

September 10, 2007-Budget Hearing

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Budget Hearing on Monday, September 10, 2007 at 5:05 p.m., at the South Walton Courthouse Annex.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen, Chairman; Commissioner 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.

Chairman Pridgen called the meeting to order.

Chairman Pridgen read the following statement: The proposed county-wide millage rate is 3.3563 mills plus voted debt service of 0.0144 mills totaling 3.3707 mills, and 0.5069 mills for the North Walton Mosquito Control District. In aggregate, this is a 9.01% decrease below 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 3.3707 mills (which is applied to the General, County Transportation, Fine and Forfeiture, and Debt Service Funds) is lower than the fiscal year 2006-2007 rate, which was 3.8255 mills. The 0.5069 millage rate for the North Walton Mosquito Control District is lower than fiscal year 2006-2007 rate, which was 0.5982.

Mr. Bill Imfeld, Finance Director, presented issues left unresolved from the July 11, 2007 Budget Workshop. The first issue was the reduction of funding for the Council on Aging.

Mr. Ken Little, Citizens Services Director, stated that he met with Ms. Kay Brady and prepared a spreadsheet detailing the meal expenses for July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. He stated that there are Federal and State grants that help fund the Council on Aging through the Older Americans Act, Title 3. Mr. Little stated that federal funding would continue with a budgeted 2% increase.

Commissioner Meadows asked if the Board's decrease in funding directly impacted the meals service. Mr. Little stated that it would not.

Ms. Kay Brady, Director of Walton County Council on Aging, stated that the figures discussed were actual costs of meals and did not include the administrative costs.

Discussion continued regarding the different areas that would be affected by the decrease in funding.

Mr. Imfeld presented the Resources for Human Development issue. The issues included a contract for the 2006-2007 year in the amount of \$39,000 and a mandate for service options. He recommended funding half of the \$39,000 during the 2007-2008 Budget year.

Sheriff Ralph Johnson, Walton County Sheriff, asked the Board to support a pay raise for all current employees. Discussion continued on the purported percentage increase of 8% or less. The Board concurred to support a pay raise for all Sheriff Department employees with no new positions being developed.

Mr. Bob Smith, Executive Director of the Economic Development Council, requested temporary funding for the EDC while other avenues of funding can be established. Commissioner Jones suggested that one-fourth of the original EDC request

of \$77,000 be designated during the first quarter to give time to meet with the Board and seek other sources for funding.

Ms. Maria Milton, citizen, spoke in opposition of the proposed closing of the Gladys Milton Branch of the Walton County Library System. Mr. Imfeld stated that asbestos had been found in the building currently housing the library, therefore causing a health hazard. The Board concurred that the library should not be closed and that other building options should be explored. Rev. Tyrone Broadis, of St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, offered the use of the church lunchroom to house the library until the existing building was repaired.

Motion by Commissioner Jones, second by Commissioner Brannon, to adopt the tentative millage rate of 3.3563 mills county-wide, 0.0144 mills for Voted Debt Service and 0.5069 mills for the North Walton Mosquito Control District. Ayes 5, Nays 0, Pridgen Aye, Meadows Aye, Jones Aye, Brannon Aye, Comander Aye.

Motion by Commissioner Brannon, second by Commissioner Meadows, to adopt the tentative 2007-08 Fiscal Year Budget in the amount of \$118,669,245.00 for operations \$128,168,120.00 for total budget and capital projects, debt service of \$249,235.00 and \$644,762.00 for North Walton Mosquito Control District. Ayes 5, Nay 0, Pridgen Aye, Meadows Aye, Jones Aye, Brannon Aye, Comander Aye.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

APPROVED _____
Kenneth Pridgen, Chair

ATTEST _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court