tentatively approved her request for \$678,742. Mr. Alan Pfeifer asked if the approval included the raises. Mrs. Pendleton replied she had to put raises in because she had to submit her budget to the State for approval.

Mr. Joe Bacher, St. George Island, informed the Board he wanted to express opposition to taking any money from road paving. **Mrs. Ruth Williams** explained there was two million dollars in the current year as grant matching funds for C30 and Lake Morality roads, and she further stated there is 2.6 million in this budget as match for CR 67 and Alligator Point roads. **Mr. Pierce** said if the match required is less, the funds could be utilized. **Commissioner**

Lockley said the Board will also get money back from the Hospital for road paving.

The **Tax Collector** was not present. The Board tentatively approved his request for \$503,182.

A **Mr. DeHaven-Smith** inquired of the Board if the Property Appraiser's budget was mandated by the State. **Mrs. Pendleton** said no. Mr. Alan Feifer suggested reducing the budget to last year's total.

Mike Mock, Sheriff, appeared. He reported his only increases were for inmate medical and employee raises, and he said inmate medical is mandated. **Commissioner Crofton** asked the Sheriff how he spends forfeiture monies received which are separate from the budget. **Sheriff Mock** said the vehicles seized are returned to county departments and the money can't be used for budgetary items. The Board tentatively approved the Sheriff's request in the amount of \$5,331,669.

Bill Mahan, County Extension Director, appeared. His budget increased \$643.00. The Board tentatively approved his request for \$59,079.

Van Johnson, Solid Waste Department, appeared and offered to decrease his budget request in the following areas: \$8,723 in overtime, \$29,000 for a new truck, and \$38,663 in raises. Regarding the **Parks and Recreation** budget, he offered to decrease raises \$19,076, equipment \$5,800, and operating fuel \$6,000. In the **Animal Control** budget, he offered to decrease the raises by \$7,500 and operating fuel by \$3,000. The Board had stated earlier that raises should be left out to be discussed as a whole later. **Chairman Sanders** felt fuel shouldn't be decreased, and other commissioners felt nothing should be cut. The Board tentatively approved his budget requests without raises to the following: Solid Waste \$894,169; Parks and Recreation \$393,125; and Animal Control \$142,672.

Alan Pierce, Planning and Zoning Department, appeared. He reported he'd cut the grants writer position from his budget and had a decrease of \$37,675. **Mrs. Dana Whaley** inquired if a grant writer position would ultimately bring more money to the county. **Mr. Pierce** responded he felt he had staff now available to handle the needs. **Commissioner Lockley** expressed the desire to put the money back in the budget for the position. **Mrs. Ann Harper** stated the commissioners had earlier said they weren't hiring any new positions. The Board tentatively approved the Planning and Zoning Budget in the amount of \$126,741 which didn't include a grants writer position.

Alan Pierce then brought into discussion the **Building Department** budget which had a slight decrease from last year. The Board tentatively approved the budget request of \$255,029, and it was pointed out that code enforcement would be handled by **Mr. Jack Osburn** who works in that department.

Alan Pierce remained to discuss the **Administrative Services Department's** budget. He explained the budget had increased due to an engineer being hired by the County. The Board tentatively approved that budget in the amount of \$174,802.

Butch Baker appeared to answer any questions regarding the budget request for the **Emergency Management Federal and State Grants**. The Board tentatively approved the Federal budget item of \$84,683 and the State budget item of \$102,959.

Hubert Chipman, Road Superintendent, appeared. He pointed out he had an increase to hire a new employee since the Board had agreed to move the Mosquito Control Director from his department. **Commissioner Mosconis** wanted the Board to rethink moving mosquito control into its own department and away from the road department, but no action was taken towards that end result. **Mr. Chipman** also pointed out that he had not included raises in his budget request, but he expected his department to receive the same as any other department received. **Chairman Sanders** asked if the Board needed to put \$20,000 back in his budget for a vehicle. Upon questioning by **Commissioner Mosconis**, **Ruth Williams** reported it would take \$546,000 of ad valorem taxes to fund the road department's budget. **Mr. Joe Bacher** asked the Board why two people were being sent out in the mosquito control truck. **Mr. Alan Feifer** asked how much was being spent on fuel, and he was told the County does bid it out. **Mr. Kelvin Shiver**, a county worker, appeared and stated the workers can't do it any cheaper than what is being done. Upon questioning, **Ruth Williams** did say if the County is charged tax on fuel, the State reimburses same and the funds are put back into the road department's budget. The Board tentatively approved an amount of \$1,821,425 with the money for a truck being included in that total.

Dewitt Polous, Mosquito Control Director, was present regarding his budget request. **Commissioner Mosconis** again asked why the County should separate this department from the road department. **Mr. Polous** stated it would allow him to put more efforts on mosquito control. He then responded to an earlier question from **Mr. Joe Bacher** by saying that if two people were seen in the mosquito control truck, it was because a worker was being trained. He reported his increases were due to transferring part of his salary and for communications and equipment. The board tentatively approved his request for \$183,018.

Eileen Annie, Librarian, presented the budget request for the **Franklin County Library**. She said her main increase was for a position for program services and not necessarily for literacy and would be paid by a grant. **Ms. Barbara Reed** appeared and suggested the Board may want to think about putting the other Literacy Program back under the library. The Board tentatively approved the budget request for \$286,143.

William Scott, Veterans Service Officer, appeared and said his only increase of \$624 was due to travel expenses. The Board tentatively approved his budget request in the amount of \$48,810.

Alan Pierce presented the **Courthouse Maintenance** budget. He reported this budget had been reduced due to State funding the County had received. The Board tentatively approved the budget in the amount of \$167,497.

Joe Whitley appeared on behalf of the **State Attorney's Office**. Their slight increase wasn't questioned, and the Board tentatively approved the request for \$32,700.

Kevin Steiger appeared on behalf of the **Public Defender's Office**. He said the increase was

related to a one-time purchase of lap top computers. The Board tentatively approved the request for \$20,740.

Grant Slayden appeared on behalf of the **Circuit and County Judge's** budget request. He stated the request had decreased by 18%, that their budget was small, and also that a T-1 line would be funded by the State in the near future. The Board tentatively approved the request for \$32,263.

The **Tourist Development Council's** budget was tentatively approved at \$1,090,910, and it was explained the Council funds itself and no ad valorem taxes are utilized.

Discussion began regarding a budgetary amount for **Weems Memorial Hospital**. **Mr. Alan Feifer** thought the County may need more money. The Board responded they will be receiving monies from hospital revenues. The Board agreed to tentatively approve an amount of \$250,000 for the hospital.

There was some discussion regarding ambulances and the ambulance contract with **Emergystat**. **Ruth Williams** explained there was \$200,000 in the budget to purchase new ambulances as well as the \$17,000 per month, and she pointed out that **Emergystat** had asked for an increase to \$35,000 per month. **Mr. Skip Chormicle, Emergystat**, was present, and **Alan Pierce** asked him to look at procuring a 75/25 match on the purchase of new ambulances. The Board understood about the \$200,000 and tentatively approved putting \$20,000 for the monthly contract instead of the \$17,000.

Ruth Williams informed the Board that some departmental budgets were increased due to increases in property insurance amounts, and the Board had no problem with that.

The issue of raises for all county employees came up. **Ruth Williams** informed the Board that a 3% across-the-board raise would equal an amount of \$964 per employee. She went on to say that \$1200 raises would total approximately \$244,000 and that \$2500 raises would total approximately \$508,000. **Commissioner Lockley** wanted to go ahead and approve \$2500 raises for all county employees. **Mr. Joe Bacher** asked for a vote from the Board, but **Chairman Sanders** explained there were no votes at a workshop. **Mr. Richard Harper** stated there were a lot of angry people present because the Board had approved increases that amounted to over three million dollars in tax monies. He felt the Board should improve the budget process. At this point, **Mrs. Wanda Whaley** appeared before the Board to express discontent with the Board's recent motion to abandon the Lighthouse Point Estates Roads. **Commissioner Crofton** responded by saying the roads were not built to county standards and would cost a million dollars to pave. **Commissioner Mosconis** responded by saying the Board had hired an engineer to give recommendations and are waiting on his evaluation. **Mrs. Gathana Parmenas** said the roads need to remain open for school bus passage. **Mr. Allen Millender** said the roads were used during last year's hurricane season. The Board agreed to notify the homeowners of any future actions. Going back to the budget, **Mr. Jerry Thompson** stated the County had excellent employees but he felt the budget process needed to change. He pointed out that Wakulla County had only a nine million dollar budget with a bigger population. He recommended the County hire a county manager. **Mrs. Missy Jones**, an employee of the Tax Collector, appeared and

stated Franklin County's millage rate is one of the lowest in the State, and it was her personal feeling that if people didn't like paying the taxes, they should move. **Mr. Alan Feifer** responded by saying the County had the highest spending, not the highest millage rate. **Mr. Lawrence Brannan** appeared. He said he worked for the County, and pointed out the County has a very high tourism rate which requires services to be rendered. He also said high taxes hurt everyone, but he felt the real estate industry was most responsible for the high land values existing. **Mrs. Lois Watkins** pointed out that many of the County's elderly population can't afford a huge tax increase. The Board tentatively approved raises for all county employees at an amount of \$2500 per employee.

Adjourn

Chairman Sanders adjourned the workshop after it was announced the first public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, September 6, 2006 at 5:30 P.M.

Cheryl Sanders, Chairman FCBCC

Attest:

Marcia M. Johnson, Clerk of Court