



MINUTES

Board of County Commissioners Monday, September 12, 2022 @ 5:01 PM South Walton Annex Board Room Budget Hearing

COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Chairman Michael Barker, Vice-Chairman Danny Glidewell, Commissioner Boots McCormick, and Commissioner Trey Nick

ABSENT: Commissioner Tony Anderson

STAFF PRESENT: Tony Cornman, Interim County Administrator, Mary King, Interim Deputy County Administrator, and Melissa Thomason, Walton County Chief Financial Officer. Attorney Clay Adkinson, Interim County Attorney, was not present.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Barker called the meeting to order and announced that Commissioner Anderson would not be in attendance. He recognized Commissioner-elect Donna Johns.

BUDGET STATEMENT

1. **Ms. Melissa Thomason, CFO read the following required 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 for fiscal year 2023 is 3.6363 mills, and 0.4912 mills for the North Walton Mosquito Control District. In aggregate, this is a 17.91% 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 2022 rate, which was 3.6363 mills. The 0.4912 millage rate for the North Walton Mosquito Control District is the same as the fiscal year 2022 rate, which was 0.4912.

PROPOSED BUDGET REVIEW

2. **Review and discussion regarding notable items since the July budget workshop**

Ms. Thomason reported that the tentative budget includes: a 3% COLA and a one-step increase for non-exempt employees, exempt employees have been budgeted at an

overall 5% increase, the Paxton Health Clinic matching funds, the Eagle Springs Restaurant, a \$20,000.00 discretionary grant program, retiree payout of \$81,062.91, and the Mojo Building renovations at \$1.5 million. She said that the Sheriff's Office has asked to move the \$2.8 million budgeted for the Glendale Fire Station to the Sheriff's Fund Budget so that everything budgeted for the Sheriff's office can be in one area. This will reflect the item as an expense of the Sheriff's Office. It will not go to the Sheriff and the board will still be responsible for the fire station construction. Ms. Thomason stated that the Sheriff's office is also asking that the \$1 million budgeted for Choctaw Beach Fire Station be moved into the Sheriff's fund as an addition to the Sheriff's budget. She announced that Walton County would be receiving the \$1 million in matching funds for the grant to go forward with the building of the fire station. The Sheriff is requesting to use the original funds budgeted for the fire station toward competitive salaries.

PUBLIC HEARING

3. Public Comment and Discussion

Motion by Vice-Chairman Glidewell, second by Commissioner McCormick, to open the public hearing.

4-0 by the following votes:

Ayes: Chairman Barker, Vice-Chairman Glidewell, Commissioner McCormick, and Commissioner Nick

Commissioner McCormick questioned if the Sheriff had already requested an increase in funds for salaries to be more competitive. Ms. Thomason replied that he had and that all of the surrounding counties have increased their budgets for these items. Commissioner McCormick asked when the Sheriff discovered there would be a shortfall in competitive salaries. Ms. Minette Bruce, Walton County Sheriff's Office discussed the increases in salaries in Bay and Okaloosa Counties, and how they compared to Walton County salaries. She said without the additional funds, Walton County Sheriff's Office starting salaries would be \$45,000.00; Bay and Okaloosa Counties' starting salary is \$48,000.00. She said Walton has 20 vacancies in law enforcement with Bay County only having four. Ms. Bruce reported there were approximately 50 vacancies throughout the Walton County Sheriff's Office (20 patrol deputies, 5 in CIB, 2 school resource deputies, along with vacancies in fire rescue and other areas). She said the budget requested three additional deputies. The Sheriff is hoping with the additional funds the vacant positions and the three additional positions will be filled. The discussion continued regarding the \$15.00/hour minimum wage requirement for employees involved in Medicaid being included in the budget.

Ms. Donna Johns asked about the \$1 million increase to the Eagle Springs Golf and Recreation Center. Ms. Thomason responded that the largest amount will be in the building's account which will be used for a maintenance building and remodeling of the bathrooms to be ADA compliant. She said \$100,000.00 will be designed for parking and fencing around the maintenance building, \$70,000.00 for a six-inch backup well, and \$45,000.00 to re-sod two fairways. She said there are also two FTEs included. Ms. Johns asked about the condition of the current maintenance building. Commissioner

Glidewell said there were currently three maintenance buildings that were all in bad shape. He said the location of the new maintenance building would be at the back of the property and will be accessed from Live Oak Street. He talked about the basketball, tennis, volleyball, and pickleball courts that would be built in the areas occupied by the older buildings.

Ms. Barbara Morano talked about the beach safety budget and the need to have competitive pay for the lifeguards. Chairman Barker said that is being addressed.

4. Staff requests a motion to adopt a resolution to set the Tentative Millage rates for County-Wide plus North Walton Mosquito Control District for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Motion by Vice-Chairman Glidewell, second by Commissioner Nick, to adopt **Resolution 2022-104** setting the tentative millage rates for County-Wide (3.6363) and North Walton Mosquito Control District (0.4192) for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

4-0 by the following votes:

Ayes: Chairman Barker, Vice-Chairman Glidewell, Commissioner McCormick, and Commissioner Nick

5. Staff requests a motion to adopt a resolution to set the Tentative Budget for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Motion by Vice-Chairman Glidewell, second by Commissioner McCormick, to adopt **Resolution 2022-105** setting the Tentative Walton County Budget for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$256,911,567.00 for county government, of which \$948,298.00 is for the North Walton Mosquito Control District.

4-0 by the following votes:

Ayes: Chairman Barker, Vice-Chairman Glidewell, Commissioner McCormick, and Commissioner Nick

Motion by Commissioner Nick, second by Vice-Chairman Glidewell, to close the Public Hearing.

4-0 by the following votes:

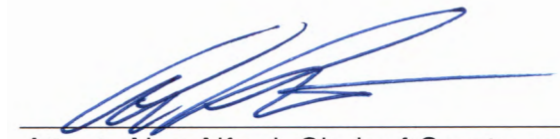
Ayes: Chairman Barker, Vice-Chairman Glidewell, Commissioner McCormick, and Commissioner Nick

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:16 p.m.



Michael Barker, Chairman



Attest: Alex Alford, Clerk of Courts, and County Comptroller