

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 – WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a workshop on Tuesday, February 24, 2009, at 2:03 p.m., at the Walton County Courthouse to discuss the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 budget.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Sara Comander, Chairman; Commissioner Scott Brannon, Vice-Chair; Commissioner Larry Jones, Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen, and Commissioner Cecilia Jones. Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator; Ms. Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts; Mr. Patrick Pilcher, Property Appraiser; Mr. Bobby Beasley, Supervisor of Elections; Ms. Rhonda Skipper, Tax Collector; and Mr. Mike Adkinson, Sheriff, were also present.

Chairman Comander led the invocation.

Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator, briefly discussed information regarding the revenue shortfall projections for budget year 2008-2009, Ad Valorem Tax projections for 2009-2010, projected tax shortfall estimates for 2009-2010, total shortfall estimates and millage rates, and an investment report.

Chairman Comander stated that options need to be discussed on sharing personnel. She stated that they have begun sharing personnel with Sheriff Adkinson and the Clerk's Office will start the bookkeeping for the Supervisor of Elections due to the retirement of Ms. Brenda Earl.

Mr. Patrick Pilcher, Property Appraiser, stated that the estimated projection for reduction and taxable value could increase from 11% up to 14%. He stated that the last quarter of 2008 continued to decline in selling prices.

Commissioner L. Jones stated that the county needs the commitment to run the most efficient County government that can be run. Working together will be more beneficial than working separately.

Chairman Comander questioned if some departments could be combined or work together. Sheriff Adkinson stated that being cost effective is one part and public safety is another. He stated that they have been working with other County entities and have been reviewing options to possibly work in partnership to improve efficiency and include public safety.

Ms. Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court, stated that the Clerk's Office supports working with all the other departments and Constitutional Officers. She clarified that the negative amounts in the investment report information is only on paper, there is not a loss of any County funds. When the time limit is reached it will be made whole.

Chairman Comander commented that the funds in reserve need to be protected since hurricane season is coming.

Commissioner Pridgen stated that Mr. Bell will have to meet with the Constitutional Officers to see what and how much can be cut to get to the 14%, and then figure out where the rest of the cuts will have to come from. Many services will be cut out but all efforts need to be made to get the 14%.

Ms. Ingle clarified with Mr. Pilcher that the sales are a year behind. Mr. Pilcher stated that the information provided is from property sales in 2008 and there is almost a two year curve.

Mr. Bobby Beasley, Supervisor of Elections, stated that two employees have retired and they are trying to avoid filling those positions. The biggest expense saved is

by utilizing the Clerk's Office personnel. He stated that they are limited because of state mandates which require early voting and extended hours, resulting in overtime. Chairman Comander mentioned the community centers that are funded year round by the Supervisor of Elections, which are only used for a couple of months. He stated that also needs to be addressed. Mr. Beasley expressed concern of House Bill 537 requiring a new touch screen voting machine before 2012, but he hopes to extend that time frame.

Ms. Rhonda Skipper, Tax Collector, stated that early planning and streamlining will help. She stated that the senior management staff has began to do some secretarial duties which will help her department. She stated that she is the only one out of 16 Tax Collectors to not offer some type of driver's license service. They are hoping to start that service with the current level of staff, but the state mandates that also.

Commissioner C. Jones commented that if everyone goes the extra mile individually, in communities, and in the government we will make it through this difficult time.

Chairman Comander questioned when another meeting regarding the budget should be held. Mr. Bell stated that the budget packets will be sent out mid-March. He asked that all unfilled positions stay open to make up for shortfalls and before advertising to fill a position to see if employees could be shifted from different departments.

Another meeting regarding the FY 2009-2010 budget will be held on April 28, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_  
Sara Comander, Chairman

ATTEST \_\_\_\_\_  
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts