

JULY 8 & 10, 2002 – BUDGET WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Budget Workshop on Monday, July 8, 2002 and Wednesday, July 10, 2002 at 9:00 a.m. in the Boardroom of the Walton County Courthouse.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Tim Pauls, Vice-Chairman Larry D. Jones, Commissioner Herman L. Walker, Chairman Lane Rees and Commissioner Gene Ryan. Mr. Michael Underwood, County Administrator, Attorney Gary Vorbeck, Director of Legal Services, and Ms. Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts, were also present.

Commissioner Jones led with prayer following the pledge of allegiance to the American Flag.

Chairman Rees called the meeting to order and began with review of the strategic plans.

Mr. William Imfeld, Financial Director, stated that the plan is in line with the commissioner's goals and objectives. Mr. Underwood read the mission statement, which was presented as a draft for the Board's review.

Mr. Imfeld stated that the proposed budget is \$77.8 million, which is lower than last year's budget and there is no proposed increase to the ad-valorem tax. Commissioner Pauls questioned if all capital improvements would be paid out of reserves. Mr. Imfeld stated that the designated funds from the Landfill fund should be adequate to cover the costs. Mr. Imfeld stated that there are approximately \$11 million in unrestricted reserve funds and he recommended leaving \$10 million. He commended previous Boards for their foresight in reserving funds for future paving and capital improvements.

Mr. William Pennington, Finance Director to the Clerk of Court, appeared before the commissioners to present the Clerk's budget. Mr. Pennington advised that the Clerk is requesting additional staff due to the addition of a new courthouse annex and the 30% increase in workload from additional court cases. The budget request totals \$1,883,563 between the three divisions of the Clerk's Office and represents a 4.57% increase over last year. He further explained the Clerk's budget and stated that there is also an increase in the MIS Department because of overtime; many tasks are required to be performed after normal work hours. The commissioners raised questions about upgrades.

Mr. Alex Alford, MIS Director, explained that software upgrades could be done if the Board is willing to budget for them; however, they would be expensive. Mr. Alford explained that he is expecting to perform another upgrade during the following budget. Chairman Rees questioned if there is an individual on the Board's side that could interface with Alex to enhance communications between the Clerk and Board employees regarding MIS. Commissioner Walker reminded him that Alex serves the entire county, but could communicate more closely with Mr. Underwood if needed.

Mr. Patrick Piltcher, Property Appraiser, advised that he is still awaiting approval from the State for his budget. Mr. Piltcher is requesting one additional staff person for the South Walton Annex. Chairman Rees requested that Mr. Piltcher provide an organizational chart for his department. Mr. Piltcher advised that the GIS is proceeding and is about 72% complete in south Walton. The budgeted amount for the Property Appraiser is \$1,144,328 and is a 2.76% increase.

Mrs. Melissa Beasley, Supervisor of Elections, presented her budget with a 4.50% decrease from last year. She explained that a \$122,000 reimbursement from the State is

expected. Mrs. Beasley is asking for ten (10) laptop computers for the precincts for provisional ballots. Commissioner Pauls questioned her regarding the possibility of leasing them. Mr. Imfeld will work with Mrs. Beasley regarding this issue. She also advised that money might be sent for the special elections. The total budget request for the two divisions in her budget totaled \$398,364.

Mr. Imfeld reported on the Tax Collector's budget and stated that it is fixed by State Statute. The total budget is \$1,407,880 reflecting an 8.98% increase. There is no change in staffing requirements. (Tape 1/side 2)

Sheriff Johnson appeared before the commissioners stating that his budget was prepared according to the recent study performed by Cody & Associates. The proposed funding plan proposes a 3-year implementation plan. It defers 20 Corrections positions, pending resolution of different recommendations between Cody & Associates and 2WR. The remaining positions are then funded 1/3 each in Fiscal Years 2003, 2004, and 2005. Corresponding adjustments for these personnel reductions were made in Operating and Capital Outlay costs. Salary amounts are recommended for funding at the Cody & Associates study levels. Sheriff Johnson explained the process used by Cody & Associates to perform his study. He also stated that amendments are being made to prepare the final report. Sheriff Johnson further explained the 3-year implementation process and how it will be used to hire personnel in the most critical areas first, such as beach patrol, deputies, and administration. Commissioner Pauls agreed that additional beach patrol is needed and further addressed the need for a mini sub-station to better serve the deputies in certain south Walton areas. Commissioner Pauls also spoke about

the need for an employee protection program. Sheriff Johnson stated that the plan he would like to implement would protect employees lower in rank.

The Commissioners questioned Mr. Johnson regarding the 23% increase in his budget and asked if he is comfortable asking the taxpayers of Walton County for that much of an increase. He stated that he is comfortable because of the critical shortage. He also stated that his liability insurance has increased by 70%. The commissioners asked Mr. Imfeld to look into this matter.

The commissioners recessed briefly.

Mr. Jack Arthur, Growth Management Division Director, appeared before the Board to present his departmental budgets. Growth Management - \$765,685; Building Department - \$657,066; Code Enforcement - \$258,534; Planning Department - \$685,761; Parks & Recreation - \$555,314; and Beach Activities – \$66,677. Mr. Arthur stated that he is requesting two (2) new positions, one being an Environmentalist and an Environmental Planner. The commissioners felt these positions should be under the Planning Department. Commissioner Pauls requested that Mr. Arthur consider a different individual for the position of Director of Planning & Zoning other than himself. Mr. Arthur stated that the other position is more important to fill at the present time. Discussion followed regarding the amount of fees collected for the department, their goals and what it will take to reach the goals. (Tape 2) Mr. Imfeld explained that it takes approximately \$1.3 million in operating costs and only \$8-900,000 in fees are collected. The Board asked for additional reporting on the amount of fees being collected and by which departments.

The budget for the Building Department was laid out for the commissioners. Three new positions are being requested to help with the increase of workload: Building Plans Examiner, Building Inspector, and a Clerk. One new position is being requested for Code Enforcement, which was not approved during the scrub process. Six new positions were requested for the Planning and Zoning Department, two of which were not approved during the scrub process. The new Building Permit Technician will provide coordination and communication between the Building Department and Planning Department to better qualify projects. Mr. Arthur explained the positions along with the duties. Commissioner Walker stated that he would like to see the costs broken out separately for costs relating to correcting the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Arthur requested six (6) new positions for Parks and Recreation, two of which were not approved during the scrub process. He stated that this would be the best way to keep the parks maintained. Discussion followed regarding the maintenance and mowing at the parks. Chairman Rees stated that he is uncomfortable with the increase and feels that this department needs to be more cost effective. Mr. Arthur stated that his reasoning is to better focus on upkeep of the parks. The commissioners stated that they would rather see the upkeep of the parks done through coordination of Public Works.

The commissioners discussed the budget for the Beach Activities Department. One new position is being requested, which would be shared with the Parks and Recreation Department. Discussion followed regarding the budget originally set for this department.

Mr. Vernon Thowe, Tri-Village Fire Department, appeared before the commissioners regarding their budget. Mr. Thowe questioned why his budget was cut

from \$50,000 to \$35,000 and stated that he was informed that it was due to them having CD's. However, those funds have been designated for new buildings, fire trucks and contingencies as set forth in their 5-year plan. He also stated that the number of calls has increased. Mr. Imfeld also advised that Tri-Village has not provided any financial statements as required in addition to it not being clear as to what the requested funds would be spent on. He advised that in 2000 the fire department profited \$15,000. The Board agreed on the \$35,000 funding

The commissioners recessed for lunch.

The commissioners reconvened with the exception of Mr. Jones.

Mr. Ronnie Bell, Emergency Services Director, spoke about the savings from the separation of services from the South Walton Fire District. He also explained the additional equipment that is needed. Discussion followed about providing EMS services in the rural areas of the county in order to provide quicker response time. Commissioner Walker stated that priorities need to be considered when determining where to place the services. (Tape 3)

Commissioner Walker spoke about the savings the county was suppose to receive from South Walton Fire becoming independent. He also stated that as a part of that previous discussion the commissioners agreed to add more coverage north of the Bay and only one additional service has been provided; Mossy Head.

Chairman Rees stated that public safety is important and questioned possible areas of the budget that could be scrubbed further to fund the needed emergency services. The commissioners requested that Mr. Imfeld add \$384,000 in the budget to fund additional EMS services north of the Bay.

The following budget amounts were presented under the Emergency Services:
Emergency Services Division - \$158,647; Emergency Medical Services - \$2,886,474;
EMS Grants - \$59,675; E911 - \$1,046,971; Emergency Operations Center - \$210,209;
Emergency Management Trust - \$146,483; Animal Control - \$170,908; Fire Board -
\$41,300; Aid to Volunteer Fire Departments - \$299,750; Darlington Fire Department -
\$71,195; Liberty Fire Department - \$88,510; Mossy Head Fire Department - \$97,000;
Glendale Fire Department - \$82,600; Red Bay Fire Department - \$65,675; County Fire
Assessments - \$13,998. These totals resulted in a 4.53% increase overall.

Mr. Bell explained the increase for the E911 department. An upgrade will be implemented in two phases, which consists of wiring that will be able to track the location of cell phones. He also stated that they are working on a “call back system” that is able to provide emergency notification to area residents in the event of an emergency, by location.

Ms. Karen Sheehan was present to answer questions relating to the budget for the Legal Services Division. This department has a proposed 9.04% decrease over last year’s budget.

Mrs. Kris Titus, Executive Director of the Tourist Development Council, explained their proposed budget to the Board. She also stated that the majority of funding for walkovers in the proposed budget is for reconstruction. The overall budget decreased by 28.08%.

Mr. Gary Mattison appeared before the Board to explain his department’s budget. He explained that there is a possible settlement from Governmental Risk Insurance Trust

(GRIT) in the future for approximately \$180,000. Mr. Mattison explained that the largest increase is from the addition of a full-time floater position.

Mr. Russ Barry, Public Works Director, appeared before the commissioners presenting the following budgets: Public Works, Facilities Maintenance, Solid Waste Landfill Fund, and North Walton Mosquito Control. Mr. Barry presented a proposed organizational chart, which showed six new positions. He explained that other long-term vacancies have not been filled and he is reclassifying those positions. Mr. Barry explained the reasons for those positions, their duties, and the realignment of his budget. He also spoke about the number of miles that have been completed (23.4 miles) and another 21 miles to be completed by the end of July. He stated that he has decreased the budgeted amount under Professional Services and increased it in Road Materials and Supplies. Discussion was held regarding the mowing of the bike paths and the necessary equipment to perform that function. The commissioners advised Mr. Barry that the mowing activities would be transferred back under his department. He therefore stated that he would revisit the need to purchase mowing equipment. The total County Transportation Trust Fund requested was a 28.62% reduction from last year's budget; pending any changes. The Solid Waste Landfill budget decreased by 9.50% and the North Walton Mosquito Control increased 17.22%.

Ms. Diana Tucker, 30-A Bike Path Advisory Group, appeared before the Board and stated that Mr. Barry has been very helpful. She stated that the bike path has been very useful and well used so far. She stated that she is in hopes of seeing the bike path completed by the end of the year. Commissioner Pauls explained that the bike path is being constructed in phases and may not be completely finished by the end of the year.

Mr. Barry explained the budget for the Facilities Maintenance and explained that the increase is because of additional personnel for the South Walton Annex and additional equipment. A 3.10% increase is being requested.

The Landfill budget consists of additional staffing and necessary equipment to provide laborers for roadside trash pick up; however, there is an overall reduction by 9.50%.

Mr. Barry stated that the increase in the Mosquito Control budget is in Professional Services for a study of mosquito borne viruses. The contract for this service is with Florida A&M University (FAMU).

This portion of the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

The commissioners reconvened the Budget Workshop on Wednesday, July 10, 2002 at 9:00 a.m. The following Board members were present: Commissioner Tim Pauls, Vice-Chairman Larry D. Jones, Commissioner Herman L. Walker, Chairman Lane Rees and Commissioner Gene Ryan. Mr. Michael Underwood, County Administrator, Attorney Gary Vorbeck, Director of Legal Services, and Ms. Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts, were also present.

Chairman Rees opened the meeting with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Ken Shannon, Growth Management Division, appeared before the commissioners and explained the process for Large-scale Amendments. Commissioner Pauls spoke about clarity of the LSA process regarding publicly or privately sponsored amendments. He stated that there have been privately sponsored LSA in the past that have not gone through any review process. He stated that there should be reviews. He also questioned why some parcels are sponsored by the county as LSA when they are less

than 10 acres. Mr. Shannon explained that many of these that have occurred have been map related problems. Commissioner Pauls felt that if the county creates the problem then they should be responsible for correcting it. Mr. Underwood questioned if a new process could be established that requires review by the Planning Department before the amendment is presented to the Board.

Commissioner Ryan arrived.

Attorney Vorbeck stated that it should be the property owner who is responsible to bring it to the county's attention and to file the application. The county could then waive the fee if it is an error created by the county.

Mr. Shannon presented flow charts showing the Development Order process that occurs in addition to the building permitting process.

Ms. Jennifer Christensen, Planning Department, also presented information regarding the amount of fees collected in the Building Department, Planning Department, Code Enforcement, and Beach Activities Department. She also presented a proposed fee schedule for the Building Department. She explained that some of the fees would be increasing. Commissioner Walker voiced concern with the amount of increase for the fireworks permits. The newly proposed fees are set according to the Building Codes. Commissioner Pauls stated that a public hearing would need to be held before adopting any new fees. Chairman Rees recommended placing this on the August agenda as a public hearing to consider the new fee schedule.

Mr. Imfeld advised that Mr. Mattison has contacted other counties in reviewing staffing issues. Mr. Mattison recommended eliminating one Code Enforcement Officer position and to defer the new positions for the South Walton Annex until January,

pending completion of the building thereby giving time to review that department's needs. Commissioner Pauls voiced concern with deferring the hiring of these positions and not being able to complete work in a timely and efficient manner.

Commissioner Jones felt that a complete review needs to be done including the amount of fees that would be collected under the newly proposed fee schedule.

Commissioner Walker explained the budget process stating that the rates could be set and the budget could be decreased, but not increased. Two public hearings are required and the final budget and millage rate would be adopted at that time.

(Tape 1/side 2)

Ms. Nancy James suggested that a Director of Planning and Zoning should be hired to reduce the workload on Mr. Arthur. She also felt the new Director should be a Professional Planner.

Mr. George Frankford, South Walton Community Council Budget Oversight Committee, questioned if the Growth Management Division has a mission statement.

Mrs. Lynda Robinson advised that Mr. Mattison had relayed to her that his recommendation was to postpone the hiring of an Environmentalist, the Development Order Inspector and the GIS Auto CAD Technician. Commissioner Jones stated that this issue needs to be discussed at a later date.

Mr. Imfeld advised that Mr. Bell has further scrubbed his budget from \$388,000 to \$350,000 and stated that the budget could now support additional EMS services as requested.

Mr. Imfeld presented the proposed budget for County Court. He explained that the 21.83% increase is related to an additional judge and another Bailiff for the courtroom

facilities at the Governmental Education Center. Judge Lindsey also requested to budget for a full-time court reporter to reduce the judicial budget for court reporting services for transcripts.

Commissioner Ryan spoke about the need for additional funding for Guardian Ad Litem. He explained that funds were previously budgeted only to cover the cost of postage. Mr. Ryan stated that additional funding would be requested to provide staff in Walton County in the future.

Mr. Imfeld presented the Board's Administrative budget consisting of the BCC budget - \$2,263,155; County Administrator - \$381,263; Public Information Officer - \$80,600; Other Funding - 95,000; Reserve for Contingency - \$400,000. Mr. Underwood explained that the budget decreased overall, but an increase was included for furnishings and fixtures for the GEC Center. Mr. Underwood explained the increase in the County Administration's budget is for a new vehicle. Mr. Underwood would receive the new vehicle and his would be transferred to the new Construction Manager.

Mr. Imfeld presented the proposed budget for the Finance Department consisting of the following: OMB - \$204,466; Central Purchasing - \$364,492; Grants - \$83,726; Telecommunications - \$53,069; Central Ambulance Billing - \$36,348; and Contracts Department - \$30,154. There is an overall increase of 6.39%

Commissioner Pauls questioned if the Grants Department is staffed properly because of the cost benefits that are available in this department. Mr. Imfeld explained that they want to keep it staffed sufficiently. He stated that they are continually researching the possibilities of new grant.

Commissioner Pauls questioned the functions of the Telecommunications Department. Mr. Imfeld explained that Mr. Dan Trotman has been tasked with all communications relating to radios, phones systems for the new buildings and alarm systems.

Ms. Ingle commended Mr. Imfeld for their work on the budget.

The commissioners did not have any questions for the Citizen Services budget, which was decreased 3.31%. This budget included Citizen Services, Probation and parole, Ag. and County Extension, Soil Conservation, Veteran's Services, SHIP, Section 8 Housing, Library, and the Health Department.

The required statutory organizations include Child Care Services, Health Care Responsibility Act, Medicaid Services, Baker's Act Fees, and Indigent Burials for a total of \$543,500.

Mr. Imfeld presented the Debt Service budget (Hospital Bonds) in the amount of \$246,860 and stated that this budget is fixed by contract and is funded by an outside levy. This does not affect the county's millage rate. Mr. Imfeld explained the Driftwood MSBU (\$258,000) and stated that it is supported by fees collected. The Recreation Plat Fee Fund is expected to begin the year with approximately \$608,809 in the account. The Board must decide how these funds are to be spent. Commissioner Pauls questioned if Sandestin has an agreement with the county regarding their recreational impact fees.

Mr. Imfeld presented the proposed amount to be collected for the Local Option Gas Tax in the amount of \$1,900,000. He stated that this is based on what the State of Florida has indicated that Walton County can expect for revenue. He stated that the .04-cent per gallon to be paid to Lucky 13 Truck Stop would expire in May.

Mr. Imfeld gave an overview of the Capital Projects. These amounts are based upon information from Watkins Engineering for expected costs for each project. The projects include Courthouse expansion and renovation, Greenways Trail, Walton County Jail, Sheriff's Administration, Records Storage, and Hospital Renovation. Commissioner Pauls gave an update on the Greenways Trails. He stated that two sections have been flagged and clearing will begin next week. He stated that the wetlands have been flagged as well as the proposed trail site.

Discussion occurred regarding the assisted living facility. Commissioner Ryan stated that the Regional Planning Council has submitted some statistical data that he will distribute soon.

The commissioners recessed briefly. (Tape 2)

Mr. Imfeld presented the discretionary organizations. He stated that he would be requiring contracts with each agency for the donation they receive from the county. Attorney Vorbeck advised that this is for accountability from these organizations. He advised that Mr. Little would be drafting a contract for review by Legal staff.

Chairman Rees recognized Mr. Joel Paul and Mr. Van Ness Butler, former commissioners, who were present in the audience.

The following budget scrub amounts were presented for the Discretionary Organizations:

Catherine Cole Taylor Center for the Arts, Inc.	\$25,000
Cultural Arts Association	0
D.B.P.A.	4,800.
Grit & Grace, Inc.	8,000.
Judge Ben Gordon, Jr. Family Visitation Center	12,600.
Walton County Junior Miss	1,000.
The Florida Chautauqua	5,000.
Chamber of Commerce	35,000.

Economic Development Council	71,250.
COPE Center	80,654.
Shelter House	25,000.
Walton County Council on Aging	155,424.
Tri-County Community Council	27,400.
Elder Care Services	4,000.
American Red Cross	5,000.
Walton County ARC, Inc.	50,000.
Resources for Human Development	26,000.
NW Fl. Comprehensive Services for Children	69,935.
OWCC	0.
7 Little League & Youth Groups	<u>17,500.</u>
	\$613,563.

Mr. Butler spoke on behalf of the Arts Center and stated that they need the county's support because these funds are used to help secure other possible grant funding.

Mr. Jack Abbott spoke on behalf of the Cultural Arts Association and the benefits they provide to the county. Mr. Joe Stanko and Meg Nelson also addressed the commissioners. Commissioner Pauls stated that he does support the Arts as part of the county's economic development benefits and recommended giving at least \$30,000. Commissioner Ryan also stated that he supports the Arts. Mr. Imfeld noted that there are overlapping issues between the two Arts organizations and questioned how the groups will be working together including their goals. Questions were raised regarding the use of Recreational Impact Fees for the Arts Center. Attorney Vorbeck advised that those funds are for capital improvements. Commissioner Walker stated that he is not comfortable with giving more than \$50,000 total for the Arts and does not support it coming from ad-valorem taxes at all. Commissioner Pauls stated that if expenditures from the Recreational Impact Fees are appropriate, then he would support it, however, he still felt that the Board should commit \$30,000. This issue will be researched further.

The commissioners voiced concern with funding \$4,800 to D.B.P.A. because the sign advertised Christmas until May. Commissioner Ryan recommended approval at some level with a performance-based contract. The commissioners agreed to readdress this issue.

Ms. Sharon Rogers appeared before the commissioners to explain the program. She stated that the program is administered through the Shalimar Office to keep overhead lower. She stated that these funds are used to help pay the rent and one staff person for the Walton County Office where the children are exchanged.

Mr. Jack Huggins appeared before the Board on behalf of The Florida Chautauqua and asked the Board to reconsider their original request of \$10,000. He explained the need for the funding request and stated that they have hired Mr. Bruce Collier, Artistic Director. Mr. Huggins stated that they are coordinating the use of the various arts buildings with the south Walton Art groups. (Tape 2/side 2)

Ms. Pam Tedesco appeared on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce and explained that the funds they request help cover expenses related to business operations that are not Chamber related, such as for staff who handle the numerous calls for county information.

The commissioners requested that each organization present the county with a funding request, which outlines their purpose and contribution to the county because of the funding. Mr. Little stated that he did receive input from most of the organizations.

Staff agreed with the requested amount of \$71,250 for the Economic Development Council. Mr. Little stated that this includes the \$10,000 membership for the Florida Great Northwest.

Mr. Tom Powell, representing Walton County EDC, stated that the arrangement with Florida Great Northwest is that the EDC has a membership, not Walton County. EDC then has an agreement with Walton County that the commissioners will decide who will serve on the board for Florida Great Northwest. Mr. Powell presented a contract proposal for review. Mr. Little questioned if the Board desires to fund EDC from ad-valorem or from the \$500,000 earmarked out of the one-cent sales tax. Commissioner Walker stated that he does not want to support it from ad-valorem. Commissioner Pauls stated that because it is economic development, it would make sense to fund it from the one-cent tax; it will benefit the entire county. Commissioner Jones felt it should be funded from sources there and the \$500,000 be used in other ways. Commissioner Ryan supported funding it from the one-cent sales tax. The commissioners discussed the fact that the \$500,000 was set aside for economic development in the county, not only in Mossy Head.

The COPE Center requested \$107,579 and staff recommended funding in the same amount as last year in the amount of \$80,654. The commissioners agreed with staff's recommendation.

Shelter House requested \$40,000 in funding; however, staff recommended only \$25,000. Commissioner Ryan reminded the Board that this funding leverages other funding from grants.

Chairman Rees stated that he feels an amount needs to be determined for Economic Development. Commissioner Pauls stated that a plan is needed to know what is being funded and how much is needed. Mr. Underwood stated that a consultant needs to draft a plan and infrastructure would also have to be funded.

Ms. Sandra Preston, Shelter House, appeared before the commissioners and introduced Mrs. Kris Cash, President of the Board of Director, and Ms. Margaret Sivalas, Director of Finances/CPA. Ms. Preston presented a handout of their revenue and expenditures, which is divided out by county per capita, allocation of grants by county, explanation of use of the \$25,000. Mr. Imfeld explained what data was asked for, but was not received. After further discussion the commissioners asked them to meet with Mr. Imfeld for further clarification. Commissioner Ryan spoke about the need for Shelter House in Walton County.

The commissioners accepted the recommendation to fund Walton County Council on Aging's requested amount of \$155,424.

The commissioners accepted staff's recommendation for the funding request by Tri-County Community Council in the amount of \$27,400. Mr. Joel Paul addressed the Board and stated that this amount of funding would provide about 100,000 trips for the transportation program and helps provide the necessary cash match for grant funding.

Elder Care Services requested \$4,000 and is also used for cash match for obtaining other sources of funding. Ms. Julie Belinski, Director of Elder Care Services, appeared before the Board and explained the services they provide. She explained that they provided volunteers who serve in many different functions throughout the county.

Mr. Rick Sustrom, volunteer for American Red Cross of Northwest Florida, stated that they are requesting the same amount of funding as last year; \$5,000. He explained that the Red Cross is still operating in a deficit in Walton County, but will continue providing service as needed.

The commissioners agreed to the \$50,000 funding request by Walton County ARC, Inc.

Ms. Sandra Golden and Ms. Sandy Weimorts appeared before the Board on behalf of the Resources for Human Development with a funding request of \$40,000. Staff recommended only \$26,000. Sandra spoke about the need to provide supported living facilities in Walton County for their clients. The Board supported funding in the amount of \$26,000. The same number of clients is being served as last year.

Ms. Cathy Chieung, Program Director for the NW Florida Comprehensive Services for Children, represented their funding request in the amount of \$69,935. She explained that services provided by their organization includes crisis interventions and medical forensics services for children at the Children's Advocacy Center in Niceville. The services include interviews with children, medical examinations, evaluations, and counseling referrals. She explained that the children they serve are referred to them by law enforcement. Commissioner Walker felt that some of these services might be a crossover of the same service provided by another agency. Commissioner Ryan explained that many of these services were fragmented and this organization has worked to consolidate those services to better serve the children. Ms. Chieung stated that they do provide service in Walton County, which is where these funds are used.

Mr. Little explained that staff has recommended no further funding for Okaloosa Walton Community College. The five-year contract has expired and the services being provided were not being taken full advantage of, therefore staff recommended to set up a program through the county's HR Department to pay as you go.

Staff recommended funding in the amount of \$2,500 for each of the seven (7) Little League and Youth Organizations. Mr. Imfeld explained that if they want to request additional funds above and beyond that then they need to present their request to the Recreational Board. (Tape 3) Commissioner Walker felt that all of the monies should be given to the Recreation Board for them to make a determination as to the priorities. The Board agreed.

Mr. George Frankford, SWCC Budget Oversight Committee, commended previous commissioners for their foresight. He stated that he feels the county's reserves are too high.

Commissioner Jones left for a prior commitment.

Mr. Imfeld explained the overall budget and the amount of reserves. He stated that there is a total of \$15 million in all of the reserves. He further explained that certain reserve funds are earmarked for particular items such as EDC, Landfill purchases, road paving and maintenance, and capital outlay. Mr. Frankford opposed this amount of reserves. Commissioner Walker stated that this is only two and one-half months of operating costs. Mr. Imfeld also explained that the county attempts to meet the standard guideline for operational reserve to maintain the highest bond rating level possible. He stated that it is within the level set by State Statute. Mr. Frankford also commented on the need for long-range plans and stated that he is willing to help draft some long-range goals. Ms. Nancy James reiterated the need for long-range plans for all of the departments within the county.

Mr. Imfeld gave a summary of the decisions made in the budget workshops. He stated one Code Enforcement position was reduced. One of the assistants was cut from

Parks & Recreation from the lawn services being placed back under Public Works. Cost adjustments have been made in the Public Works Department and vehicles scrubbed. The Professional Services Study for the park at the Clyde Wells Bridge will be deferred for one year. These changes will allow necessary funding to put in the additional EMS stations as requested. The total changes reduced the budget from last year's budget of \$91 million to \$78 million. He stated that he would like to see the ad-valorem unchanged to remain at 5.315, which should adequately fund, along with the other revenue sources, the budget as presented.

Commissioner Pauls stated that he would like to see an Employee Protection Plan implemented for the Sheriff's Department within the next year. Commissioner Pauls suggested stipulating that the Plan be implemented by the second year of the three-year funding cycle. The Board agreed to discuss this issue at the next meeting.

Mr. Underwood complemented Mr. Imfeld and his staff for their job in preparing the budget.

Ms. Nancy James questioned the Board if they are going to consider the position of Director of Planning and Zoning. Commissioner Pauls stated that he supports this and feels that it should be part of the discussion as the fees are reviewed to see if there are fees being collected that could be allocated for this position. Staff also agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Lane Rees, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court