

## JULY 7, 2004 – BUDGET HEARING

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Budget Hearing on Wednesday, July 07, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at the Emergency Operations Center.

The following Board members were present: Larry Jones, Chair, Tim Pauls, Vice-Chair, Commissioner Lane Rees, Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen, and Commissioner Rosier Cuchens. Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator, and Mr. Bill Imfeld, Finance Director, and Mr. Gary Mattison, Human Resource Director, were the members serving on the budget preparation committee.

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

Mr. Bell gave an overview of the budget process and introduced those sitting on the budget committee along with staff. Commissioner Rees stated that he appreciates the budget process and asked for an explanation relating to the zero based budget. He also commented on the amount of revenues. Mr. Bell commented on the zero based budget and justification for other line items.

Mr. Powdermaker addressed the commissioners regarding the ease of understanding the budget. He commented that they are pleased with the items that have been implemented. Revenue is something to be extremely concerned with. He felt that the commissioners should set a percentage for the amount of revenues that can be spent. He commented on the need for future projections, which are currently lacking. Overall, he felt that the county is moving in the right direction. He felt that Mr. Imfeld has done a good job.

Mr. Dan Scupin stated that the executive summary does not present a clear picture. He does not feel that there is clear breakdown for the increase in the number of employees. Mr. Bell stated that Mr. Mattison has the number of employees. Commissioner Pauls stated that he has asked that the Planning Department be allowed to perform a build out study. Someone needs to be tasked with the job in order to obtain the necessary information.

**Clerk of Court**-\$1,625,940 funded by the BCC. Commissioner Pauls questioned if information services is part of the budget. Ms. Ingle stated that it is in the budget. There was an increase of two employees in the Clerk's budget. Ms. Ingle commented on the increase in the workload. She stated that the space needs are currently met, however, with the growth, that could change. She projected a 25% increase with the current rate of growth. Ms. Ingle commented on the changes taking place from the implementation of Article V.

**Supervisor of Elections:** \$545,302. Mr. Beasley stated that they have increased by one employee due to the increase in workload. A partial increase is due to additional budget for ADA implementations.

**Property Appraiser:** \$1,451,425. This budget is set by the Department of Revenue. Commissioner Pauls asked for an update on the GIS. Mr. Pilcher stated that they are about 80% complete. They are looking at an additional 3000 parcels being added each year. They added one employee for the upcoming year.

**Sheriff:** \$12,950,506. The increases included the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Cody Study, health insurance costs, and the additional computer equipment for the cars. Commissioner Pauls questioned the additional costs for the computer equipment. He

commented on the equipment not working and the need not to commit the entire amount until we are sure that it will work. Mr. Scupin questioned the increases recommended by the Cody Study and asked if anyone is following this over the years. Chairman Jones explained how the study was done and how it was implemented over the past three years. The total recommendation was for 53 additional staff members, which occurred over the three years. Sheriff Johnson arrived. He stated that they agreed to abide by the study. He recommended another study next year to determine how much growth has occurred and how to meet the needs. He commented on the growth over the entire county. He commented that space also needs to be considered. Commissioner Rees stated that they will have 213 positions with the additional 15 positions this upcoming year. Sheriff Johnson stated that they currently have one vacancy. Commissioner Pauls explained his concern with the computer equipment and felt that the board could commit to it, but not invest in all of it at the present time until it is sure to work out. Commissioner Rees felt that the Cody Study is being followed. He also commented on the reduction in crime. Commissioner Rees stated that it might be time to perform another study to evaluate the current status. Sheriff Johnson explained that the Cody Study was performed and the recommendation was made to increase by an additional 53 employees. He further explained how the shortages affected the department, especially when deputies were sent out on a call. Sheriff Johnson also spoke about the increase in tourism. He suggested to determine how much of a population increase has occurred to determine how many additional deputies will be needed for next year's budget. Commissioner Pauls commented on the needs relating to parking and bike path issues. Mr. Imfeld explained how the committee arrived at the budget with the increase. The Sheriff agreed based on

the information he understands. Criminal Justice and Special Law Enforcement budgets also fall under the Sheriff.

Mr. Imfeld explained that each constitutional officer has his or her own contingency fund.

**Tax Collector:** \$1,746,535. This budget is set by State Statute. Mr. Bell stated that the projected amount of return for this year is approximately \$800,000. Commissioner Rees asked for an organizational chart from the Tax Collector. Commissioner Pauls commented on the need to ask each constitutional officer about their projected space needs.

**Tourist Development Council:** \$31,778,500. Ms. Titus and Ms. Barley were present. There is an increase resulting from the renourishment projects. Ms. Titus explained the reason for the increase in the contingency/reserve fund. She also explained that \$5.6 million is to fund TDC, \$7.5 million is the loan, and \$7.5 million is from the state grant. \$8.7 million is expected revenues from the 4<sup>th</sup> cent. Ms. Barley stated that they will use the contingency reserve carryover for the beach renourishment project. That portion going to be used for beach renourishment was budgeted this year, which accounts for a large percentage of the increase. Discussion was held regarding the increase in the costs to perform the beach renourishment. DEP has designated .8 mile in critically eroded beaches. The \$7.5 million will be borrowed within the next 30-60 days. Commissioner Pauls stated that the monies would not be borrowed until the necessary permits are obtained. There is no increase in staff.

**GIS Department:** \$484,362. Ms. Erica Teets was present. This is a new department consisting of six personnel currently employed by the county. There is a net

increase of approximately \$200,000 and one employee. Commissioner Pauls stated that this department should remain at the county level in order to remain up-to-date with all of the on going changes. Mr. Mike Lane commented on how this will be a tremendous asset to the county. Ms. Teets commented on the complexity of updating the FLUM and the training they have received to accomplish this. Commissioner Pauls stated that it is essential to keep the FLUM up-to-date.

The commissioners recessed briefly.

**Planning:** \$3,377,829. Includes Planning & Development, Unfunded Comp Plan & Other, Planning Department, Building Department, Code Enforcement, and Planning & Development.

Ms. Nancy James, Scenic Corridor Association, voiced concerns with Code Enforcement. She asked that three additional code enforcement officers be added. Commissioner Cuchens concurred with Ms. James regarding the need for three officers. Commissioner Rees also agreed with the need for an officer in each district. Commissioner Pauls supports the request, but don't think it will be beneficial to assign an officer to each district. Commissioner Cuchens stated that he would not support the manager position. Commissioner Pauls stated that this is only restaffing the department to the level it was previously at. Commissioner Cuchens asked for Mr. Vorbeck to render a legal regarding the parking problems. Mr. Gary Hulion stated that they could be deputized to write certain citations without carry any weapons. Commissioner Cuchens requested Mr. Hulion to determine some kind of percentages relating to the amount of complaints that are sheriff related versus code related. Chairman Jones stated that he is in favor of funding three positions if they are justified positions. Mr. Hulion stated that two

additional officers would work at the present time, but they may need to add the additional position in next year's budget. Commissioner Rees recommended hiring the third position in this year's budget if funding is available. Commissioner Cuchens commented on the revenue from fines being a source to help fund the position. Chairman Jones commented that he is in favor of funding the number of positions it takes to accomplish the job properly, whether it is two or three positions.

Ms. James spoke about affordable housing, which she felt is an enormous need in the county. She stated that Walton Community Development Corporation has a charter to develop affordable housing. Commissioner Cuchens stated that they have requested state surplus lands for that purpose. Commissioner Pauls stated that he went to Tallahassee, along with some staff. He commented on the letter from the State and the change they made. The State will reappraise the land, but the chances of the county getting any of the property are limited. Ms. James stated that WCDC has been revived and have begun meeting again.

**Planning & Development Admin:** \$283,594 with an increase of one employee. Discussion was held regarding the need to staff this department at the level needed to operate effectively. Mr. Mattison spoke about the employment offers that have been made in an attempt to secure additional Planners. Mr. Powdermaker commented on the critical needs in this department. He spoke about identifying the most critical positions and paying the people what is needed to obtain qualified individuals. Commissioner Pauls questioned how the EAR will be done. Mike Lane has allocated two in-house positions to work on the EAR.

**Building Department:** \$1,387,816 with the primary increase in personnel. There have been four additional people hired this year. Mr. Mattison stated that there is one unfilled Building Inspector position. Commissioner Pauls spoke about the improvements that can be made with it being a fee driven office.

**Parks and Recreation Department:** \$1,127,533 includes Parks & Recreation, Freeport Pool, Recreation Board, and Beach Activities. Two additional employees. They are responsible for maintaining the bike paths and ball fields. Commissioner Pauls stated that there has been a tremendous improvement to the 30A area and bike paths, as well as the South Walton Annex. Discussion was held regarding outsourcing this department. Bids were received, but they were too high in comparison to what the county could perform. Discussion was held regarding the Beach Activities Department and a contingency for when Mr. Ken Wilde is out of the office. Commissioner Pauls spoke about the good job Mr. Wilde does and the need to compensate him. Commissioner Pridgen questioned if anyone has considered the need for in-county small engineer repair to keep up with the amount of repairs the county has.

**Freeport Pool:** \$90,188. The funding for staffing will be paid out of Professional Services because it will be contracted out.

**Recreation Board:** \$257,762. Mr. Bell stated that they met with Ms. Posey and Dr. Stevenson. They were able to reduce the budget and still meet their needs with the addition of a gymnastics program. Commissioner Pauls commented on the need to set aside a contingency fund in this department to meet the requests of those entities that make requests during the budget year. Chairman Jones suggested that the parameters be defined for using the monies. Commissioner Pauls recommended \$15-20,000. Mr. Imfeld

explained that they have \$75,000 designated as miscellaneous funding that they can work with. Mr. Bell stated that they will meet with Dr. Stevenson to designate a certain amount of monies for those teams competing at championships.

**Beach Activities:** \$72,402. Discussion was held regarding the need to increase Mr. Wilde's salary and to provide additional clerical help. Commissioner Pauls recommended the committee look at the salary level to determine a proper level. Commissioner Cuchens recommended looking at providing clerical help, which might take a considerable load off of Mr. Wilde.

The commissioners recessed for lunch.

The commissioners reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

**Public Works:** \$27,290,328. This budget includes CTT, North Walton Mosquito Control, State MC. Solid Waste Landfill, and Small Counties Grant. CTT-\$17,291,393 is the recommendation. The recommendation was to move the Plans Review Engineer over to Planning. Mr. Barry stated that he reduced his personnel by four. Commissioner Pauls stated that he is unsure if it will be sufficient with moving the Plans Review Engineer. Mr. Bell stated that this will be part of the study currently taking place. Commissioner Cuchens stated that he does not support the Deputy Director or Zone Engineers and requested that they be removed from the budget. Chairman Jones stated that he does not support it either. Discussion occurred regarding the number of employees currently in the Public Works Division, which is 149. There is an addition of one employee for the upcoming budget. Commissioner Rees questioned Mr. Barry why he recommended the three zone engineers. Mr. Barry stated that with the work for next year he felt they would be needed. He agreed that they could be removed from this year's budget. He further



explained the duties that these engineers would be performing. Chairman Jones suggested discussing the needs further with Mr. Mattison. Commissioner Rees spoke about the critical needs in this department. Commissioner Pauls spoke about the importance in reviewing the entire structure for efficiency. He felt that a Deputy Director is needed even if the Zone Engineer positions are removed. Commissioner Pauls stated that additional funding should be designated for road paving whenever possible. Commissioner Cuchens felt that improvements can be made with current staffing to increase efficiency. Mr. Powdermaker commented on the monies borrowed for road paving and asked what will be accomplished by the end of this budget year. Mr. Barry stated that they are currently on schedule with those roads being contracted out. We have completed about 60% of the projected in-house road-paving plan. Mr. Barry stated that they are collecting information for all roadwork. In-house they are averaging \$198,500 per road mile, \$492,935 for contracted roads. Discussion was held regarding the costs of road paving and the allocations of equipment to a project and costs when equipment is sitting idle. Mr. Imfeld stated that he used general accounting practices for obtaining the numbers. It needs to be addressed whether additional funds will be allocated to road paving. Commissioner Rees asked Mr. Barry if his budget could be built by function for a comparison. Mr. Barry withdrew the recommendation for the three Zone Engineers. Mr. Barry and Mr. Mattison will work to determine the need for a Deputy Director. North Walton Mosquito Control- \$392,990. Solid Waste Landfill-\$9,393,899. Mr. Imfeld stated that if the Board agrees to fund garbage pick-up for condominiums that the costs would be covered in the budget. Small County Grant-\$191,176.

Mr. Jack Rhodes and Kassy Keyes representing Hammock Bay appeared before the Board regarding Bay Loop road. Hammock Bay, in conjunction with the City of Freeport, has 2.89 miles they want the county to give consideration in paving a bike path and the right of acquisition. He stated that they will be meeting with the City of Freeport. Mr. Rhodes stated that they have already begun the process. Mr. Rhodes stated that the community development district will pay for the path. He wants the county to help with phase I, which is approximately one mile. He is asking for utilization of the right of way and paying for the one mile. The community will help pay for the additional 2.89 miles. Mr. Barry stated that he has requested monies from the SCOP Program for Bay Loop Road. Mr. Commissioner Cuchens stated that he would support the \$150,000 needed for this project.

**Emergency Response Division:** \$7,255,665 including Administration, EMS, EMS Grant, EOC, Paramedics/Firefighters, 911 Animal Control Fire Board, Aid to Volunteer Fire Departments, Glendale VFD, Darlington VFD, and Red Bay VFD. Emergency Response Division-Administration-\$178,759 includes an additional \$10,000 for the building currently being constructed. EMS-\$3,578,098 includes the additional funding to cover 24-hour personnel as previously approved by the Board. Emergency Operations Center-\$363,036 includes increases for necessary equipment to facilitate the new building. Mr. Ed Baltzley stated that the ventilation system needs to be added back in. Mr. Bell stated that they would review this issue and reprioritize. EM Trust-\$154,174; Paramedics/Firefighters-\$832,962. He also stated that a fire coordinator position is included. Animal Control-\$263,306 includes the contract with West Florida Animal Control. Emergency 911-\$966,875 after removing the budget for GIS. Fire Board-

\$45,950. Mr. Baltzley advised which five personnel would relocate to the GIS Department. Mossy Head VFD-\$133,471. Mr. David Chairman Jones, Fire Chief for Mossy Head, requested that the two items removed from the budget be added back in. One item being membership \$3,000 to reimburse employees \$5.00 per call up to \$500 per month. He also spoke about the number of calls per month, which are at 500 per month. He also addressed the need for paid personnel in the amount of \$32,000 to cover daytime hours. He stated that they are seeing a decline in the number of volunteers. Mr. Bell stated that there are about 5 other departments in the county who want paid staffing. He also stated that he would encourage the other departments to go independent and then the county contract with them for a certain level of service. Chairman Jones asked what the costs would be to staff those fire departments with certified personnel during the peak hours. Commissioner Pauls questioned how a fair methodology can be provided versus the costs of providing the service. He spoke about fairness in determining the cost to charge. Commissioner Cuchens asked that the committee review this issue further to determine if there is any possibility of funding the request. Glendale VFD-\$82,419. A recommendation was made to provide Glendale VFD with a surplus vehicle instead of purchasing a new one. Chief Dell asked about the reduction in Books and Publications due to the need to send personnel for additional certification. Pauls stated that he is in favor of the additional training and educational needs. He requested that the funding be placed back into the budget. Darlington/Gaskin VFD-\$99,775; Red Bay VFD-\$104,917; Paxton VFD-\$20,000. Chief Tommy Matthis of the Paxton Fire Department spoke about the needs in his department. He stated that they need additional equipment, fire station and personnel. Commissioner Pridgen stated that they need help upgrading. Chairman

Jones stated that long-range planning is needed to assist Paxton in obtaining their goals. Mr. Bell spoke about assisting them by funding some of the necessary items by a loan. Argyle VFD-\$51,000; South Walton Fire District- \$40,000; Freeport Fire Department-\$69,900; DeFuniak Springs Fire Department-\$71,300; United Fire Department-\$64,000.00. Mr. Baltzley stated that United also recommended a day time person on staff. Tri-Village Fire Dept-\$50,200. Liberty Fire- \$55,925. Chairman Jones asked that the committee revisit this budget for reconsideration. Commissioner Rees spoke about consistency in providing funding for all of the fire departments. Roger Roy, Chief of Liberty VFD, spoke about every department receiving the same amount. The new position of Fire Coordinator would assist in the budgeting process. Those chiefs present recommended giving each of the departments \$70,000. The budget committee will work on this issue further. Mr. Bell spoke about the \$70,000 from the GSG recommendation. The committee will review this further.

**Construction Management**-\$1,202,196 includes one additional electrician position.

**Capital Projects**-\$381,000 for all minor projects and \$7,797,385 for all major projects.

**Legal Services**-\$378,400. Attorney Vorbeck stated that their budget request was for \$5,000 in overtime not \$3,000 as presented. They also requested \$8,000 not \$500. in Books and Publications.

**Citizen Services**-\$3,993,752 for all departments including Citizens Services/PIO-\$192,185; Probation & Parole-\$261,677; Library-\$880,619; Veteran Services-\$130,976; Housing & Urban Development-\$1,726,508; Extension Service-\$338,799; Soil

Conservation-\$95,153; SHIP-\$367,835. Commissioner Pauls questioned an Ombudsmen position under Citizen Services. Mr. Little felt that they are getting closer to this by the changes they are making. Mr. Imfeld advised that most of the increases are a result of the Cost of living allowance.

**Contributions:** Angel Tree Foundation-\$3,000; Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center-\$4,000; and Shelter House-\$22,500. Ms. Beth Nelson, Coordinator, spoke about the services they provide. She stated that they have added an additional safe house for children. Commissioner Rees stated that he would support funding Shelter House in the same amount they request. Discussion was held regarding those organizations becoming self sufficient and the method used for cutting budgets. Commissioner Pauls stated that he supports their request. The Board concurred to allow their budget to remain at \$25,000. Judge Ben Gordon Jr. Family Visitation Center-\$12,600. Mr. Gene Ryan stated that they are requesting an increase due to their services rapidly increasing. He also spoke about becoming self sufficient. He requested that the initial request of \$17,393 be granted. Commissioner Pauls agreed with the initial request. Commissioner Rees stated that he would like to see the bottom line remain at the \$723,330 as last year. He also said that it is his desire to have reporting on results based on established expectations, and moving toward self sufficiency for appropriate organizations. Commissioner Cuchens stated that he would like to see it remain at the \$12,600. Families Count-\$62,942; Child Care Services-\$25,000.

**Cultural & Educational:** The Florida Chautauqua-\$10,000; and Catherine Cole Taylor Center for the Fine Arts-\$10,000. Mr. Little read their scope of services that are provided to the county. Commissioner Cuchens commented on this being a duplicate

service of TDC and felt that they may not need any funding until they move into the location at the GEC Center. Commissioner Pauls stated that they are performing a feasibility study, which does not show the need for what they want. He stated that they are attempting to get a new board. The Board concurred that a better understanding is needed for use the funding. The commissioners agreed to allow the requested funding until additional information could be provided. Cultural Arts Association-\$10,000; Grit & Grace-\$15,000. A representative from Grit & Grace spoke about their program and their desire to find a home. Friends of Eden-\$7,500; Walton County Art League-\$10,000; Walton County Jr. Miss, \$1,000;

**Economic Development:** Chamber of Commerce-\$40,000; EDC-\$75,000; American Red Cross-\$8,000; and South Walton Turtle Watch-\$3,000. Commissioner Cuchens stated that they are a group of volunteers and questioned why they need the funding. He stated that the county has not adopted an ordinance yet. Mr. Little stated that they want radio equipment for communications for the turtle watchers. The commissioners agreed to remove their funding until the time an ordinance is adopted. Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance-\$20,000; COPE-\$83,100; Walton County ARC-\$60,000; and Resources for Human Development-\$26,000. Mr. Bell stated that they would like to see these groups combined for cost savings and to provide better service to their clients. Several members from ARC were present and spoke about their services. The State of Florida requires “choice” and Resources for Human Development provides that choice. Mr. Bell stated that a savings could be provided to the county with joining these two groups. ARC staff advised that the State cut their budget by about \$75,000. Commissioner Pridgen suggested providing in-kind services, such as janitorial services,

to help ARC with their budget. Commissioner Cuchens recommended budgeting Walton County ARC, Inc, in the amount of \$90,000 and provide in-kind services. Commissioner Rees agreed to provide the in-kind services. Commissioner Rees suggested that the commissioners raise the additional monies from private donors in the community rather than the Board. The Board agreed to fund them in the amount of \$90,000 and provide in-kind service. Walton County Council on Aging-\$155,000; Elder Care Services-\$4,000; and Tri-County Community Council-\$34,000. Mr. Bell spoke about the overlap in services and the need to combine services for a cost savings.

**Statutory Mandated Contributions:** Health Care responsibility-\$182,612, Medicaid Services-\$400,000; Walton County Health Department-\$698,879; Baker Act Fees-\$50,000; and Indigent Burials-\$6,500. The total revised budget for the Contributions is \$731,142.

**Human Resources Division**-\$807,266 including Custodial Services-\$365,165.

**Finance Division:** OMB-\$247,051; Central Purchasing-\$408,877; and the Grants Department-\$92,803; Commissioner Pauls stated that with the ability to manage the department, the funding could be increased beyond the expense. He feels they should be looking for additional funding for recreation as well as many other areas. Telecommunications-\$56,713; Contracts Budget-\$39,107; and Central Ambulance Billing-\$44,726. The total Finance Division is \$889,277.

**Board of County Commissioners**-\$8,664,666. Mr. Bell stated that he has added the requested \$150,000 for the Bay Loop project. County Administrator-\$355,262; GIS/Information Resources-\$484,362. Commissioner Rees stated that he would support a reduction in the millage.

**Courts:** Circuit Court-\$182,652; Guardian Ad Litem-\$1,000; Medical Examiner-\$11,679; County Court-\$63,737; States Attorney-\$104,745; Public Defender-\$39,985. The total for the Courts Division is \$546,949.

**Debt Service** for the old hospital \$241,280

Mr. Bell presented a handout consisting of all BCC operations. He recommended that the Board fund \$70,000 for each fire department and let the Fire Board distribute it as necessary. Commissioner Cuchens recommended not disbursing the entire \$840,000 at one time. The original 2004 budget was \$68,876,805. The 2004 amended budget was \$85,388,610. The 2005 proposed budget is \$71,406,967 not including the recommended changes. The TDC operations total budget \$31,778,500; **Capital projects**-\$8,178,385: courthouse, jail, sheriff's administrative office, records center, GEC related projects, old hospital, Ag center sewers, architecture-Moll Drive Building, Farmers' Market repairs, Bayfield Boardwalk/pier, Freeport Pool, Alaqua Creek Boardwalk and paving, ADA repairs at voting locations, Mossy Head EMS landscape, and Choctaw Beach paint and repairs, which are all to be spent in the 2005 proposed budget. **Unique Items**-\$4,663,500; Combined budgets - \$116,027,352 total combined 2005.

Mr. Bell stated that one option would be to allow the millage rate to remain the same at 5.315. The 25% increase would bring in approximately \$8.2 million in revenues from Ad Valorem. Another option would be to reduce it by 1/3 of a mill or to pull \$1.1 million from reserves, or 1/2 mill reduction would generate an additional \$4.3 million, because of additional growth, and pull about \$3 million from reserves. Mr. Bell stated that the millage rate would be 5.17 without pulling from reserves. Commissioner Rees stated that he would support a 1/3 to 1/2 reduction in the millage rate to lower it to 4.982.



Mr. Powdermaker stated that the capital budget reserve is about \$24 million, which is adequate to cover capital projects. He stated that the TDC increase is at no cost to the county. He commented on the 2002 revenues of \$63 million and 2003 revenues of \$73,000. He further commented on the increase of revenues and expenditures. He stated that there should still be enough funds to budget for roads. Commissioner Rees commented that he originally recommended a one mil reduction. Mr. Imfeld stated that the figures he is working with include bank loans and TDC revenues, which cannot be included.

Commissioner Pauls agreed with truth in reporting, but stated that there are no monies for Chat Holley Road or the Mac Bayou grid system, as well as other projects, in the capital improvement plans. He spoke about allowing the millage to remain the same so that there are additional funds being collected for infrastructure. Commissioner Cuchens support allowing the millage to remain the same and leave the reserves alone. Chairman Jones commented on looking at each need as they arise and then determining how to pay for it. Commissioner Cuchens, Commissioner Pridgen, and Commissioner Pauls stated that they were in favor of leaving the millage rate the same. Commissioner Rees and Chairman Jones were in favor of reducing the millage rate. Commissioner Pauls stated that he wouldn't mind seeing it reduced if there was another revenue source to address other needs.

Commissioner Cuchens spoke about the importance of retaining the amount of reserves that the county has.

Mr. Bell stated that the millage rate would be set at 5.315. The unique projects could still be funded without using reserves. He stated that they will proceed with notifying the property appraiser of the proposed millage.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Larry D. Jones, Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court