

FEBRUARY 5, 2001 – WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a workshop on Monday, February 5, 2001 at 9:00 a.m. at the Emergency Operations Center.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Tim Pauls, Commissioner Larry D. Jones, Chairman Herman L. Walker, Vice-Chairman Lane Rees and Commissioner Gene Ryan. Ms. Shirl Williams, Administrative Supervisor, Ms. Martha Ingle Clerk of Courts, were also present. Sheriff Ralph Johnson was also in attendance.

Vice-Chairman Rees led with prayer following the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Chairman Walker called the meeting to order and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the 911 contract between Walton County and the former Sheriff and to make a determination regarding construction of the two buildings being constructed for the Regional Distribution Center. Vice-Chairman Rees stated that this is also for the purpose of opening a dialogue between both parties in order to become familiar with the operations of the Sheriff's Department.

The session was opened with questions and answers regarding the Emergency Operations Center and Regional Distribution Center. Vice-Chairman Rees questioned who would be paying for the Distribution Center and stated that it is his understanding that funds have not been budgeted for this project.

Ms. Paula Churchwell of the Department of Community Affairs addressed the Commissioners and explained the process that Walton County used to apply for the competitive grant. She stated that Captain Pagels applied for the grant and the Board of

County Commissioners committed by signing the contract. Ms. Churchwell presented the related costs for the cash match, in-kind services and amount requested from State.

Chairman Walker questioned if funds were available to construct the railroad spur. Ms. Churchwell responded that no funds were being provided for the railroad spur or for day-to-day expenditures. The cost of the property, which was donated by Mr. Pennington, was listed under cash match. Again, former Commissioner Van Ness Butler, Jr. gave an overview of this issue and how it was presented to the previous Board.

Former employee, Captain Tom Pagels, explained how the project began and the circumstances that brought about the needs for this facility. Mr. Pagels stated that the grant information was presented to the Commissioners in its entirety. He stated that he never looked at costs because the Sheriff's Department felt that the benefits outweighed the costs and they were willing to cut back on their budget wherever needed in order to construct the buildings. Mr. Pagels advised that the Sheriff's Department is responsible for the funds not the Board because they are the ones who applied for the grant; the Board is the conduit for the revenues. It was also their choice to make one of them climate-controlled. Mr. Pagels spoke of his plans for the building and various offices that could be housed in the building. He also mentioned that they planned on dividing the costs between two budget years in addition to using some funds from the EOC budget. Their intentions were to relocate public addressing to the new building due to overcrowding, which would allow a portion of those funds to be expended on the project.

Chairman Walker questioned if any of the other counties were asked to participate with funding. Mr. Pagels stated that they were not asked because they will not receive any benefits from the building other than during a disaster.

Mr. William Imfeld, Financial Director, addressed the budgeting issues relating to the Regional Distribution Center. He stated that he has searched through the budget and there were no funds designated to this project out of Personnel, Operating, or Capital Outlay.

Mr. Ronnie Bell, Public Works Director, gave an overview of the previous information that was presented to the Commissioners at an earlier meeting. Mr. Bell stated that he is awaiting estimates for construction of the two buildings and advised that he is expecting the retention wall alone to exceed the \$484,000.

Mr. Brian Kellenberger, Watkins Construction, advised the Board that he is working on an estimate; however, with the figures that he has included it has already exceeded the estimated \$484,000.00 for the project. Mr. Pagels stated that the estimates he had were prepared by qualified county personnel. Mr. Kellenberger estimated that costs to be \$1.25 to \$1.5 million for the entire project. Sheriff Johnson agreed that it is beyond his department's ability to handle these costs. Mr. Bell stated that it is also beyond county staff's ability to perform the construction. He advised that bids would be presented on February 13 for cost of construction.

Commissioner Pauls requested information from the State regarding the amount of space that the county could utilize in each building. Commissioner Walker questioned Mrs. Churchwell regarding the length of time the county is required to utilize the building as a Regional Distribution Center. She replied that the contract does not stipulate a certain time frame; however, the state looks at the long-term benefits the counties will receive. Commissioner Rees suggested that the other counties become involved because of the benefits they would receive.

Sheriff Johnson questioned Mr. Imfeld as to where the monies came from to pay for the buildings. Mr. Imfeld stated that the monies were allocated from state. There are currently additional funds that have been spent on the project that reimbursement has not yet been requested for.

The Road Master for CSX Railroad presented estimated costs of \$75,000.00 to install a switch and an estimated cost to construct 800 feet of rail at a cost of \$125.00 per foot.

The Commissioners allowed a time of questions and answers from the public. Questions were asked regarding responsibility for ongoing costs and the availability of fine and forfeiture funds.

Chairman Walker suggested making a budgetary request to legislature for enough funds to cover the costs of this project. He also suggested requesting the other counties in Region I to adopt resolutions supporting the budget request and submit them to Legislature.

Mr. Skip Dugger, Field Director, addressed questions relating to qualifications of an EOC Director and criteria that must be met under Florida Statute 252. He stated that the Sheriff has the responsibility to run the Emergency Management Program and ultimate responsibility lies with the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff holds the job description for this position and it is his responsibility to see that the EOC Director is qualified according to that description because the Board delegated the operations of EOC to the Sheriff.

Sheriff Johnson asked Mr. Jimmy Helms, State EOC, to explain Mrs. Cole's qualifications to the public. Mr. Helms stated that Mrs. Cole previously worked as an

Assistant to the EOC Director and was directly involved with filing paperwork in a time of disaster. Mr. Helms also stated that in his opinion Mr. Bill Bishop is also qualified for the position of EOC Director and that staffing requirements of the Walton County EOC Office are being met.

Mr. Dugger stated that a capability assessment could be performed to determine if staff meets the requirements. Sheriff Johnson asked that the assessment be performed to assure that the needs of Walton County are being met.

Commissioner Jones stated that an advisory committee would be beneficial. Sheriff Johnson stated that he is working with the Commissioners regarding Emergency Management and is open for discussion to fix any problems and also willing to turn the EOC back over to the Board if the State finds them in non-compliance. He stated that he would serve the citizens of Walton County to the best of his ability. Mr. Johnson advised that he would take whatever steps are necessary to fix any problems. He also shared that the equipment will be shared between all county departments to utilize it in the best possible manner to save lives.

Ms. Sharon Glass, American Red Cross, requested to be part of the Advisory Committee.

The Commissioners requested to review the job description of EOC Director.

Several members of the audience voiced their concerns regarding the qualifications of the current EOC Director for safety reasons.

Mr. Dugger spoke regarding the position description, salary funding and educational requirements that must be met within a certain timeframe. Mr. Mike Barker

reminded the Commissioners that there are FEMA courses that are available to all county officials.

Chairman Walker asked that Mrs. Churchwell and Mr. Dugger meet with county staff to secure funds from Legislature for construction of the building.

Vice-Chairman Rees stated that changes could be made to make the buildings smaller if necessary. Mrs. Churchwell stated that the scope of work could be changed if necessary.

The Commissioners thanked everyone in attendance for his or her input in an attempt to make this happen. Commissioner Pauls requested that another meeting be scheduled to discuss additional issues with Sheriff Johnson. The Board agreed to hold another meeting on Monday, March 5, 2001 at 6:00 p.m. The location will be announced.

Ms. Angie Biddle, Grants Coordinator, announced that the county currently has four grants on behalf of the Sheriff's Department and nine additional applications have been submitted for consideration.

There being no further business the workshop was adjourned until 2:00 p.m. for an advertised special meeting. Chairman Walker called to order the advertised special meeting with the following Board members were present: Commissioner Tim Pauls, Commissioner Larry D. Jones, Chairman Herman L. Walker, Vice-Chairman Lane Rees and Commissioner Gene Ryan. Ms. Shirl Williams, Administrative Supervisor, Attorney George R. Miller, Staff Attorney Jonathan Walker and Ms. Rhonda Skipper, Administrative Supervisor to the Clerk of Courts, were also present.

Chairman Walker gave opening comments regarding the master plan for the Governmental/Education Center and turned the meeting over to Commissioner Pauls who

met with staff and the Architect whom together recommended some of the following changes.

Commissioner Pauls suggested eliminating the drive thru lane, which would bring the lanes together creating additional space pulling away from the wetland area. This would create more space for the trails and buffers also. Mr. Pauls felt that this proposed plan is safer and more efficient.

Another issue is the need for approval to master plan the 40-acre parcel along with the entire property for the purpose of planning roads, greenways and trails. The more master planning that is done now will be a benefit to everyone in the future. Another aspect is the potential to construct a single-story 22,000 square foot building instead of 19,000 for the courthouse annex, which will allow additional space.

Mr. Pauls stated that the county's seven-acre parcel could be expanded into the 40-acre site for site preparation. Mr. Bell stated that Choctaw Engineering is currently working on a wetlands survey on the 40-acre parcel. Commissioner Pauls requested Board approval to proceed with master planning the 40-acres into the rest of the project for planning purposes. Some areas may have to be mitigated in terms of wetlands. Chairman Walker agreed, but he does not want to enter into any contracts that will further bind the county with any contractor.

Mr. Don Crim questioned if large delivery truck would have sufficient space to make deliveries. Mr. Pauls stated that the turning radius would be determined at a later date.

Mr. Bell spoke about the possibility of running utilities down the road on the 40-acre site to J.D. Miller Road if they proceed with site plans on that site.

Commissioner Pauls stated that the identification of trails and greenways are not in the original contract. Mr. Bell stated that it is part of the master planning.

Vice-Chairman Rees asked Ms. Paladini if she is satisfied with the information presented so far. Ms. Paladini stated that she is satisfied. Discussion continued regarding the polygon and master plan. Commissioner Pauls stated that the concerns could be resolved as long as communication remains open with the school board. He stated that he feels that this site plan will serve the citizens well and meet the needs of the county.

A diagram was presented showing the green highlighted area as the proposed area of infrastructure that would be constructed first to meet the needed number of parking spaces.

Motion by Commissioner Pauls, second by Commissioner Jones to proceed with construction of the proposed site plans regarding parking as presented today (shown in green). Ayes 5, Nays 0. Pauls Aye, Jones Aye, Walker Aye, Rees Aye, Ryan Aye. This also allocates 15,000 square feet for the Arts Center.

The second issue presented for discussion was the proposed building. Commissioner Pauls stated that the Gov/Ed Center was originally proposed for 19,363 square feet. As a result of meetings with each constitutional officer it was determined that additional counter space was needed to serve the public. He stated that larger space would be more beneficial with divider walls creating individual cubicles rather than building permanent walls. Commissioner Pauls continued presenting his recommendations regarding District Commissioner's offices, space for the County Administrator, Judicial needs, Planning Department needs and other constitutional officers.

Mr. Crim questioned the aspects of handi-cap accessibility. Mr. Pauls stated that these plans are conceptual and these issues would be addressed.

Mr. Bell stated that they would like the opportunity to meet again with each constitutional officer to get final input in order to proceed with the final design and possibly within 90 days the specifications could be prepared for Watkin's to proceed.

Motion by Commissioner Pauls, second by Commissioner Rees to grant conceptual approval and proceed with meeting with the constitutional officers, Administration, Mr. Bell and Watkins to obtain specifics blueprints for final approval by the Board. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Pauls Aye, Jones Aye, Walker Aye, Rees Aye, Ryan Aye.

Ms. Nancy James questioned Mr. Bell regarding the status of roads into the library. Mr. Bell stated that the road would be completed before final construction of the library, which is estimated to be complete near the end of May.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Rees, second by Commissioner Pauls to adjourn. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Pauls Aye, Jones Aye, Walker Aye, Rees Aye, Ryan Aye.

APPROVED: _____

Herman L. Walker, Chairman

ATTEST: _____

Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts