



MINUTES

Board of County Commissioners

Monday, September 9, 2019 @ 5:00 PM

South Walton Annex Board Room

Budget Hearing

COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Vice-Chair Bill Chapman, Commissioner Danny Glidewell, Commissioner Trey Nick, and Chairman Tony Anderson

ABSENT: Commissioner Melanie Nipper

STAFF PRESENT: Larry Jones, County Administrator, Melissa Thomason, Finance Director, and Heather Christman, Assistant County Attorney.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order.

OMB/FINANCE

1. Meeting Agenda

Ms. Melissa Thomason, Finance Director, read the following statement into the record:

The purpose of this meeting is to set a tentative millage rate and a tentative budget. The proposed Walton County Board of County Commissioners county wide millage rate is 3.6363 mills and 0.4912 mills for the North Walton Mosquito Control District.

In aggregate, this is a 5.9% increase over the Rolled Back Rate. The Rolled Back Rate is the rate that would essentially generate the same ad valorem tax revenues as last year.

The county-wide 3.6363 mills (which are applied to the General, County Transportation, and Fine and Forfeiture funds) is the same as the fiscal year 2018-2019 rate, which was 3.6363 mills.

The 0.4912 millage rate for the North Walton Mosquito Control District is the same as fiscal year 2018-2019 rate, which was 0.4912.

Ms. Thomason reviewed the following additions to the budget since the Budget Workshop in July: \$5.9 million for the January through September 2020 High Tourism Impact tax collections; \$125,000 for construction of a parking lot at the Freeport Annex;

and \$350,000 for irrigation at Eagle Springs Golf Course. Funding for two additional positions in the Planning Department and two part-time laborer positions at the golf course was added. An overall 3% increase was added to the budget for all permanent employees. Ms. Thomason stated the final negotiated insurance premium was 12.07% increase, which was included in the budget. Additional funds were also included in the Building Department based on their historical collections.

Motion by Vice-Chair Chapman, second by Commissioner Glidewell, to open the Public Hearing.

4-0 by the following votes:

Ayes: Vice-Chair Chapman, Commissioner Glidewell,
Commissioner Nick, and Chairman Anderson

2. Budget Hearing Presentation for FY 19/20

Mr. Larry Jones, County Administrator, presented a request from Commissioner Nipper for a pocket park in District 3. He recommended taking \$50,000 from the golf course irrigation and earmarking it for the pocket park followed up with an application for a FRDAP Grant for improvements at the golf course.

Chairman Anderson opened the floor for discussion:

Vice-Chair Chapman requested the tentative budget numbers. Ms. Thomason stated the tentative net budget for county wide is \$183,448,102.00. Any additions would change that number.

Mr. Tony Roy, Liberty Fire District, asked the board to restore funding to all the volunteer fire departments. Commissioner Glidewell questioned what the money would be used for. Mr. Roy stated new bunker gear and hose replacements are needed and they would like to build a new fire station in the north end of the county.

Further discussion was held regarding Liberty Fire District being independent and their ability to increase their funding through an MSBU. Mr. Roy further mentioned the number of county buildings they provide coverage for but are not compensated for.

Motion by Commissioner Glidewell to give Liberty and Argyle Fire Districts \$25,000.00 each.

Motion died for lack of a second.

Chairman Anderson commented that they can raise funds through an MSBU if needed.

Commissioner Glidewell addressed the 3% COLA raise and questioned the plan to address the discrepancies in the pay scale. Commissioner Chapman also questioned if the 3% is based on the amount of earnings as in the past.

Mr. Nathan Kervin, HR Director, stated the 3% is across the board and they will be reviewing the entire wage scale for further adjustments.

Commissioner Glidewell commented on the issue of employees being hired in at a higher rate than some employees already on staff. Mr. Kervin stated there is nothing budgeted at this time to correct that. Commissioner Glidewell also spoke about the county not being competitive with other local businesses and asked if there are any funds in the budget to correct that. Mr. Kervin stated he can adjust the minimum rate. After implementing the current 3% there would still be 14 employees making under \$11.00 per hour. He recommended moving those employees up to \$11.00. Discussion was held regarding the number of employees that need to be raised and the cost to provide raises. Vice-Chair Chapman commended the employees stating they work hard and in adverse conditions and strongly urged that they be raised up to \$16 to \$17 per hour even if it were to mean increasing the millage rate. Discussion continued on raising wages for county employees, paying enough to get them above poverty level, and the amount of funding it would take.

Chairman Anderson asked Ms. Thomason to review the numbers to present at the next meeting. Ms. Thomason stated she would need specific numbers because the budget can only be decreased; no increase is allowed. Commissioner Glidewell recommended figuring the budget based on \$12 per hour. Ms. Thomason stated that will add \$150,000.00 and she would advertise for that rate.

Motion by Commissioner Glidewell, second by Vice-Chair Chapman, to direct staff to add \$150,000.00 into the budget and raise all employees to a minimum of \$12.00 per hour and then fix the pay scale.

4-0 by the following votes:

Ayes: Vice-Chair Chapman, Commissioner Glidewell,
Commissioner Nick, and Chairman Anderson

Commissioner Glidewell thanked public works and Ms. Thomason for finding money to add to the Road and Bridge budget.

Motion by Vice-Chair Chapman, second by Commissioner Glidewell, to adopt a resolution **(2019-89)** to set the tentative millage rates for county-wide (3.6363) plus North Walton Mosquito Control District millage of (0.4912).

4-0 by the following votes:

Ayes: Vice-Chair Chapman, Commissioner Glidewell,
Commissioner Nick, and Chairman Anderson

Motion by Vice-Chair Chapman, second by Commissioner Glidewell, to adopt a resolution **(2019-90)** to set the tentative budget for fiscal year 2019-2020 in county-wide government in the amount of \$183,598,102.00 and for \$728,894.00 for North Walton Mosquito Control.

4-0 by the following votes:


Ayes: Vice-Chair Chapman, Commissioner Glidewell,
Commissioner Nick, and Chairman Anderson

Motion by Vice-Chair Chapman, second by Commissioner Glidewell, to close the Public Hearing.

Ayes: Vice-Chair Chapman, Commissioner Glidewell,
Commissioner Nick, and Chairman Anderson

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.



Tony Anderson, Chairman



Attest: Alex Aiford, Clerk of Court and County Comptroller