

JULY 2, 2003 – BUDGET WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Budget Workshop on Wednesday, July 2, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom B of the Walton County Courthouse.

The following Board members were present: Larry Jones, Chair, Commissioner Lane Rees, Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen, and Commissioner Ro Cuchens. Mr. Michael Underwood, County Administrator, Attorney Gary Vorbeck, Director of Legal Services and Ms. Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts, were also present.

Commissioner Rees led with prayer followed by the pledge of allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

Mr. Alan Powdermaker addressed the commissioners urging them to watch the relationship between revenues versus expenses.

Mr. Dan Scupin also commented on the task of the commissioners in setting a budget. He asked if budget schedules could be provided relating to revenues, expenditures, budget for capital expenditures, and total number of employees.

Mr. William Imfeld, Financial Director, presented the proposed 2003/2004 budgets for review. He explained that he has reviewed each budget in conjunction with the Strategic Plan. One aspect of the budget that is different is the funds being committed to the accelerated road-paving plan. Another issue is the funding to implement another phase of the Cody & Associates Study for the Sheriff's Department, which includes the hiring of 16 additional employees.

Mr. William Pennington, Finance Director for the Clerk of Courts, presented the 2003/2004 proposed budget for the Clerk of Courts Office. He stated that the largest

increase is reflected in personnel, which is 8.6%. Capital Outlay decreased and was based on zero-based budgeting. Mr. Pennington further explained that Article IV would be implemented in 2005, which will change the funding altogether. The Clerk's Office will become a fee office and will be required to fund itself and the Board will fund the Comptroller's budget. Commissioner Rees urged the Clerk to make sure that the MIS Department has the necessary funding to continue enhancing technology. The overall budget request for the Clerk of the Courts is \$3,364,174 which includes \$1,047,051 for the Fee Office that was not part of last year's budget.

Mr. Patrick Piltcher, Property Appraiser, appeared before the Board to present his budget, which is developed and approved through the State Department of Revenue. The proposed budget amount is \$1,305,094 and is a 14.05% increase over last year's budget of \$1,144,328. Mr. Piltcher explained that the change reflects an increase in personnel.

Mrs. Melissa Beasley, Supervisor of Elections, appeared before the commissioners to present her proposed budget in the amount of \$468,310 reflecting an 11.54% increase over last year's budget of \$419,864. She explained that increase is to fund an additional employee and possibly some additional part-time staff. Mrs. Beasley explained that they would be implementing the Federal Help America Vote Act and could need additional funding for that also.

Sheriff Ralph Johnson presented his proposed budget for FY 2003/04 in the amount of \$11,177,899 that reflects an 11.92% increase over last year's budget of \$9,986,962. He explained that the increase is due to the hiring of 16 additional personnel to meet the recommendations of the Cody & Associates Study. The Sheriff's Department currently has 180 full-time employees and 4 part-time.

Mr. Michael Underwood, County Administrator, presented the Board's Administrative budget for FY 2003/04. This budget includes the following nine divisions: Board of County Commissioners, County Administration, Construction Manager, Public Information Officer, Parks and Recreation, Recreation Board, Teen Center, and the Freeport Pool. Mr. Underwood explained that the Public Information Officer and the Construction Manager budgets have been broken out from under the Administration Budget. He stated that he is attempting to set up a construction manager's crew consisting of five people to handle the workload. This budget would consist of \$499,917 annually, but would be beneficial in completing necessary construction projects and would decrease other contract work. The Teen Center budget and Freeport Pool budget has also been divided out from under the Recreation budget for better control.

Commissioner Rees questioned if each commissioner's Administrative Assistant's salaries could be funded under the Administrative budget rather than from Public Works; the Board concurred.

Discussion followed regarding the Garfield access grant funding Mr. Imfeld explained that the grant is currently in process with the State. He feels that it will be complete and does not need to be carried forward. There were no further questions on the Administration budget.

Mr. Underwood also presented the proposed budget for Growth Management. The proposed 2003/04 budget is \$2,551,646 and is a 16.93% increase over last year's budget of \$2,182,250. The budget for Growth Management includes the following divisions: Growth Management, unfunded mandates, Building Department, Beach Activities, Planning Department, and Code Enforcement. Mr. Underwood explained that the Growth

Management Director's position remains vacant, but has been included in the budget. An additional Inspection Clerk has been budgeted in the Building Department. The Planning Department includes the addition of a GIS Technician and one half Receptionist that will be shared with Beach Activities.

Mr. Ronnie Bell, Emergency Response Director, presented the proposed budgets under Emergency Services consisting of the following: Emergency Services, Emergency Operations Center, Emergency Management Trust, E911, Emergency Medical Services, Animal Control, Paramedic/Firefighter, Fire Board, Aid to Volunteer Fire Departments, and the following fire departments: Red Bay, Mossyhead, Liberty, Glendale, Darlington and County Fire Assessments. The proposed budgets for these divisions total \$6,059,107 and reflect a 1.55% increase over last year's budget of \$5,966,340. Mr. Bell explained that additional personnel would be deferred, such as the paramedic/firefighters, until a master plan is finalized. Mr. Bell further explained that the increase in the Ambulance Services is from adding additional personnel to cover a 24-hour ambulance. The increase in the 911 Division is for equipment. An additional officer is being requested causing an increase in the Animal Control Division. The county is now providing services to the three municipalities creating additional work.

Mr. Bell advised that RFP's have been advertised for animal control services, but stated that additional personnel is needed because of the increase in the number of calls. Commissioner Cuchens stated that he would like to see a report on the number of animal control calls before approving a third officer. Chairman Jones agreed, but stated that he would like to see the proposed budget approved and postpone filling the position pending additional review; the Board concurred.

Attorney Gary Vorbeck, Legal Services Director, presented his proposed budget for the Legal Services Division. This budget reflects a 6.91% increase due to the cost of living increase. The total proposed budget for Legal Services is \$350,811.

Mr. Gary Mattison, Human Resources Director, presented his proposed budget with a 14.21% increase to HR. The Custodial Services Division was placed under this department creating an overall increase in the amount of 126.66%. Mr. Mattison explained the change that occurred using present staff, Mr. Jerry Fountain, to oversee the Custodial Service Division. He also informed the commissioners that he would be overseeing the cleaning of the new South Walton Health Department. Mr. Mattison explained that they would like to have sufficient funding in the budget to maintain enough staff to fill in when vacancies occur in various departments.

Mr. Alan Powdermaker questioned the possibility of outsourcing the custodial services. He felt that outsourcing might create better management of the people and buildings, while also lowering the costs. He asked if RFP's could be issued for this service. The Board agreed to review the issue further.

Mr. Mattison explained that job descriptions and salaries are reviewed on a regular basis and updated as needed. Mr. Scupin requested information regarding the total number of employees in the entire county.

Mr. Russ Barry, Public Works Director, presented an overview of the budget for Public Works explaining the increases and decreases. This department includes Public Works and Facilities Maintenance and reflects a 105.70% increase because of the increased funding for road paving. Solid Waste and the North Walton Mosquito are also a

part of Public Works and include a 74.27% increase because of the increasing costs in chemicals.

Mr. Barry explained the details of his budget. Some of the increase in Public Works is due to the purchase of new equipment. However, approximately \$419,000 will be put toward to the purchase from monies raised from the sale of older equipment. Mr. Barry gave an overview of the accelerated paving program and related costs for in-house paving versus that being outsourced.

Mr. Barry spoke about the engineering services that are used by the Public Works Department. Six different firms are used and they provide service to the county in their area of expertise. He also stated that there is a need for additional surveyors and explained that it would cost less to hire them in-house. Some additional surveys would have to be contracted out at peak times. Mr. Barry also requested one road construction Inspector.

Discussion continued regarding the costs for in-house paving versus the cost for contracting the services out. Mr. Barry explained that eight (8) additional personnel are being added. He further stated that it would cost less for in-house paving even with the additional personnel rather than contracting it out. Commissioner Rees stated that he would like to see a break down of the costs by department and the costs of paving per mile. The Board asked to review the Public Works Department further after additional information is provided.

Mr. Powdermaker questioned why funding for completion of the bike path was not reflected in the budget. Mr. Imfeld stated that the monies come from grant funding and the bike path is expected to be completed before the new budget.

Mr. Barry explained that the Custodial Services Department was moved under Human Resources and the Grounds Maintenance Crew was moved to the Public Works Department under the General Funds. The Landfill requested one additional person due to requirements from the Department of Environmental Protection regarding the separation of trash. This budget will be reviewed further at the next meeting.

Ms. Lana Barley, South Walton Tourist Development Council, appeared before the commissioners to answer questions relating to their budget. She explained that the 63.07% increase is due to the amount of funding added in the budget to cover the beach nourishment project.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

APPROVED: _____
Larry D. Jones, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court