



MINUTES

Board of County Commissioners

Tuesday, July 13, 2021 @ 2:00 PM

DeFuniak Springs Board Room

Budget Workshop

COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Chairman Trey Nick, Commissioner Michael Barker, Commissioner Boots McCormick, Commissioner Danny Glidewell, and Commissioner Tony Anderson

STAFF PRESENT: Clay Adkinson, Interim County Attorney and Larry Jones, County Administrator

OPENING COMMENTS

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nick called the meeting to order.

OMB/FINANCE

1. Presentation of Recommended Budget

Ms. Melissa Thomason, County Finance Director said the current millage rates (County-wide at 3.6363 mil and North Walton Mosquito Control at 0.4912 mils) were used in preparing the proposed 2021-2022 budget and that the rates can be changed at the direction of the board. She addressed the South Walton TIF (SW-TIF), storm water, and other infrastructure projects. She requested the board set the percentage at zero value and set the budgeted amount at \$4 million. She said there is an avenue to pursue storm water projects through the American Rescue Funding and this would give staff more flexibility to bring more projects forward. The budget assumes that the 8.14% increase in health insurance costs would be absorbed by the county and the constitutional offices. Ms. Thomason said the budget includes moving all non-exempt employees to the board approved step plan and increasing permanent employees by one additional step. She asked for board direction on both the non-exempt and exempt employees. The average increase for an exempt employee is approximately 3%. She reviewed the Medical Examiner's (ME) request for a 90% increase to their budget. She said staff recognized the increase in the ME workload and included in the budget a 30% increase over last year's budgeted amount. She said staff wants to see what the partnering counties are doing with their medical examiner budget and to bring back more information at a later date. Ms. Thomason said \$100,000.00 was added for the Choctawhatchee Bay initiatives; the \$100,000.00 for coastal dune lake projection was kept in the budget. She announced the Sheriff's office has requested \$1.5 million

additional funding to move personnel paid out of housing revenues into the Sheriff's regular budget. She said staff is on hand to answer any questions from the board.

The board concurred to leave the millage rate at 3.6363 mills-County-wide and 0.4912 mills-North Walton Mosquito Control.

The board concurred to leave the SW-TIF at \$4 million for the 2021-2022 budget year. Ms. Thomason said a resolution would be brought back to the board.

After a lengthy discussion regarding step increases, the board concurred to set a minimum salary at \$13.00 per hour, scale up current employees to \$13.00, give all current employees a two-step increase in pay, and the exempt employees to receive a 5% increase.

Mr. Bob Brooke questioned if the public would be allowed to give input. Chairman Nick said that public comment would be taken near the end of the meeting.

Commissioner Anderson asked to see the actual figures on the salary increases. Ms. Thomason said all the information would be put together and presented to the board.

Ms. Thomason presented for board consideration the requested items not included in the budget draft.

Administration: After a brief discussion, the board concurred to include the requested 1 FTE for Grant Research and Writing, and Opportunity Zone & Legislative Priorities.

Code Enforcement: A discussion was held with Mr. Tony Cornman, Code Enforcement Director regarding the issuance of all beach permits in one office, increasing personnel for permitting and code enforcement, and projected funding from permits and the managed beach vendor program. The board concurred to include four beach code enforcement officers, two street code enforcement officers, and one administration assistant. Staff was directed to determine if TDC funds could be used for some of the beach positions.

Landfill - The board discussed with Mr. Billy McKee, Landfill Director the loss of inmate labor and the increasing volume of garbage. Additional staffing is needed for safety and public assistance. The board concurred to include the requested 3 FTEs.

Custodial - This request was pulled.

Public Works - The board spoke with Mr. Wilmer Stafford, Public Works Director about the requested 15 FTEs and the need to increase personnel due to the growth in the county and the loss of inmate labor. Concern was voiced regarding the lack of responses to currently open employment positions. Mr. Stafford requested a higher pay for the District 5 crew due to the safety issues they face in that area daily. The board agreed to include one FTE for a training coordinator, one FTE for paint and maintenance of traffic crew, and one FTE for sign production. The board also approved the 10 FTEs for the district road departments but would only fund five FTEs at this time. The unapproved FTEs can be added to a needs list and addressed at a later date. Staff

was encouraged to move forward with advertising to fill road department positions to begin work on October 1, 2021.

Facilities Maintenance - The board discussed with Mr. Brad Alford, Facilities Maintenance Director the current and proposed construction and remodeling projects. An additional crew would enable the county to perform more projects in-house rather than obtaining a sub-contractor. Further discussion was held on how the loss of inmate labor has affected the department. The board concurred to include 2 additional construction and remodeling employees at this time and to place the remaining FTEs on a needs list to be addressed at a later date.

Recreation - Ms. Thomason addressed the District Discretionary Funding which is currently funded at \$50,000.00 for district recreational projects. It has been requested the amount be increased to \$75,000.00. The board concurred to allow the increase.

Commissioner Anderson announced his conflict with issues regarding the Eagle Springs Golf Course and submitted Form 8B to the clerk.

The board spoke with Mr. Shane Supple, Recreation Director regarding the items requested for his department. The board concurred to include the storage building and batting tunnels at the South Walton Sport Complex to be built using in-house construction crews. Grant funding would be sought for Wee Care Park and Choctaw Park playground structures. Discussion was held on FTEs and site improvements needs of the Eagle Springs Golf Course & Recreation. The golf course produced \$45,000.00 in revenue in June and has a projected revenue of \$400,000.00 for the year; overhead costs to maintain the course and facilities is \$943,000.00. Discussion was held to determine whether to raise the fees. The board concurred to include one additional FTE for the golf course, to raise the golf course rates to \$35.00, to perform the drainage improvements in-house, to build the maintenance staff building, to construct the driving range netting, and consider the greens renovation next year. Ms. Thomason stated that some of the improvements can be covered under the increased revenue resulting from the increase in course fees. Mr. Supple recommended using the Live Oak access for deliveries, maintenance, and staff.

Planning and Development - Mr. Mac Carpenter, Planning and Development Director and the board discussed the four FTEs, the benefits of performing engineering reviews in-house, the increase in development throughout the county, the lack of response to currently open positions, and the need to increase the salaries for incentive. The board talked about the inclusion of the requested four FTEs and directed staff to work with Mr. Carpenter to determine the appropriate salary increase to be brought back to the board for further consideration.

Commissioner McCormick questioned if an additional budget workshop would be held. Ms. Thomason stated that normally only one workshop is held, but this one could be continued at the board's direction. The board concurred to continue the current workshop to July 27, 2021 to be held at 1:00 p.m. in the Walton County Courthouse Annex in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida following the Regular Meeting scheduled for 9:00 a.m. and prior to the 5:30 p.m. Micromobility Workshop.

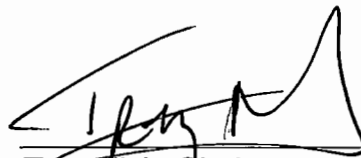
Ms. Thomason asked to discuss the Medical Examiner and Sheriff's Office.

Medical Examiner - Ms. Thomason said the ME has requested a 90% increase to their budget which would equal \$209,818.00. A 30% increase has been included and this amount does not include the additional \$139,624.00 request. She said she would like to see what the other counties are doing with their ME's budget before committing to the increase. Dr. Deanna Oleske, Medical Examiner discussed with the board the amount of work that her office performs and how the number of cases has grown. She spoke about the supplies demand and costs which have increased due to the pandemic. She also talked about the need to secure more funding and personnel. She said that her facility is no longer located within Sacred Heart and that she is in the process of securing additional space and furnishings. Ms. Thomason stated this item would be brought back to the continued workshop. The board concurred to continue this item to the next workshop and to direct staff to present the ME budget information from the other counties.

Sheriff's Office - Ms. Minette Bruce presented an amendment to the Sheriff's budget that is a result of the loss of inmates from Escambia County. The request is for funding to hire an additional 20 people to cover staff for both inmate housing units due to the increased number of Walton County inmates and State requirements. Discussion was held regarding the staff for both housing units, the daily population, a potential contract with Bay County, using county funds on out-of-county inmates, and the lack of inmate labor. The board concurred to continue this discussion to the next workshop and to direct staff to meet with the commissioners individually to discuss the Sheriff's budget.

ADJOURN

The workshop was recessed at 3:50 p.m. and will reconvene on July 27, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. at the Walton County Courthouse Annex in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida.



Trey Nick, Chairman



Attest: Alex Alford, Clerk of Court and County Comptroller