

SEPTEMBER 25, 2006 – FINAL BUDGET HEARING

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a final budget hearing on Monday, September 25, 2006, at 5:05 p.m. in Courtroom A of the Walton County Courthouse in DeFuniak Springs.

The following Board members were present: Chairman, Scott Brannon, Vice-Chairman, Kenneth Pridgen, Commissioner Larry Jones, Commissioner Cindy Meadows, and Commissioner Rosier Cuchens. Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator, Mr. David Hallman, County Attorney, and Ms. Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts, were also present.

Commissioner Cuchens led with prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Chairman Brannon called the meeting to order.

Mr. Bill Imfeld, Finance Director, read into the record a proposed resolution to adopt the millage rate of 4.060 for operations of the county government, a millage rate of .0155 to service the Voted Debt Service, Hospital Renovation Bond Issue, and a millage rate of .5982 for operations of the North Walton Mosquito Control District for the tax year 2006-2007, for a aggregate millage rate for county wide of 4.0981 mills which is more than the rolled back rate of 3.5074 mills by 16.84%.

The following items were proposed to be removed in order to reduce the budget by ¼ mill as approved by the Board at the budget hearing held on September 11, 2006:

• Senior Center	(\$300,000)
• Red Bay Volunteer Fire Department	(400,000)
• Land Purchase	(1,000,000)
• Remodel – Jail	(200,000)
• Remodel – Jail Administration	(100,000)
• Additional Ambulance	(200,000)
• General Fund Contingency Fund – 001	(250,000)
• Public Works Contingency Fund – 002	(300,000)
• Reserves	<u>(450,000)</u>
Total	(\$3,200,000)

Motion by Commissioner Jones, second by Commissioner Cuchens, to adopt the resolution as presented by Mr. Imfeld.

The following items were the items that staff suggested be removed from the budget to reduce the budget by an *additional* ¼ mill, for a total reduction of ½ mill:

- Parks and Boat Ramps (\$1,850,000)
- Red Fish Bridge (½) (125,000)
- Phase III Scenic Gulf Drive (defer to 08) (1,500,000)
- Planning Department Operations (250,000)
- Walton County Fire Rescue (300,000)
- Total (\$4,025,000)**

Mr. Imfeld stated that currently there is approximately \$8.1 million of unearmarked, undesignated general fund reserves.

The floor was opened to public comments. The following citizens voiced public comments: Ms. Marie Nelson, Ms. Lu Rutter, Mr. David Kramer, Mr. Tim Casey, Ms. Suzanne Harris, Ms. Bonnie McQuiston, Mr. Bob Hudson, Mr. J.B. Hilliard, Mr. Chad Ward, and Mr. Antonio Barbosa.

Several discussions ensued regarding eliminating alternative items from the budget.

Commissioner Jones discussed deferring voting on the proposed millage rate and budget for fiscal year 2006-2007 for one week to allow time to review and consider the alternative items that were mentioned through the conversations.

Chairman Brannon called a vote for the motion on the floor.

Commissioner Cuchens withdrew his second to the motion.

Commissioner Jones withdrew the motion.

Motion by Commissioner Jones to recess the meeting until October 2, 2006, at the South Walton Courthouse Annex, allowing time to re-advertise the final budget hearing notice. This will allow time to review and consider eliminating additional or alternative items from the budget.

Chairman Brannon stepped down and seconded the motion.

Further discussion was held. Attorney Hallman read into the record a statute regarding the issue of entering into a new fiscal budget year without a set millage rate and budget.

Commissioner Pridgen, acting as Chair, called for a vote for the motion on the floor. Ayes 2, Nays 3. Jones Aye, Brannon Aye, Cuchens Nay, Pridgen Nay, and Meadows Nay. Motion failed.

Motion by Commissioner Meadows to adopt a resolution reducing the millage rate by ½ mill by eliminating the following items from the budget:

• General Fund Contingency Fund – 001	(\$250,00)
• Public Works Contingency Fund – 002	(300,000)
• Reserves	(450,000)
• Land Purchase	(1,000,000)
• Roads & Bridges (½)	(925,000)
• Red Fish Bridge	(125,000)
• Phase III Scenic Gulf Drive (defer to 08)	(1,500,000)
• Reserves	(2,000,000)
• Senate Bill 360	<u>(1,000,000)</u>
Total	(\$7,850,000)

Commissioner Pridgen seconded the motion.

Mr. Bell requested authorization to take any necessary actions to reduce the millage rate by ½ mill if the figures provided by Commissioner Meadows are not sufficient to reduce the millage rate a ½ mill. The findings will be presented to the Board at the next Board meeting.

A vote was called for the motion on the floor (Resolution 2006-85). Ayes 4, Nays 1. Jones Aye, Brannon Nay, Cuchens Aye, Pridgen Aye, and Meadows Aye.

Mr. Imfeld presented a revised resolution to adopt a millage rate of 3.8100 for operations of the county government, a millage rate of .0155 to service the Voted Debt Service, Hospital Renovation Bond Issue, and a millage rate of .5982 for operations of the North Walton Mosquito Control District for the tax year 2006-2007, for a aggregate millage rate for county wide of 3.8481 mills which is more than the rolled back rate of 3.5074 mills by 9.71%.

Mr. Imfeld read into the record a proposed resolution to adopt the budget for fiscal year 2006-07 in the total amount of \$137,484,698.

Motion by Commissioner Cuchens, second by Commissioner Jones, to adopt a resolution approving the fiscal year 2006-2007 budget in the amount of \$137,484,698 for county government, of which \$243,835 is for Voted Debt Service Hospital Renovation Bond Issue, and \$615,045 for the North Walton Mosquito Control District (Resolution 2006-86). Ayes 5, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Brannon Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pridgen Aye, and Meadows Aye.

There being no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Scott Brannon, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court