

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS - STRATEGIC FINANCIAL REVIEW**

**MAY 23, 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 **Chairman D'Aprile, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Loftus**. Also in attendance were Interim County Administrator Baltz, County Attorney Knowlton, and Deputy Clerk Lansing. The following members were absent: **Commissioners Duffy and Commissioner Moore**.

The meeting was called to order at **10:07 AM** followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

County Budget Officer Ray Sandrock advised the Agenda for the following week, said it would include a preview of what was handed in by the Constitutional Officers, and provided a review of the Reduction Summary.

**1. Department Reviews:**

**a. Human Resources**

Assistant County Administrator Kelly Shoemaker started with Learning and Organizational Development, provided Total Budget and Ad Valorem, stated proposed Reduction was 53%, noted the Department Focus and Efficiencies would concentrate on increasing in-house training and resources while reducing outside training, discussed cutting outside source design of course materials, mentioned a reduction in outside management training courses, explained Service Reduction recommendations, and asked for Board direction to move forward in the training and development area.

**Chairman D'Aprile** commended Human Resources for reducing their budget as they did. **Commissioner Loftus** asked how the balance of revenue was funded and still expressed concern with the training costs. Ms. Shoemaker explained. **Commissioner Cummings** discussed his reduction presumptions and questioned the amount of success expected in lowering ad-valorem. Mr. Sandrock expressed his hope for success was great but stated depending on the revenue structure in some departments there was a possibility that not all reductions would be 100% ad-

valorem. **Commissioner Loftus** asked if the \$80,000 for professional and contractual services was necessary. Pam Stein responded.

Ms. Shoemaker proceeded with Employee and Labor Relations, provided Total Budget and Ad Valorem, stated proposed Reduction was 21%, discussed Department Focus, advised this department would be moved under one roof, noted the possibility of future efficiencies, explained Expense Reductions, advised the elimination of one position on May 13th, and asked for Board direction. **Chairman D'Aprile** opined they did everything they could with the exception of closing the office. Ms. Shoemaker advised many of the departments are high staffed departments, explained their major expense is people, and stated staff is trying to create a balance. **Commissioner Cummings** asked if the reductions would affect the level of service. Human Resources Director Maggie Kain said Human Resources is re-focusing their efforts, noted using technology to reduce paper and process, and opined keeping the same level of service this year.

b. **Budget**

Mr. Sandrock proceeded with the Budget Office, stated they are heavily staff driven and support many areas of the County, provided Total Budget and Ad Valorem, stated proposed Reduction was 28%, mentioned the Department Focus and responsibilities, stated considering level of service reductions by priority, noted the elimination of two positions on May 13th and recommended the elimination of another for 2008-2009, discussed how the other members of the department need to absorb the increased workload, and indicated New Revenue due to a Private Utility Regulatory position funded from fees.

**Commissioner Cummings** mentioned he was still trying to find the backup packets posted to the internet. Mr. Sandrock apologized. **Commissioner Cummings** confirmed a total of 4 positions were cut, wondered how this would affect the department, and asked what tasks would not get done. Mr. Sandrock opined legislative areas would be impacted initially, explained as you reduce staff you try and work harder and faster, and opined eventually you can only go so far.

(Commissioner Cummings was not present for this part of the meeting)

Chairman D'Aprile and Commissioner Loftus commended the Budget Department and noted they were doing a great job.

c. **Purchasing**

Ms. Shoemaker stated the Total budget and Ad Valorem for Purchasing, indicated the recommended reductions were 67% of the Ad Valorem budget, mentioned Purchasing is a heavily staffed department, explained they are comfortable with staff reductions since workload demands have been significantly reduced over the last several months, advised if the workload increased there would be delays in processing or they would then need to come back to the Board to approve the return of some personnel. Ms. Shoemaker discussed Efficiencies and explained the Proposed Eliminations would trim the department down to 11 employees from 14. Chairman D'Aprile questioned why 11 people could not get the work done. Ms. Shoemaker explained they were comfortable that 11 people could get the job done, but noted if the workload increased, there would be delays.

d. **Cemeteries**

Mr. Sandrock advised Public Works manages three County Cemeteries, provided the Total Budget, Ad Valorem, and said the proposed reduction is 11%. Chairman D'Aprile asked about funding and asked where the Cemeteries are located. Mr. Sandrock advised there were various non-ad valorem fees charged and Ms. Shoemaker provided the names and locations of the Cemeteries. Mr. Sandrock discussed proposed reductions, advised the elimination of one maintenance worker on May 13, 2008, and explained there was accumulated reserves that have been slowing building over the years, provided detail, and recommended using the full amount of the reserve during the current economic condition.

(Commissioner Cummings was present for the remainder of the meeting)

Commissioner Loftus and Chairman D'Aprile agreed the full reserves should be used based on the current economic condition.

e. **Survey & Mapping**

Ms. Shoemaker provided an overview, advised Total budget, Ad Valorem, said they recommend 129% reduction of the Ad Valorem Budget, mentioned the reductions would fall heavily on personnel elimination, noted one position already eliminated on May 13, 2008, discussed the Re-Organization proposal, described how the new process would be handled in the future, explained position eliminations would be phased in after the completion of projects, and discussed additional expense reductions. **Chairman D'Aprile** asked if savings could be found in areas other than staff reductions. Dan Quick advised they were still researching the subject and would advise the Board at the June 2, 2008 meeting.

f. **Economic Development**

Mr. Sandrock provided the Total Budget, Ad Valorem Funding, stated the recommended impact is 27%, discussed Efficiencies, Expense and Service Reductions, stated they will try and do certain things in house to save money, and mentioned **Commissioner Duffy** had sent a memo advising she was in favor of the reductions as long as no additional reductions were made.

**Commissioner Loftus** opined moving forward, stated economic development is essential, commented on the need to diversify the tax base, help eliminate residential ad valorem burden, and somehow bring in development to provide good paying jobs and keep our graduates here.

Attorney Knowlton mentioned **Commissioner Cummings** was not present for the discussion on Cemeteries and asked if he was in agreement. **Commissioner Cummings** responded affirmatively.

**Chairman D'Aprile** commented on the importance of economic development, opined now is not the time to reduce their budget, indicated the need to bring industry to our community to help raise tax revenue, and expressed the need for the business community to pay the bulk of taxes that local residents are currently paying. **Commissioner Loftus** opined the plan is good and agreed with a portion of the costs being shifted to the (Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)). **Commissioner Cummings** stated quality of life is the County's primary asset and said there will not be anything to sell if we do not protect it

now. Economic Development Director Donald Root said a balance is necessary and commented they need to be careful not to bring in businesses that will jeopardize our quality of life. **Commissioner Cummings** noted the value of economic development, diversification, and the certainty that decisions will be made in the public's interest. **Commissioner Cummings** noted the importance of focusing on meeting the needs of the Community in the most cost effective way, advised taxes will go up even if the millage rate stays the same, mentioned citizens will not see the savings they are expecting, will see a decrease in the level of services provided, and opined our actions will cause future financial problems.

**Chairman D'Aprile** wanted to be sure he had not given the impression that economic development would take the place of quality of life, said we should concentrate on Mom and Pop businesses as well as the larger corporations coming in, discussed the need to create better jobs without sacrificing quality of life, and apologized if he was misunderstood. **Commissioner Cummings** said that was not the point he was trying to make. **Chairman D'Aprile** said he wanted to clarify his comments, said our taxpayers need some kind of relief, stated we do not have large attractions like Disneyworld or a water park to help pay the bulk of taxes, indicated we are a unique area with boating and waterfront, explained we need to draw businesses who will appreciate our area, commended Mr. Root for his aggression. **Commissioner Cummings** stated his point was if they do not cut Economic Development in the hopes it will help expand the economy and diversify the tax base and cut everything else and if it affects the quality of life, it will reduce the assets Mr. Root has to sell.

**Chairman D'Aprile** agreed, said the present economy is impermanent, stated he has seen three similar recessions, mentioned the burden of state mandates, advised the cuts are temporary, noted eventually the economy will improve, indicated building will return, and opined we will go back to normal. **Commissioner Cummings** agreed with **Chairman D'Aprile's** intent, indicated the framework is based upon the notion that taxes will not increase if the millage rate remained the same, explained in an effort to please the Board staff is trying to minimize the consequences and said we will not truly understand the consequences of these cuts until we feel the

impacts next year, indicated things will not go back to normal once the economy comes back, noted growth, cap, cost per taxpayer, additional burden, and opined people expect cut taxes will not decrease services and infrastructure, and said the Board should consider the most cost effective way to handle this over the next five years. **Chairman D'Aprile** indicated his positive vision for the future.

ADJOURNED: 11:10 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 Minutes  
Deputy Clerk

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