

JULY 10, 2008 – BUDGET HEARING

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Budget Hearing on July 10, 2008 at 9:00 a.m., at the South Walton Annex Courthouse to discuss the budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2008-2009.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Larry Jones, Chair; Commissioner Sara Comander, Vice-Chair; Commissioner Scott Brannon; Commissioner Cindy Meadows; and Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen. Attorney W. C. Henry, County Attorney, was also present.

Commissioner Meadows led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order. He commented that the millage rate to be set during the meeting can be lowered but not raised.

Mr. Bill Imfeld, County Finance Director, presented the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2009. He stated that Walton County has the third lowest millage rate in the State. Some challenges that will be faced are decreases in gasoline tax revenues and sales tax revenues. He reported the recent drop in taxable property values have affected the ad Valorem tax revenue. The Budget Scrub Team was comprised of Mr. Imfeld, Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator; Mr. Gary Mattison, Human Resource Director; Ms. Wanda Smith, Assistant Finance Director; and Ms. Michelle Guidry, Budget Technician. Mr. Imfeld stated that the budget recommendations presented does not include pay increases and minor modifications that will not impact the millage rate. He stated that a tentative millage rate needed to be set due to TRIM notices being sent out. Final budget recommendations will be presented in September.

Mr. Imfeld reviewed the proposed 2009 budget recommendations for the Constitutional Offices and county departments as follows:

Clerk of Court - \$1,942,140 with no increase in the level of funding and a total of 74.5 FTE's.

Tax Collector - \$2,765,516 with no increase in the level of funding and a total of 29 FTE's. Mr. Imfeld stated that if the School Tax Constitutional Amendment passes this fall, the fees collected by the Tax Collector will be reduced by approximately \$.5 million. This is an issue that will be addressed in the year to come.

Property Appraiser - \$1,896,121 with no increase in the level of funding and a total of 34 FTE's.

Supervisor of Elections - \$670,058 with no increase in the level of funding and a total of 8 FTE's. Mr. Imfeld stated that there are State mandated requirements to modify the touch screen voting machines. The current year's budget will not be affected by these requirements, but must be addressed in future budgets.

Sheriff's Office - \$15,053,110 with no increase in the level of funding and a total of 202 FTE's which is the same level approved by the Board for the FY 2007-2008 Budget. Mr. Imfeld stated that the Sheriff requested an increase of approximately \$1.4 million for the FY 2009 budget. The requests are for increases in personnel, pay, operations, and capital outlay. A recommendation for no increase was returned to Sheriff Johnson by the Scrub Team. Mr. Imfeld said that Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator, suggested to a Sheriff's representative that consideration be made to reduce the current budget. A Sheriff's representative responded in a letter dated June 24 that the requested

budget could not be cut. The recommendation by the Scrub Team is to keep the budget at the same level as last year.

Tourist Development Council - \$16,996,780 with a decrease of \$1,112,463 and a total of 30 FTE's. The TDC is funded by the Tourist Development Tax not by ad Valorem taxes. A request was made for two new positions, manager and assistant, to run the Huettel and Kellogg Properties. Mr. Sonny Mares, TDC Director, has realigned the duties of existing unfilled positions to make provisions for the two new positions. Mr. Imfeld stated that the revenues are predicted to be 4% below the current level. He reported that there are beach related projects currently in progress. Mr. Imfeld said that three TDC vehicles are on rotation to be replaced. He reported that research is being done to replace these vehicles with hybrids which will help save on fuel costs.

Board of County Commissioners - \$11,416,241 an increase of \$132,516 and a total of 94 FTE's.

- BCC-\$5,246,392 a decrease of \$139,308 with 15 FTE's.
- County Administration-\$405,221 a decrease of \$14,749 with 4 FTE's.
- Public Information Officer-\$79,893 a decrease of \$15,043 with 1 FTE.
- GIS-\$452,078 a decrease of \$83,821 with 7 FTE's a decrease of 1 FTE due to job consolidation.
- Corrections-\$5,232,657 an increase of \$385,437 with 67 FTE's.

Mr. Imfeld stated that the increase to the Corrections budget was for employee raises due at the end of probation and completion of certification. Utilities have been cut by approximately \$120,000. The Corrections Department FY 2008-09 budget is less than the proposed budget for FY 2006-2007.

Parks and Recreation – \$1,237,205 a decrease of \$343,717 and a total of 15 FTE's a decrease of 1 FTE.

- Parks and Recreation-\$923,222 a decrease of \$155,350.
- Recreation Board-\$260,200 a decrease of \$185,500.
- Freeport Pool-\$53,783 a decrease of \$2,867.

Planning and Development Services - \$5,475,821 a decrease of \$1,169,210 and a total of 70 FTE's.

- Planning Administration-\$638,729 a decrease of \$51,603 with 9 FTE's and increase of 1 FTE.
- CBA-\$100,000 a decrease of \$125,000 which was transferred to Public Works..
- Planning-\$1,224,529 a decrease of \$738,882 with 14 FTE's a decrease of 8 FTE's.
- Environmental-\$341,024 a decrease of \$10,788 with 5 FTE's an increase of 3 FTE's.
- Engineering-\$904,574 an increase of \$146,253 with 10 FTE's.
- Code Enforcement-\$513,540 a decrease of \$15,434 with 8 FTE's.
- Building Department-\$1,753,425 a decrease of \$373,756 with 24 FTE's a decrease of 4 FTE's

Mr. Imfeld stated that the Building Department is funded through building permits and would not affect the ad Valorem tax.

Public Works - \$34,724,089 a decrease of \$2,377,488 and a total of 175 FTE's.

- Public Works-\$21,293,308 a decrease of \$1,654,965 with 154 FTE's a decrease of 2 FTE's.
- North Walton Mosquito Control-\$613,862 a decrease of \$30,900 with 7 FTE's.
- State Mosquito Control Grant-\$17,500 a decrease of \$1,000
- Landfill-\$12,799,419 a decrease of \$690,623 with 14 FTE's.

Mr. Imfeld stated that certain types of equipment will be needed during the next year and presented the approved list. Board approval will be required to purchase any equipment not on the approved list. He stated that more information, regarding road paving and funding, will be presented in January.

Emergency Services - \$10,384,160 a decrease of \$362,575 and a total of 107 FTE's.

- Emergency Services-\$170,342 a decrease of \$18,882 with 2 FTE's.
- Emergency Operations Center-\$204,553 a decrease of \$31,681 with 2.5 FTE's.
- Emergency Management Trust-\$128,396 a decrease of \$ \$3,422 with 1.5 FTE's.
- Paramedics/Firefighters-\$7,924,227 a decrease of \$202,472 with 80 FTE's.
- Animal Control-\$394,749 an increase of \$9,234 with 3 FTE's.

- E-911-\$1,187,524 a decrease of \$77,226 with 18 FTE's.
- Fire Control-\$15,769 no increase in level of funding.
- Aid to other fire departments-\$358,600 a decrease of \$38,126.

Mr. Imfeld stated that new equipment for Emergency Services has been deferred until next year.

Facilities Management - \$2,562,529 a decrease of \$237,796 and a total of 36 FTE's.

- Facilities-\$1,714,605 a decrease of \$240,372 with 19 FTE's.
- Custodial-\$556,961 a decrease of \$18,024 with 14 FTE's.
- Construction Management-\$290,963 an increase of \$20,600 with 3 FTE's.

Mr. Imfeld stated that the increase in Construction Management was due to the monies for contracts being moved from Facilities.

County Attorney - \$281,182 a decrease of \$245,522 and a total of 3 FTE's a decrease of 2 FTE's.

Citizens Services Division - \$5,615,049 a decrease of \$7,531 and a total of 40.5 FTE's.

- Citizens Services-\$161,666 a decrease of \$8,810 with 2 FTE's.
- Statutory Required Org.-\$686,500 an increase of \$10,000.
 - HCRA-\$230,000 an increase of \$10,000.
 - Medicaid-\$400,000 no change.
 - Baker Act-\$50,000 no change.
 - Indigent Burials-\$6,500 no change.
- Discretionary Org.-\$251,380 a decrease of \$92,191.
 - Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center-\$1,340 a decrease of \$660.
 - Shelter House- \$6,700 a decrease of \$3,300.
 - Families Count-\$21,000 a decrease of \$10,471.
 - Child Care Services-\$8,300 a decrease of \$4,200.
 - Chamber of Commerce-\$15,250 a decrease of \$7,500.
 - Economic Development Council-No funding recommended.
 - American Red Cross-\$2,670 a decrease of \$1,330.
 - The Canaan Recovery Foundation-No funding recommended.
 - COPE Center-\$55,430 a decrease of \$27,670.
 - Resources for Human Development-\$13,000 a decrease of \$6,500.
 - Walton County ARC, Inc.-\$30,000 a decrease of \$15,000.
 - Children's Volunteer Health Network-no funding recommended.
 - Walton County Council on Aging-\$50,000 a decrease of \$25,000.
 - Senior Center-\$35,000. Funded by City of DeFuniak Springs

- Elder Care Services-\$1,340 a decrease of \$660.
- Tri-County Community Council-\$11,350 a decrease of \$5,650.

Mr. Imfeld stated that the Judge Ben Gordon Center is judicially funded by surcharges placed on criminal cases and is not impacted by ad Valorem, sales, or gas tax.

- Health Department-\$797,960 no change.
- Veterans-\$159,887 a decrease of \$3,609 with 3 FTE's.
- Soil Conservation-\$99,412 a decrease of \$3,476 with 2 FTE's.
- Agricultural Center-\$304,859 a decrease of \$79,442 with 8.5 FTE's.
- Probation-\$318,392 a decrease of \$16,583 with 5 FTE's.
- Library-\$963,995 a decrease of \$22,127 with 17 FTE's.
- HUD-\$1,870,998 an increase of \$208,707 with 3 FTE's. Mr. Imfeld stated that HUD is a Federal Grant and is not affected by ad Valorem taxes.

S.H.I.P. Department-\$519,763 an increase of \$18,365. This amount is not affected by ad Valorem taxes, sales tax or gas tax.

- Professional Services-Administration \$41,580 an increase of \$1,469.
- Other Current Charges-Administration \$10,396 an increase of \$368.
- First Time Homebuyer-\$70,000 an increase of \$27,419.
- Rental Development-\$40,000 a decrease of \$20,000.
- Home Ownership Counseling-\$1,000 no change.
- Substantial housing Rehab-\$198,958 an increase of \$9,109.
- Emergency Repair-\$57,829 no change.
- Replacement Housing-\$100,000 no change.

Human Resources - \$569,079 a decrease of \$65,953 and a total of 7 FTE's a decrease of 1 FTE.

Courts - \$1,215,578 an increase of \$35,727.

- Circuit Court-\$401,613 no change.
- Guardian Ad Litem-\$1,000 no change.
- County Court-\$75,119 no change.
- Medical Examiner-\$201,834 a decrease of \$23,420.
- State Attorney-\$81,500 no change.
- Public Defender-\$16,490 no change.
- Court Technology-\$438,022 an increase of \$59,147.

Mr. Imfeld reported that the salaries of the six bailiffs hired for Circuit Court and one bailiff for County Court is paid by the Sheriff. The Sheriff is reimbursed by the

Courts for these salaries. Court Technology is funded by court case surcharge and is not ad Valorem tax funded.

Finance Division - \$ 1,072,496 a decrease of \$54,697 and a total of 18 FTE's.

- Office of Management and Budget-\$337,104 a decrease of \$15,697 with 4 FTE's.
- Purchasing-\$489,860 a decrease of \$85 with 9 FTE's.
- Grants-\$101,142 a decrease of \$15,964 with 1.5 FTE's a decrease of .5 FTE's.
- Contracts-\$26,958 a decrease of \$19,796 with .5 FTE's a decrease of .5 FTE's.
- Telecommunications-\$66,637 a decrease of \$1,617 with 1 FTE.
- Ambulance Billing-\$50,795 a decrease of \$ 1,538 with 1 FTE.

Debt Service - **\$248,700.** Mr. Imfeld stated that this is the last year for assessments on the Hospital Bonds. The debt is scheduled to be paid off the following budget year.

Recreation Plat Fee-\$525,000. Mr. Imfeld stated that the rate for collecting the fees has diminished, but expected to bring in another \$200,000. The balance left over will be rolled forward. This amount is not affected by ad Valorem taxes, sales tax or gas tax.

Preservation Fees-\$725,000. This amount is not affected by ad Valorem taxes, sales tax or gas tax.

Sidewalk Fees-\$390,000. This amount is not affected by ad Valorem taxes, sales tax or gas tax.

Local Option Gas Tax-\$2,000,000 (estimated). This money is restricted by Florida Statute for use in repairing and constructing roads and bridges.

Inmate Canteen Fund-\$252,901 an increase of \$52,306. This amount is not affected by ad Valorem taxes, sales tax or gas tax.

Driftwood MSBU-\$434,000. Mr. Imfeld stated that this is the last year for assessing the MSBU.

Imperial Lakes MSBU-\$36,941. This amount is not affected by ad Valorem taxes, sales tax or gas tax.

Capital Projects-\$1.7 million. The only item funded is the debt service on the \$30 million credit line. There are no new buildings or facilities.

Mr. Imfeld stated that the current year's millage rate is 3.3563 mills. The rollback rate for this year is at a higher rate. He requested the Board's guidance in setting the millage rate and what is to be done regarding raises for employees.

Commissioner Comander relayed her gratitude to everyone who participated in the budget process.

Chairman Jones suggested that methods be looked at to provide salary increases to non-exempt employees. Mr. Imfeld stated that the information could be brought back to the public hearings in September. Commissioner Comander stated that some exempt employees make less than non-exempt employees and suggested that the raises be administered to everyone. She asked that the information being brought back to the Board contain both figures for non-exempt employee raises, and across the board raises.

Commissioner Meadows voiced concern over the funding of the raises. She stated that Walton County employees were fortunate that 100% of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance was paid; private sector employers only pay part.

Commissioner Brannon questioned if the amounts had been compiled for the amount per employee for a cost of living increase. Mr. Imfeld stated that if a 2% increase was given to the non-exempt employee, the amount would be under \$700 per year per

employee. The ad Valorem impact would be approximately \$600,000. He said that the information will be brought back in September.

Chairman Jones clarified that the FTE's eliminated are positions that have remained unfilled. Employees have not been laid off. Mr. Imfeld stated that surrounding counties have begun laying people off and voiced appreciation to the Constitutional officers for working to keep their workers employed.

Commissioner Comander asked Mr. Gary Mattison, Human Resources Director, about the possible insurance buy out. Mr. Mattison stated that options are still being explored.

Motion by Commissioner Pridgen, second by Commissioner Comander, to approve the 3.3563 millage rate. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Comander Aye, Brannon Aye, Meadows Aye, Pridgen Aye.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

APPROVED _____
Larry Jones, Chairman

ATTEST _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts