

SEPTEMBER 13, 2004-BUDGET HEARING

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a budget hearing on Monday, September 13, 2004 at 5:15 p.m. in Courtroom A of the Walton County Courthouse.

The following Board members were present: Larry Jones, Chair, Tim Pauls, Vice-Chair, Commissioner Lane Rees, Commissioner Cuchens, and Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen. Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator, Ms. Shirl Williams, Assistant County Administrator, and Ms. Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts, were also present.

Chairman Jones called to order the scheduled budget hearing to adopt the tentative millage and budget for FY2004-2005.

Chairman Jones read the following statement regarding the proposed millage rate into the record:

“The proposed county-wide millage rate is 5.3150 mills plus voted debt service of 0.0314 mills totaling 5.3464 mills, and 0.5982 mills for the North Walton Mosquito Control District.

In aggregate, this is an 18.65% increase over the Rolled Back Rate.

The Rolled Back Rate is the rate that would essentially generate the same ad valorem tax revenues at last year.

The 5.3464 mills (which is applied to the General, County Transportation, Fine and Forfeiture, Capital Projects, and Debt Service Funds) is lower than the fiscal year 2003-2004 rate, which was 5.3557 mills.

The 0.5982 millage rate for the North Walton Mosquito Control District is the same as the fiscal year 2003-2004 rate.”

Mr. Bill Imfeld, Financial Director, submitted and reviewed a handout listing several items that the Board indicated should be included in or deleted from the budget during the initial presentation at the July 2004 Budget Workshop. The amended proposed fiscal year 2004-2005 budget totaled \$94,899,426.

Chairman Jones opened the floor to the public for comments and questions.

Mr. Jack Bennett appeared before the Board to question the ad valorem tax assessment for the Tri Village Fire Department. Mr. Bell explained that the Tri Village Fire Department is an independent district and the assessment is set by their board of directors.

There being no further public comments, the discussion was brought back to the Board. Commissioner Rees spoke about his desire to reduce the millage rate. He recommended that the rate be reduced by $\frac{1}{3}$ mill. Chairman Jones concurred with Commissioner Rees that the rate should be reduced. He felt that the rate should be reduced between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ mill. Commissioner Pauls stated that he was also in favor of seeing the millage rate reduced.

Motion by Commissioner Rees, second by Commissioner Pauls, to reduce the millage rate by $\frac{1}{3}$ mill.

Commissioner Cuchens questioned the dollar amount that would come out of the Unrestricted/Unreserved General Fund Reserves if the motion to reduce the millage rate by $\frac{1}{3}$ mill was approved. Mr. Imfeld stated that 3.6 million would come out of the reserves, which would leave approximately 11.5 million dollars. Commissioner Cuchens also questioned the dollar amount that would come out of the reserves if the millage rate were reduced by $\frac{1}{4}$ mill. Mr. Imfeld replied that 3 million dollars would come out of the

reserves, which would leave approximately 12.2 million dollars. Commissioner Cuchens stated that it was his opinion that the millage rate should be reduced by $\frac{1}{4}$ mill. Chairman Jones agreed with Commissioner Cuchens.

A vote was called for the motion on the floor. Ayes 2, Nays 3. Jones Naye, Rees Aye, Pauls Aye, Cuchens Naye, and Pridgen Naye.

Motion by Commissioner Pridgen, second by Commissioner Cuchens, to reduce the millage rate by $\frac{1}{4}$ mill. Ayes 4, Nays 1. Jones Aye, Rees Naye, Pauls Aye, Cuchens Aye, and Pridgen Aye.

Chairman Jones read the following statement into the record to reflect the new millage rate:

“The proposed county-wide millage rate is 5.065 mills plus voted debt service of 0.0314 mills totaling 5.0964 mills, and 0.5982 mills for the North Walton Mosquito control District.

In aggregate, this is a 13.12% 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 5.0964 mills (which is applied to the General, County Transportation, Fine and Forfeiture, Capital Projects, and Debt Service Funds) is lower than the fiscal year 2003-2004 rate, which was 5.3557 mills.

The 0.5982 millage rate for the North Walton Mosquito Control District is the same as the fiscal year 2003-2004 rate.”

Motion by Commissioner Cuchens, second by Commissioner Pridgen, to adopt the tentative millage rates of 5.065 mills plus voted debt service of 0.0314 mills totaling

5.0964 mills, and 0.5982 for the North Walton Mosquito Control District. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Rees Aye, Pauls Aye, Cuchens Aye, and Pridgen Aye.

Motion by Commissioner Pridgen, second by Commissioner Cuchens, to adopt the tentative budget for FY2004-2005 in the amount of \$86,721,041 for Operations and \$94,899,426 Total Budget. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Rees Aye, Pauls Aye, Cuchens Aye, and Pridgen Aye.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:32.

APPROVED: _____
Larry D. Jones, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court