

JULY 11, 2007 – BUDGET WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Budget Workshop on Wednesday, July 11, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. at the South Walton Courthouse Annex.

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

Also in attendance were county staff members, department administrators, and representatives from the Constitutional Offices.

Mr. Bill Imfeld, Finance Director, reviewed the following proposed 2008 budget recommendations as presented by the Constitutional Offices and county departments:

Clerk of Courts – \$1,942,140

There were no public comments.

Supervisor of Elections – \$500,931

- Elections – \$11,127
- Voter Education Fund – \$0

There were no public comments.

Property Appraiser – \$1,896,121

There were no public comments.

Tax Collector – \$3,041,689

There were no public comments.

Sheriff's Department – \$15,167,058

Commissioner Jones felt that the budget for the Sheriff's Department should be kept within the maximum 7% increase as directed by the Board.

Attorney Chris Cadenhead was present to represent the Walton County Sheriff's Department. He felt that the Sheriff's Department budget should not be restricted to the same budget restraints since their services are provided 24 hours per day.

Commissioner Comander commented that all other emergency service providers operate 24 hours per day and each were directed to cut their budgets. She asked if Sheriff Johnson had submitted a budget proposal with a zero increase and a 7% increase as directed by the Board.

Commissioner Brannon questioned the cost per deputy. Mr. Cadenhead replied that the cost per each new deputy is approximately \$100,000. Sheriff Johnson explained that the budget proposal includes a 5% raise for each deputy, which totals \$400,000, and \$100,000 for each of the proposed four new deputies. Sheriff Johnson cited population growth as the basis for needing additional deputies. Mr. Cadenhead added that the CODY Study report suggested a necessary budget increase of 7.1%.

Commissioner Jones discussed the budget cuts mandated by the state.

Commissioner Meadows requested the budget be re-calculated with a 3% COLA raise instead of 5% as proposed. Mr. Cadenhead explained that the budget contains a maximum raise of 5% while other county departments budgeted for a 3% COLA and a 3.01% merit raise. He stated that the difference between giving 3% and 5% raises is \$200,000.

Commissioner Comander spoke in support of giving the 5% raise but was not in support of hiring new deputies.

Commissioner Brannon discussed the CODY Study and questioned where the four new deputies will be located. He asked if there are currently any vacant positions and if there are reserves to be rolled forward. Commissioner Brannon asked to see the exact figures regarding population and growth.

Commissioner Meadows also questioned reserve funds. Sheriff Johnson replied that he uses reserves during the budget year to maintain existing equipment and to purchase new.

Mr. Bob Hudson, Walton County Taxpayers Association, stated that the WCTA is conducting a survey regarding taxes and services provided by the county. He stated that most citizens surveyed are willing to give up services in exchange for lower taxes. The three most important services to the citizens who responded are roads, law enforcement, and emergency services. He stated that last year the majority of county employees received a 7% raise, 4% COLA and 3% merit. Mr. Hudson commented that Code Enforcement Officers are paid more than starting deputies. He also discussed the population growth.

(Commissioner Brannon exited briefly at 9:55 a.m. and returned at 9:57 a.m.)

Commissioner Pridgen stated that two of the three critical areas mentioned by Mr. Hudson proposed budget cuts.

Ms. Bonnie McQuiston, WCTA, spoke in support of the budget proposed by the Sheriff. She felt that Sheriff Johnson did not give his employees enough of a raise last budget year.

Mr. Emmitt Hildreth also spoke in support of the Sheriff's budget.

The Board directed Sheriff Johnson to provide additional information regarding justification for the proposed budget increase.

(Commissioner Meadows exited briefly at 10:09 a.m. and returned at 10:14 a.m.)

Tourist Development Council – \$18,109,243

- TDC – Administration – \$5887,255
- Beach Area – \$7,026,250
- Beach Re-nourishment – \$2,361,832
- New Product Development – \$1,838,046
- Autumn Tides – \$995,860

Mr. Imfeld explained that the TDC budget is funded by bed taxes, not ad valorem taxes.

Commissioner Comander questioned if TDC funds can be used for beach patrol. Ms. Kriss Titus, replied that State Statutes do not allow tourist funds to pay for law enforcement.

There were no public comments.

Board of County Commissioners – \$11,205,466

- Board of County Commissioners – \$5,402,397
- County Administration – \$419,970
- GIS/Information Resources – \$535,899
- Corrections - \$4,847,200

Mr. Imfeld reviewed each individual budget, including increases and decreases. He explained that there is a \$36,000 increase related to Juvenile Justice which is un-funded and mandated by the state.

(Commissioner Jones exited briefly at 10:10 a.m. and returned at 10:14 a.m.)

There were no public comments.

Parks & Recreation – \$1,580,922

- Parks & Recreation – \$1,078,572
- Freeport Pool – \$56,650
- Recreation Board – \$445,700

There were no public comments.

Planning & Development Services Division – \$6,646,068

- Planning & Development Services Administration – \$916,369
- Planning & Development - \$1,963,411
- Environmental- Planning - \$758,321
- Engineering- Planning - \$351,812
- Code Enforcement – \$28,974
- Building Department - \$2,127,181

Mr. Imfeld explained that the Building Department is funded by departmental fees, not ad valorem taxes and that their budget is based on estimated revenues.

There were no public comments.

(Commissioner Pridgen exited briefly at 10:19 a.m. and returned at 10:20 a.m.)

Public Works Division – \$37,052,860

- Roads and Bridges - \$22,948,273
- State Mosquito Grant – \$18,500
- North Walton Mosquito Control – \$5906,045
- Landfill – \$13,490,042

Mr. Imfeld explained that monies are budgeted to complete Phase III of Scenic Gulf Drive based on previous action by the Board.

Commissioner Meadows questioned any reduction in the Scenic Gulf Drive budget. Mr. Bell replied that the reduction was \$350,000.

Mr. Imfeld stated that no new vehicles are to be purchased in the 2008 fiscal year. He explained that the State Mosquito Control Grant was reduced \$4,850 by the state and the North Walton Mosquito Control was mandated by the state to reduce their budget by 3% and that their budget is a “separate ad valorem” issue. He explained that the landfill is funded by a 1¢ Local Option Sales Tax and that profits are used to help fund road paving projects and Debt Service accounts.

There were no public comments.

Emergency Services Division – \$9,477,085

- Emergency Response- Administration – \$189,224
- EOC – \$236,234
- EM Trust – \$131,818
- Animal Control – \$385,515
- EMS – \$0
- Walton County Fire Rescue - \$8,126,699
- Fire Control – 15,769
- Non-Dependant Fire Districts - \$391,826

Mr. Imfeld explained that the Animal Control Facility is funded in the Capital Outlay budget. He stated that the \$0 EMS budget is due to the merging of EMS and Walton County Fire

Rescue which created a savings of almost \$600,000. Mr. Imfeld allowed for three additional fire fighters in the Glendale area. He stated that Freeport VFD requested a significant budget increase and that they were given a \$4,590 increase which is not the requested amount.

(Commissioner Brannon exited briefly at 10:28 a.m. and returned at 10:29 a.m.)

Freeport City Councilman Charlie Simmons was present to discuss the request for additional funds. He submitted a chart comparing the square miles and number of responses for each fire district and a chart comparing the number of homes served and proposed budgets for each. He also submitted a breakdown of the revenues and expenditures and Capital Outlay of the Freeport VFD. Mr. Simmons felt that the Freeport VFD is fielding over half of the calls for the entire county and receiving a smaller budget.

Chairman Brannon stated that Freeport VFD services a large area outside their city limits. He discussed the creation and affects of the North Walton Fire District. Commissioner Brannon felt that the Board should discuss whether the City of Freeport will have fire service inside their city limits or are they going to continue to cover the areas outside the city limits.

Mr. Simmons stated that there is currently no option other than the Freeport VFD providing services to areas outside their city limits. He felt that the best option is for the Board to increase Freeport VFD's budget in lieu of building new fire stations.

Mr. Ed Baltzley, Director, Emergency Response Division, stated that a grant has been received to establish an ambulance service in the Black Creek area and that a fire rescue unit will be added. He stated that there has been interest shown from individuals willing to donate land. Mr. Baltzley agreed that additional coverage is needed in that area.

Commissioner Brannon stated that Freeport VFD is covering three areas as opposed to one and questioned if the resolution differentiates between services provided to city residents

versus county residents. He also clarified that Freeport VFD is requesting that their budget be equal to that of DeFuniak Springs VFD.

Mr. Eddie Rivers, Emergency Management Director, stated that the resolution was written to include the areas outside of Freeport. He stated that the information submitted by Mr. Simmons regarding calls may be misleading due to the method of tracking. He discussed the tracking methods.

Commissioner Meadows questioned when the station will be opened in the Black Creek area and the funding. Mr. Baltzley responded that the grant has been obtained and the personnel and ambulance are available. He added that land and funds to construct the facility are needed. Mr. Rivers stated that a temporary facility can be established once the land is secured.

Commissioner Meadows questioned a method for transitioning until the City of Freeport decides whether they will build a station in Black Creek. Mr. Simmons felt that the Board would save money by allowing Freeport VFD to service the Black Creek area.

Commissioner Brannon felt that the Board should work with the City of Freeport regarding their intentions.

Mr. Simmons stated that the City of Freeport is willing to sign a contract to provide services in the Black Creek area on a temporary basis. Mr. Bell clarified that the City of Freeport would sign a contract to take on more responsibility and to relieve the county of liability.

Mr. Bell asked Mr. Baltzley to explain how the calls were tracked for the wildfire in Black Creek. Mr. Baltzley and Mr. Rivers explained that one incident is tracked as one call no matter how many vehicles respond or length of time responding.

Mr. Baltzley clarified that Walton County Fire Rescue will have to remain in the Black Creek area to provide EMS services.

The Board recessed briefly at 10:51 a.m. and reconvened at 11:05 a.m.

Motion by Commissioner Jones, second by Commissioner Brannon, to enter into a public hearing to consider a proposed ordinance to rescind Ordinance 2007-05, Open Burn Ban. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Meadows Aye, Pridgen Aye, Brannon Aye, and Comander Aye.

Commissioner Pridgen called to order an emergency public hearing to consider lifting the open burn ban.

Motion by Commissioner Comander, second by Commissioner Jones, to approve a proposed ordinance to rescind Ordinance 2007-05 (**2007-18**). Ayes 5, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Meadows Aye, Pridgen Aye, Brannon Aye, and Comander Aye.

Motion by Commissioner Comander, second by Commissioner Brannon, to close the emergency public hearing. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Meadows Aye, Pridgen Aye, Brannon Aye, and Comander Aye.

Mr. Hudson discussed the \$45,000 allocation proposed for the South Walton VFD. He felt that the allocation is not necessary due to the millage tax. Mr. Hudson discussed the need for expanded emergency services south of the bay. He asked if the county is on target with the six-year plan discussed by Mr. Rivers. Mr. Bell replied no due to budget cuts. Mr. Hudson reiterated that the citizens do not want budget cuts to adversely affect emergency services.

Motion by Commissioner Meadows, second by Commissioner Brannon, to delete the \$45,100 allocation to the South Walton VFD.

Mr. Brian Flanagan, South Walton Fire District, was opposed to having the Board delete the allocation.

Commissioner Brannon felt that SWFD should take into consideration that other independent districts do not have methods of generating the necessary funds to provide fire services.

Mr. Flannagan requested that the Board cut the budget by 9% instead of 100%.

Commissioner Meadows stated that the amount allocated by the Board is a very small percentage of the total budget of the SWFD.

Commissioner Brannon clarified that the fire services received by south Walton County will not be affected by the budget cut and that the additional funds will increase the services provided to other areas of the county.

A vote was called for the motion on the floor. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Meadows Aye, Pridgen Aye, Brannon Aye, and Comander Aye.

Facilities Management – \$2,800,325

- Facilities Maintenance – \$1,945,977
- Construction Management – \$270,363
- Custodial Services – \$574,985

Commissioner Meadows asked if there is a policy in place to encourage employees to conserve energy. Mr. Imfeld stated that policies were devised for department heads to implement.

Commissioner Comander recommended using fluorescent light bulbs.

Commissioner Brannon recommended that the Board consider implementing “green” concepts such as those implemented by Sarasota County.

There were no public comments.

Office of the County Attorney – \$526,704

There were no public comments.

Citizen Services Division General Fund – \$6,224,212

- Citizen Services General Fund – \$1,251,072
- Contributions – Children and Families - \$80,971
- Contributions – Cultural & Educational - \$0
- Contributions – Economic Development - \$22,750
- Contributions – Emergency Relief - \$4,000
- Contributions - Mental Health/ Developmental Disabilities - \$128,100
- Contributions – Social Services/ Indigent Services – \$94,000
- Statutory Mandated Contributions - \$1,474,460
- S.H.I.P. Department Totals – \$501,691
- Housing and Urban Development Department Tools
- Library Services – \$1,004,877

Mr. Bob Smith, Executive Director, Economic Development Council, requested that the Board not cut all of the funding for the EDC and discussed their. He stated that the current budget is five to six times lower than that of surrounding counties. Mr. Smith also felt that the EDC should not be categorized with the Chamber of Commerce since the EDC's purpose is to increase the tax base. Ms. Barbara Smith, Okaloosa Walton College, concurred with Mr. Smith.

Commissioner Jones stated that he would rather decrease the EDC budget by 50% in lieu of 100%.

Commissioner Comander recommended allocating funds for economic development but not specifically to the Economic Development Council.

Commissioner Meadows recommended establishing an economic development office within the county.

Commissioner Brannon stated that the Board is committed to economic development within the county. He stated that the EDC has not raised a substantial amount of funds from the private sector and was concerned that they do not have the support of the business community.

Commissioner Pridgen questioned incorporating the EDC with the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Bell suggested a scheduling a joint meeting with the EDC.

Mr. Hudson, on behalf of himself, stated that the county cannot be competitive in recruiting new industry with even half of the current budget.

Ms. McQuiston questioned the total budget for the EDC and discussed the need for a public/private partnership. Mr. Smith stated that the total budget is \$108,000.

Mr. J. B. Hilliard stated that Walton County currently has only a fraction of the funds necessary for economic development.

Mr. Smith discussed the trials with maintaining membership and added that returns on investments are not immediate.

Mr. Imfeld stated that the C.O.P.E. Center's budget was not cut because they are not full discretionary. He stated that they also handle the Baker Act Fund which is state mandated.

Ms. Sandy Weimortz, Resources for Human Development (RHD), and clients for the program questioned why the Board had not allocated funds to their organization.

(Commissioner Brannon exited briefly at 12:02 p.m. and returned at 12:05 p.m. and Commissioner Jones exited briefly at 12:05 p.m. and returned at 12:10 p.m.)

Mr. Imfeld stated that the necessary documentation was not submitted regarding the budget request. He stated that there are no allocations for the current year, but that the county had allocated \$26,000 in previous years.

Ms. Weimortz stated that the program receives funds from the county and the state via the Medicaid Waiver Program. She added that the necessary documentation was submitted to Mr. Ken Little, Citizen Services Director, and referred to a contract for the current year. She did not have specific information regarding the overall budget and allocations received for the

current fiscal year from the county; however, she discussed the change in the services provided this year due to the lack of funding by the Board and budget cuts from the state.

Commissioner Brannon questioned the clients served and the allocations received from the state. Ms. Weimortz stated that they serve 27 clients in Walton County and that the state allocation is approximately \$230,000.

Ms. Annabel Zorn, Physical Director, Walton County ARC, stated that the two agencies are not competitors; however, they both provide some of the same services to developmentally disabled adults. She explained that the state mandates that there be more than one option for service. Ms. Zorn discussed the services provided and stated that ARC also serves some children. She added that the state has not made final decisions regarding their budget for the 2008 fiscal year.

Mr. Hudson felt that the Board should investigate whether the information was submitted by RHD and whether they received funds in the 2007 fiscal year.

The Board concurred that more information is needed regarding RHD.

Ms. Zorn discussed the services provided by ARC and the budget cuts by the county. She also discussed how the funds are used and methods of supplementing those funds. She stated that they serve approximately 40 clients.

(Commissioner Pridgen exited briefly at 12:20 p.m. and returned at 12:28 p.m.)

Commissioner Brannon requested additional information regarding the state's funding and proposed budget.

Mr. Hudson suggested funding clients, not organizations. Ms. Zorn stated that one client can require multiple services.

(Commissioner Jones left at 12:30 p.m. Commissioner Comander exited briefly at 12:32 p.m. and returned at 12:34 p.m.)

Ms. Rachel Gillis, Executive Director, C.O.P.E. Center, suggested that they assume the liability for the \$50,000 Baker Act match. She stated that they are accustomed to the accountability requirements and to safeguarding patient account information. Mr. Imfeld concurred with Ms. Gillis.

Mr. Larry Moose discussed the 50% decrease in the budgets for the Walton County Council on Aging. He stated that the reduction may change the level of services provided to their clients and explained that the majority of funds are spent on meals. Mr. Moose added that the COA has a total budget of \$800,000 and that most of their funds come from the state. He stated that their employees are hired at minimum wage and only receive raises when minimum wage is increased. Mr. Moose reported that half of their state funding has been approved at the same level, but that no decision has been made regarding the remainder.

Commissioner Meadows recommended cutting the budget by \$20,000 instead of 45,000. Her main concern was that clients who depend on the COA for meals may go without.

Commissioner Comander questioned what budget the funds are to be taken from in the event that the Board does not make the budget cut as presented. She questioned the possibility of cutting other services instead of meals and recommended delivering all meals instead of having meal sites.

Commissioner Brannon questioned how many clients are served by the COA and how people qualify. Mr. Moose replied 20,000 and that the proposed reduction will eliminate 250 clients. He stated that all clients qualify according to income.

Commissioner Comander questioned how many of the total clients receive meals. Mr. Moose replied approximately half and explained that COA also provides house keeping and personal care services.

Commissioner Brannon commented that cuts to this type program are examples of the negative implications of the state mandated budget cuts. He felt that the Board should work with the COA since they provide meals, a service not provided by other agencies.

The Board directed staff to draft a letter to the Board's of the Council on Aging and Tri-County Community Council directing them to investigate ways of coordinating their services due to the impending budget cuts. Mr. Bell also requested that Mr. Moose provide exact numbers regarding clients, meal sites, and numbers of clients who receive meals.

Commissioner Comander questioned the proposed \$65,780 budget cut to the Library Services Department. She suggested implementing fees for use of the conference room at South Walton Coastal Library Annex and internet usage and cutting the hours of operation.

Commissioner Brannon suggested asking the Walton County School District to assist in the funding of the county libraries. Mr. Bell stated that he will explore the option with the WCSD and recommended that staff conduct a study of the library hours and users.

Mr. Little discussed the library services and schedules.

Mr. Hudson stated that the WCSD is not under a state mandated budget cut, but that they are rolling back their ad valorem tax rate.

Commissioner Meadows commented that the WCSD will soon be receiving school concurrency payments which will positively impact their budget.

The Board recessed briefly at 1:00 p.m. and reconvened at 2:10 p.m. (Commissioner Brannon did not return after the break)

Mr. JB Hillard discussed plans to create a senior center and the lack of communications from county staff regarding the issue.

Mr. Bell stated that no funds have been budgeted for the program and that staff needs direction from the Board.

Commissioner Comander recommended utilizing a portion of the \$300,000 allocated to construct the new building to improve available county buildings, such as the Warren Building, and to temporarily fund the program to determine if there is adequate participation.

Commissioner Pridgen questioned the square footage of the Warren Building and the building at the Wee Care Park. Mr. Bell stated that the Wee Care building is approximately 2200 sq. ft. Mr. Hillard stated that the Warren Building is approximately 6000 sq. ft. and expressed concern that the buildings will not be large enough.

Commissioner Meadows also requested information regarding the costs of maintenance and staffing.

Mr. Hillard stated that the committee for the senior center has not discussed operations but that a director will be needed. Mr. Bell suggested utilizing the directors of the Council on Aging or Tri County Community Council.

Commissioner Pridgen stated that the Board is supportive of the senior center and that finding a location is the first step.

Commissioner Comander recommended utilizing area churches as gathering places and of consolidating other county offices to create more space in the Warren Building.

Commissioner Meadows stated that the committee needs to find the best method of utilizing the \$300,000 allocated for the senior center.

Mr. Bell stressed the importance of partnerships with other agencies.

Human Resources – \$635,032

There were no public comments.

Courts Budget Totals - \$1,179,851

- Circuit Court - \$401,613
- County Court - \$75,119
- Public Defender - \$16,490
- State Attorney - \$81,500
- Court Technology - \$378,875
- Medical Examiner - \$225,254
- Guardian ad Litem - \$1,000

Mr. Imfeld explained that Court Technology is a non- ad valorem item. He stated that there is \$1 million in Court Technology reserves, but that the state restricts the use of the funds to technology needs for the courts, the state's attorney, and the public defender.

Mr. Jeff Martin, Director, First Judicial Medical Examiner's Office, was opposed to the Medical Examiner's proposed budget and requested a 3% increase. He explained that the total budget is comprised of the four counties, Walton, Escambia, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa Counties, which make up the district and that Walton County is responsible for 11% of the total budget. He stated that the budget cuts proposed by Walton County affect their ability to use funds allocated by other counties.

Commissioner Comander questioned the total autopsies in Walton County. He stated that the current number was 78 and that 599 cases were investigated out of Walton County last year compared to 1700 in Okaloosa County.

Mr. Imfeld stated that he did not understand Mr. Martin's statements regarding the impacts of the Walton County's allocation on the total budget.

Commissioner Comander stated that the death rate does not equate to the autopsy rate. Mr. Martin concurred but added that all deaths have to be investigated.

Commissioner Meadows questioned whether the budget is based on incidents or population. Mr. Martin replied that it is based on the number of cases serviced in the prior year.

Mr. Hudson asked if there are reserve funds and questioned the total budget. Mr. Martin stated that services are invoiced when rendered; therefore, there are no funds to roll forward. He stated that the total budget is approximately \$2 million.

Finance Division Budget Totals - \$1,127,193

- OMB - \$352,801
- Central Purchasing - \$489,945
- Grants - \$117,016
- Telecommunications - \$68,254
- Contracts - \$46,754
- Central Billing Ambulance - \$52,333

Mr. Imfeld stated that the Grants Department brought in \$15 million in revenue in the 2007 fiscal year.

There were no public comments.

Debt Service - \$249,235

Mr. Imfeld stated that the hospital bonds are due to be paid off in 2010 and are not impacted by the state mandated budget cuts.

There were no public comments.

Recreation Plat Fee

- Expenditures - \$400,000
- Revenues - \$400,000

Mr. Imfeld stated that Recreation Plat Fees are not ad valorem and will be flexible depending on the total funds and the amount spent by the Board.

There were no public comments.

Preservation Fees - \$635,000

Mr. Imfeld stated that the total budget for Preservation Fees was rolled forward because no funds have been spent. He added that this is a non-ad valorem item.

There were no public comments.

Sidewalk Fees - \$413,000

Mr. Imfeld stated that this is a non-ad valorem item.

There were no public comments.

Local Option Gas Tax - \$2,360,001

Mr. Imfeld stated that this amount was estimated based on the collections from the 2007 fiscal year. He added that these monies go into the Public Works budget and are used to fund roads and bridges.

There were no public comments.

Inmate Canteen Fund - \$200,595

Mr. Imfeld explained that these funds come from inmates and are non-ad Valorem items.

There were no public comments.

Driftwood MSBU - \$270,000

Mr. Imfeld explained that this is a bond issue from 1995 and is not related to the current drainage issues in Driftwood Estates. He stated that it is due to be paid off in 2015, but that the payments are ahead of schedule. Mr. Imfeld stated that this is non-ad Valorem and is funded by residents and landowners in Driftwood Estates.

There were no public comments.

Imperial Lakes MSBU - \$26,390

Mr. Imfeld stated that this is a non-ad Valorem item.

There were no public comments.

Capital Projects - \$9,498,875

- Animal Control Shelter - \$2,900,000
- Freeport Park Phase II - \$2,500,000
- South Walton Parks - \$2,098,875
- City of DeFuniak Springs Grant - \$300,000
- Debt Service: Principal - \$1,000,000
- Debt Service: Interest - \$700,000

Mr. Imfeld stated that there is approximately \$819,000 remaining in the budget for South Walton Parks for other park purchases or for the Town Center Park.

There were no public comments.

2008 Total Proposed Millage Rate – 3.3563

2008 Proposed Budget Summary - \$128,129,813

2008 Total Authorized Full-Time Employees - 949.0

- Walton County BCC – 589.5
- Constitutional Officers – 359.5

Mr. Imfeld stated budget cuts for fiscal year 2009 may get worse if the proposed constitutional amendment requiring another \$3.9 million in budget cuts passes. For that reason, he recommended not making any new operational commitments for which there are no continuing sources of funding.

Commissioner Comander questioned the number of programs which the state mandates the county to fund. Mr. Imfeld replied Medicaid, Baker Act, Court Systems, and Juvenile Justice.

Mr. Imfeld stated that the Debt Service millage rate will be 0.0144 and the millage rate for North Walton Mosquito Control will be 0.5403.

Mr. Hudson questioned whether the proposed budget meets the mandated state roll-back rate, the amount of the proposed employee pay increases, and of the dues and functions of the Florida Association of Counties. Mr. Imfeld replied that the proposed budget does meet the state

requirements, that the pay increase includes a 3% COLA raise and a 3.013% merit raise, and that the FAC dues are \$4700.

The Board discussed the services provided by the FAC.

Motion by Commissioner Comander, second by Commissioner Meadows, to approve the 3.3563 millage rate. Ayes 3, Nays 0. Meadows Aye, Pridgen Aye, and Comander Aye.

Motion by Commissioner Comander, second by Commissioner Meadows, to approve the 0.5403 millage rate for the North Walton Mosquito Control. Ayes 3, Nays 0. Meadows Aye, Pridgen Aye, and Comander Aye.

Motion by Commissioner Meadows, second by Commissioner Comander, to set the budget hearings for September 10, 2007 at the South Walton Courthouse Annex and September 24, 2007 at the Walton County Courthouse with both meetings to begin at 5:05 p.m. Ayes 3, Nays 0. Meadows Aye, Pridgen Aye, and Comander Aye.

Ms. McQuiston commended county staff and the Constitutional Officers for their diligence in making the required budget cuts. She stated that the WCTA recommends compiling a database of all studies commissioned by the Board so that they are not duplicated; creating a policy for the hiring of consultants; utilizing mediators and arbitrators in lieu of going to trial; rolling forward all available funds; combining non-profits; reduction of staff by attrition; evaluating the need of county vehicles; reduction of the number of county vehicles; creating a policy making driving vehicles home a benefit; and the establishment of health savings account so that insurance premiums can be reduced.

Commissioner Meadows stated that the plan is to construct five Commissioner's offices at the building adjacent the South Walton Courthouse Annex, with the two Commissioners from the south end located there and the remaining offices for use by the Commissioners from the

north end. She stated that there will be one receptionist and that each Commissioner will have one aid.

Commissioner Comander discussed efforts to curtail the practice of employees driving vehicles home.

Mr. Hudson stated that the WCTA received all necessary information regarding the proposed budget.

Commissioner Meadows thanked the WCTA for conducting the survey and felt the information would be valuable.

There being no further information, the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Kenneth Pridgen, Chair

ATTEST: _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court