

## **JULY 6, 2017 – SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING**

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Budget Workshop on July 6, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Walton County Courthouse in DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Cecilia Jones, Chairwoman; Commissioner W. N. (Bill) Chapman, Vice-Chairman; Commissioner Tony Anderson; and Commissioner Sara Comander. Mr. Larry Jones, County Administrator; Attorney Sidney Noyes, Interim County Attorney; and Mr. Alex Alford, Clerk of Courts and County Comptroller; were also present. Commissioner Melanie Nipper did not attend.

Chairwoman Jones called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Comander thanked Chairwoman Jones and Public Works for their participation at the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration.

Ms. Melissa Thomason, County Finance Manager, requested the board set a proposed millage and stated the proposed millage can be decreased, but not increased. She stated the proposed budget was created assuming there would be no increase to the Millage Rate of 3.6363 and no change in the North Walton Mosquito Control (NWMC) Millage Rate of 0.4912. The proposed budget will include a 3% Cost of Living (COLA) raise for discussion purposes and can be restructured upon board direction.

Ms. Thomason reported the Sheriff's Office has been budgeted to receive 1.9482 mils for operations and 0.5454 mils for Fire Rescue. These amounts were calculated as the proportionate amount of millage received in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 and applied toward the FY 2018 budget. The proposed budgeted amount is less than what was requested, but is an increase of \$4.2 million for operations and Fire Rescue.

Ms. Thomason announced the Clerk's Office has requested an increase of 14% for additional positions and additional costs related to Microsoft licensing fees. The proposed budget allows a 10% increase to correspond with the increase in property values and provides an increase of over \$375,000.00 to the Clerk budget.

Ms. Thomason addressed county departments and said a line was held on discretionary spending. She discussed the rise in utility costs and the rotation of equipment and vehicles.

Ms. Thomason stated that the South Walton Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funding was kept at \$4 million and the U.S. Highway 331 TIF funding was \$9,408.00. A resolution would be presented to adopt the amounts into the budget.

Ms. Thomason said the total proposed budget is \$150,132,627.00. She stated \$100,000.00 has been included to continue Coastal Dune Lake monitoring and management, \$250,000.00 to continue document scanning, and \$500,000.00 for the Legion Park seawall. She reported the monies for the Legion Park seawall was budgeted from reserves, but NRDA funding would be pursued for the project. Also added was \$163,776.00 to the Public Works budget for multi-use path maintenance in south Walton.

Ms. Thomason reported there was a net change of 26.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE). The increase in the total of FTE's for the Constitutional Officers is due to the transfer of 99 positions to the Sheriff's Office. The additional 11 FTE's for the Sheriff's Office is for deputies and Fire Rescue already added this year. The number needed for additional firefighters will be presented prior to the budget hearings. Ms. Thomason stated the Clerk is requesting two additional internal auditors and one clerk to the board. The additional Administration FTE was previously approved for processing beach vehicle permits. The Extension Office wants to change their current secretary position from part-time to full-time. She said Facilities Maintenance has been increased by two

maintenance workers. A construction crew was requested, but the budget would not support the increase and therefore Facilities Maintenance was limited to two workers. She reported the Landfill had been using contract labor, but with the increase in work load two additional landfill workers were allocated. Three of the TDC FTE positions will be new for FY 2018, the other four were approved during the 2017 FY. There were no other significant changes.

Ms. Thomason said the Discretionary Contributions have been left the same. Some additional requests have been received, but have not been included in the funding recommendations.

Ms. Thomason reviewed the Revenue Summary and stated the amount budgeted from reserves has decreased. TDC is no longer budgeting from reserves and is budgeting to spend revenues anticipated to be collected. She said \$16 million has been rolled into the budget for property purchases; unspent funds will be rolled forward into the 2018 budget.

Ms. Thomason discussed the Proposed Ad Valorem Allocation Percentages chart: Sheriff's Fund 68.5%, Constitutional Office Support 15.1%, Public Works 9.6%, and TIF Trust Funds 6.8%. She said the taxable value has risen approximately \$1.5 Billion; a 10.2% increase over last year. Operational costs, such as utilities, have increased.

Commissioner Chapman asked if there was an increase to health insurance. Ms. Thomason reported there were no increases in health insurance costs. Mr. Larry Jones, County Administrator, commended those on the insurance committee and those working with the consultant/provider to keep the numbers as low as possible.

Commissioner Comander commended Ms. Thomason and staff for a job well done.

Commissioner Chapman asked if board direction was needed regarding the COLA raises. He noted in 2017 the board directed those making less than \$60,000.00 were to receive a 3%

increase and those making \$60,000 or higher a 2% increase. Ms. Thomason said direction would be helpful and would work with the structure recommended by the board. Commissioner Chapman asked if the wage gap was lessening. Ms. Thomason said that it was. Commissioner Chapman suggested leaving the percentages as is.

Commissioner Anderson asked that funding be located for the Scenic Corridor. Ms. Thomason said she would look into the issue.

Ms. Thomason stated the Millage Rate needed to be set. Chairwoman Jones questioned if a motion could be made during a workshop. Attorney Sidney Noyes, Interim County Attorney, stated a motion would be needed.

Motion by Commissioner Comander, second by Commissioner Anderson, to set the Millage Rate at 3.6363 mils county wide and 0.4912 mils for North Walton Mosquito Control. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Chapman Aye, Anderson Aye, Comander Aye, Nipper Absent.

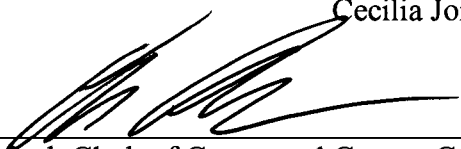
Ms. Thomason stated she would move forward in preparing the resolution for the TIF amounts at the board's direction. The board concurred.

Ms. Thomason recommended Budget Hearings be scheduled for September 11, 2017 and September 25, 2017. These dates would allow the Property Appraiser to move forward with the TRIM notices. Discussion ensued regarding the location of the meetings.

Motion by Commissioner Chapman, second by Commissioner Anderson, to set Budget Hearings for September 11, 2017 to be held at the Walton County Courthouse Annex in Santa Rosa Beach at 5:01 p.m. and September 25, 2017 at the Walton County Courthouse in DeFuniak Springs to be held at 5:01 p.m. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Chapman Aye, Anderson Aye, Comander Aye, Nipper Absent.

There being no further items to present, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Approved: Cecilia Jones  
Cecilia Jones, Chairwoman

Attest:   
Alex Alford, Clerk of Courts and County Comptroller