

MARCH 11, 2008-ROAD MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Workshop on Tuesday, March 11, 2008 at 2:45 p.m., at the South Walton Courthouse Annex. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss a policy for accepting roads for county maintenance, funding and general maintenance of county roads.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Larry Jones, Chairman; Commissioner Sara Comander, Vice-Chair; Commissioner Scott Brannon; Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen; and Commissioner Cindy Meadows. Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator; Mr. Mike Burke, Interim County Attorney; and Ms. Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts, were also present.

Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator, stated that this workshop would be broken down into three parts: 1) policy for accepting roads for county maintenance; 2) a presentation by Public Works on maintenance, paving and operations; and 3) discussion on funding.

Attorney Mike Burke, Interim County Attorney, briefly discussed the legal issues facing road maintenance. He said that during the platting process, some plats will have documented language expressing the Walton County road maintenance policy while other plats dedicate all of the streets, alleys and parks to the homeowners association. When referencing subdivisions, public roads are owned by the county and private roads are owned by the homeowners association. Private roads are not accessible to the public or county. He stated that there is confusion with the policy language on the plats. It is an expression of the county's policy that states that the county will take the dedicated roads into public trust but the ability and funding for maintenance may not be available. He

briefly discussed the Ecological Resources vs. Walton County case which determined the policy now in use. Once a road is accepted as a public road, it remains public. Determining where the county spends its limited funds is the discretion of the Board. Chairman Jones asked if this would apply only to recorded subdivisions. Attorney Burke answered affirmatively.

Mr. Lyle Seigler, Public Works Director, presented a discussion on the Public Works budget, schedule, manpower and opportunities to better utilize the on hand resources. Out of 1,114 miles (1,462 roads) of county maintained roads there are 585 unpaved miles and 529 paved miles. Each district is given a designated amount of funds specifically for paving roadways. Mr. Seigler stated that not all asphalt used was specifically for roadways; special projects such as parking lots and schools are included in the usage totals. He stated that during the 2006-2007 Fiscal years there were several additional projects which were neither county funded nor scheduled. Some of these projects were funded by grants. Mr. Seigler said that there were approximately 11 miles of uncompleted road projects that were rolled over from last year.

Mr. Ryan Douglass, Public Works Engineer, discussed the different crews and their roles in paving Walton County roads. He stated that Commissioner Meadows had requested information for additional paving crews. He presented that to have additional crews (Asphalt, Drainage/Widening, and Stabilization) approximately \$4.9 million would be needed. He said this amount only included equipment and manpower. Mr. Bell asked if that amount included additional clearing personnel. Mr. Douglas stated that it did not.

Mr. Douglas presented an accelerated paving model which included Streamlining/Focus Maintenance, Environmental Sensitivity, Interconnectivity,

Urbanization, Existing Rights-of-Ways, and Hurricane Evacuation. He stated that this accelerated paving model is not funded and that there are 28.66 miles available. He reported that the use of in-house labor (\$233,559.57) would be far more cost efficient than using contract labor (\$499,466.79) on an average dirt to pave project. However, these costs do not include professional design services. Mr. Bell stated that each project is different and that drainage must be taken into consideration.

Commissioner Brannon asked if the majority of the cost per mile was spent on drainage requirements. Mr. Douglass answered that drainage heavily impacts the cost.

Commissioner Meadows suggested categorizing the road projects. Mr. Douglass stated that each project would be assessed as to whether in-house or contract labor would be best suited for the project. The best way to categorize the projects would be based on the difficulty of the project.

Mr. Douglass reported that 20.70 miles were scheduled for paving during the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year. A total of 11.97 of those miles were rolled forward from the previous fiscal year. Mr. Bell stated that in-house funding is available to complete the remaining miles.

Mr. Bob Hudson, Walton County Tax Payers Association, questioned why 11.97 miles were rolled forward. Mr. Douglass stated that there was a history of over promising and some roads were rolled over from years before. He feels that with more manpower, there would be fewer miles to roll forward.

Commissioner Meadows feels that extra paving crews would not only get these projects completed but would also help the economy by supplying jobs to the citizens.

Discussion continued regarding the miles rolled forward, and the manpower and scheduling to complete the projects.

Mr. Douglas continued the presentation by discussing the contracted miles to be paved. He said that the costs of waiting to complete projects included environmental regulations, pave road versus dirt road maintenance costs, construction costs/inflation and roadway preparation. He then discussed the scoring system that is in place to determine the priority of the projects.

Commissioner Meadows thanked the Public Works staff who worked on the presentation.

Commissioner Comander questioned whether worker's compensation and insurance had been included in the cost. Mr. Douglass stated that it had been included.

Commissioner Comander stated that many factors, such as funding and training, need to be considered when adding an additional crew. She suggested paving out two districts to free up crews for other districts.

Commissioner Brannon also thanked Public Works for their presentation. He feels that this information will be helpful in the decision making process.

Mr. Bell stated that this presentation was for information purposes only. He requested direction from the Board as to whether to use the \$4.9 million funding for in-house labor or contract labor. He presented information from Mr. William Imfeld, County Finance Director, regarding a proposed \$15 million Infrastructure Borrowing. He said that there are several different funding options. Chairman Jones stated that the Board directed that the most practical and cost efficient means be determined and information returned for discussion.

Mr. Bell asked if 12 miles per year would be an adequate amount. Commissioner Comander stated that in-house labor could cover that amount but to increase the mileage would require contract labor. She voiced concern for funding. Commissioner Meadows feels that ad valorem tax is not an option. She suggested to see how much could be done for \$5 million and let in-house crews complete the 12 miles. She requested that as a part of paving agreements that the schools allow the usage of their recreational facilities for county functions. Mr. Bell stated that the schools had done this in the past and there would be no problem adding it to the contract.

Commissioner Pridgen stated that Public Works needed to determine the areas that would benefit and where money could be saved in transportation of equipment and man power.

Commissioner Comander questioned Mr. Seigler how many miles could be contracted out for \$5.6 million. Mr. Seigler answered approximately 10 miles.

Mr. Ed Armbruster suggested using slag to pave the roads which would cost less. Commissioner Meadows stated that any materials other than standard paving materials would not last.

Mr. David Kramer suggested the use of proportionate fair share and concurrency in the funding for road projects. Chairman Jones stated that proportionate fair share is for state roads and dedicated projects.

Commissioner Comander suggested that Public Works be directed to see what can be done. She suggested using the re-negotiation of existing loans and drawing the remaining \$5.6 million against the Capital Projects credit line as listed in the hand-out of suggestions to provide funding.

Mr. Hudson voiced concern over normal maintenance of roads and ditches. He asked that Public Works also address this when they come back before the Board.

There being no further business, the workshop was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

APPROVED _____
Larry Jones, Chair

ATTEST _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court