

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS - STRATEGIC FINANCIAL REVIEW

APRIL 29, 2008

A meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held at the Murdock Administration Complex in Room 119, Port Charlotte, Florida. The following members were present: **Commissioner Moore, Commissioner Loftus, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Duffy.** Also in attendance were Interim County Attorney Baltz, County Attorney Knowlton, and Deputy Clerk Lansing. The following members were absent: Chairman D'Aprile.

The meeting was called to order at **10:00 AM** followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

I. Opening Remarks

Commissioner Moore opened the meeting and indicated **Commissioner Duffy** had requested to speak at this time. **Commissioner Duffy** said she wanted to discuss two items from yesterday's meeting, stated the first topic was the possible replacement of the Port Charlotte Beach Complex decking, proceeded to show several pictures she had taken of the decking, described each in detail, opined many areas could be repaired, and advised much of the projected \$700,000 cost could be saved by creating a maintenance program and only replacing certain areas of the decking. **Commissioner Duffy** said the second topic for discussion was Harold Avenue Little League field sidewalks and handicap parking area, described the existing parking lot and sidewalks, recommended saving money by posting a sign advising handicap assessable parking is available in the back parking area, suggested creating a small handicap lot near the others where sidewalks are already in, and opined saving money by not installing new sidewalks that lead to a parking area that may never be used.

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Director Laura Kleiss-Hoeft explained the Port Charlotte Beach Complex decking has reached it's life expectancy and is on the brink of failure, noted an ongoing board maintenance, replacement and sealing program, indicated staff recommendation to move forward and replace the boat ramps, boardwalks, and fishing piers. Mrs. Kleiss-Hoeft referred to the handicap parking lot as Agatha

parking lot, advised it was being used, noted it is in Phase 1 of the CIP program, and provided details.

Commissioner Moore asked if Parks & Recreation could post a sign in an existing parking lot that was not currently Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compatible if provisions were available one block away. Mrs. Kleiss-Hoeft noted since Agatha did have handicap marked spaces the Accessibility Codes would require the lot provide access to all facilities. **Commissioner Duffy** respectfully disagreed and opined there is a less expensive solution to many of these issues. **Commissioner Moore** indicated yesterday the Board was looking for consensus on many topics and asked if **Commissioner Duffy** was asking for reconsideration of Topic #7 Beach Park Complex. **COMMISSIONER DUFFY ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY AND MOVED FOR RECONSIDERATION OF TOPIC #7, BEACH PARK COMPLEX, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOFTUS, AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS.**

Commissioner Moore advised the procedures the Board would be following for topics to be reconsidered. **Commissioner Duffy** asked for item number confirmation. Attorney Knowlton provided the item numbers. **Commissioner Loftus** indicated he would like to see Parks and Recreation take a second look on both issues. **Commissioner Cummings** stated his understanding is they would get a second opinion for both items from an expert and/or an ADA representative. **Commissioner Duffy** suggested they hold off for a year. **Commissioner Cummings** said he would prefer a second opinion. **Commissioner Moore** said he hoped they would move quickly and asked **Commissioner Duffy** if she was asking for reconsideration of Topic #34. **COMMISSIONER DUFFY ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY AND MOVED FOR RECONSIDERATION OF TOPIC #34, HAROLD AVENUE PARK, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOFTUS, AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS.** **Commissioner Duffy** opined if postponed the combined savings from Items 7 and 34 could cover the costs for the Sheriff's Department Sub-Station in Englewood. **Commissioner Loftus** agreed a second opinion was needed for both issues. **Commissioner Cummings** clarified what the second opinion would cover. **Commissioner Duffy** suggested several ideas related to the handicap parking lot.

Interim County Administrator Baltz confirmed the will of the Board related to Items 7 and 34 and noted these items would be

eliminated for budget planning. **Commissioner Cummings** said he would like a very prompt second opinion response.

Ray Sandrock said the next budget meeting would be held on May 19th, advised they would start that meeting with Items 7 and 34, and provided a short overview of what would be covered today.

II. Update of Public Safety Radio System

Assistant County Administrator Shoemaker recapped staff recommendations, provided detailed information related to the proposed Radio System Upgrade, furnished the Board with Motorola background, and answered several questions asked yesterday.

Commissioner Duffy asked for account clarification related to Motorola and expressed her distrust with them. **Commissioner Moore** asked for bid amounts and detail of what each included. **Commissioner Duffy** indicated the other Company's bid was for a new Digital System with a cost of \$6.7 Million. Ms. Shoemaker verified the bid amounts received, noted the quotes were several months old, and explained there would be a savings with the Digital System bid since it came in lower than the amount staff had originally budgeted. **Commissioner Loftus** also expressed his trust concerns related to Motorola and whether they would be able to support the new system. **Commissioner Cummings** voiced the need for emergency services people to effectively communicate and work together in the most cost effective manner, agreed Motorola had given good reason not to be trusted, and opined they would need to be watched.

Fire Chief Dennis DiDio explained controllers, towers, upgrades, digital systems versus analog, dead areas, and advised the new tower site location and coverage. **Commissioner Loftus** asked if there was communication between analog and digital and if Chief DiDio was comfortable with the Motorola proposal. Chief DiDio stated there was current communication with a limited amount of patches at a time, advised he was satisfied with the proposal, had requested Motorola's support guarantee in writing, and mentioned a copy was included in the Commissioner's paperwork. **Commissioner Moore** asked if the State would mandate the use of digital prior to 2014. Chief DiDio indicated hearsay is 2018. **Commissioner Duffy** continued to express her hesitation. **Commissioner Cummings** and **Commissioner Loftus** both

commented on siding with Chief DiDio and the experts. **Commissioner Moore** stated they had consensus and agreed to move forward.

III. Jail Expansion

Mr. Sandrock provided a visual outline of the proposed Jail Expansion, indicated there were several options, discussed the Project Overview in detail by phase, noted accomplishments to date, schedules, the budget, proposed re-design strategies, project financing, and asked for Board questions.

Commissioner Duffy asked for clarification of the \$22 Million in cash and future financing of \$30.5 Million; questioned reduced contingency; re-designing options; and discussed pod reduction. **Commissioner Loftus** indicated these are terrible times, mentioned the increased demand on local government due to the downturn of the economy, opined the Commissioner's should be considering a regional jail, noted future regional discussions with Sarasota County, commented on the projected increase of inmates, and indicated outgrowing the new jail by 2014.

Commissioner Cummings noted the counties already share capacity and work on a regional basis, discussed costs, and opined if the assumption is to maintain the same millage rate it is likely the County will not have the cash flow to move forward on the full project.

Sheriff Davenport agreed it is the Commissioner's jail; stated 13 of his 30 year career has been in corrections; expressed hope that the Board considered him an expert in his field; noted researching regional jails; opined it would be many, many years before the creation of a regional jail; said jails are a necessary evil; thanked the Board for support in the implementation of a 5 year strategic plan which helped reduce crime by 15%; noted a record number of arrests; stated the need to house serious offenders; opined drugs are the key to most crime especially during the economy downturn; stated for the record the need to move forward; agreed with **Commissioner Cummings** that the facility will be needed now or later; opined saving millions by building now when costs are at their lowest; mentioned generating revenue by renting out beds, and urged the Board to move forward in its entirety.

Commissioner Duffy inquired as to the number of beds planned for the proposed jail, asked about the Medical Clinic, and questioned procedures related to juvenile arrestees. Sheriff Davenport asked Jail Commander Major Thomas Rodgers to reply. **Commissioner Duffy** then asked Facilities, Construction & Maintenance Director Andrew Baker to provide his cost reduction ideas. Mr. Baker explained there were several options that could save a significant amount of money and agreed it would be less expensive to build now. **Commissioner Moore** voiced his disappointment in not receiving a realistic figure on the number of inmates requiring beds in the future. Sheriff Davenport explained the U.S. Marshall said they would use our jail but were unable to provide an inmate projection for 2010, advised other counties across the state were in need of beds, as well as U.S. Marshalls who require beds for their detainees, noted the possibility of working with Immigration to house illegal immigrants, discussed current and future rates, expressed confidence in filling the beds and generating revenue for the County. **Commissioner Duffy** said she did not want to be penny wise and pound foolish, indicated the need to keep everyone safe, and noted she was willing to delay until they met with Sarasota County. **Commissioner Loftus** asked to delay this until they have the opportunity to discuss a regional jail with Sarasota County.

Ms. Shoemaker said they have the GMP prepared, noted the paperwork is ready to be placed on the Agenda for the May 13th meeting, advised they could proceed with the knowledge that it may be pulled. **Commissioner Moore** indicated waiting to discuss would not provide an immediate solution and explained the Board needed to give staff strong direction now. **Commissioner Loftus** opined they should delay for further discussions. **Commissioner Cummings** opined the smarter investment would be to proceed with the project on a needs based budget, indicated it would be less expensive in the long run to be proactive and address community needs, and stated if the millage rate remained the same there would not be sufficient funding to proceed. **Commissioner Moore** said he would like to move forward with the jail. **Commissioner Duffy** asked for staffing detail, questioned if the costs could somehow be lowered, and mentioned receiving information from a company willing to build a regional jail where we would be the host county. Sheriff Davenport noted that could work, commented a regional jail for sentenced inmates could save by putting those

longer term inmates to work to offset costs, and provided additional information.

Interim County Attorney Baltz commented we are all in this together, noted there is only so much ad-valorem dollars available to do what we all want for the citizens, noted the high regard for law enforcement, and explained the difficult decisions will be balanced against budget challenges.

Commissioner Loftus again indicated his desire to hold off on a decision until the next meeting. Mr. Sandrock advised the next budget meeting was scheduled for May 19, 2008. **Commissioner Duffy** mentioned Ms. Shoemaker had suggested it be brought back to the May 13th meeting. Ms. Shoemaker explained the longer we wait the more likely something will have to be paid because of the site being demobilized. **Commissioner Loftus** opined they could have a decision and cost information on May 13th. Attorney Knowlton asked for final consensus and if the Board wanted to pursue cost saving measures. **Commissioner Moore** received consensus to delay until the May 13, 2008 meeting. **Commissioner Cummings** and Mr. Sandrock discussed additional operational costs, phase in budgets, caps, and millage rate projections. **Commissioner Moore** confirmed the consensus is to postpone until May 13, 2008. **Commissioner Cummings** stated it is necessary to phase in, indicated they should not wait until operation since they would not have the capacity at that time to raise the revenues needed.

ADJOURNED: 11:55 AM

Signature on file in Commission Minutes
Chairman

ATTEST:

BARBARA T. SCOTT, CLERK
OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND
EX-OFFICIO TO THE BOARD
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

By: Signature on file in commission
Deputy Clerk

JL