

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**April 27, 2009**

A meeting was held at the Murdock Administration Complex in Room 119, Port Charlotte, Florida.

Members present were: Chairman Duffy, Commissioner Loftus, Commissioner Starr, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Skidmore, County Administrator Baltz, County Attorney Knowlton, and Deputy Clerk Manley. The following members were absent: None

The workshop was called to order at **1:30 PM**, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. Review Performance Budgets and Discussion - Kelly Shoemaker and Ray Sandrock**

**a. Tourist Development and Follow Up**

Ms. Shoemaker announced the Reduction Update is \$11,433,928 from General Revenues and \$7,795,918 from Other Funds. (Staff paralleled visual slides throughout the workshop)

Ms. Shoemaker read the Tourist Development Mission Statement and its 3 Core Services into the record. Ms. Shoemaker described Core Service #1; provided its Linkage to Strategic Goal; gave its FTE, revenue sources, and budget; provided four Results; and pointed out its Time Allocation graph. Mr. Sandrock described Core Service #2; provided its Linkage to Strategic Goal; gave its FTE, revenue sources, and budget; provided five Results; and pointed out its Time Allocation graph. Mr. Sandrock described Core Service #3; provided its Linkage to Strategic Goal; gave its FTE, revenue sources, and budget; provided four Results; and pointed out its Time Allocation graph. Ms. Shoemaker reviewed Decision Points, the Organizational Chart, and explained the Recommended Reduction Scenario. Mr. Sandrock noted proposed Revenue Opportunities and provided Current Year Savings. **Commissioner Skidmore** questioned air destinations and suggested we increase connectivity. Becky Bovell discussed the development

program dedicated to airlines, mentioned its promotional activities, and noted future campaign ideas. **Commissioner Skidmore** indicated the importance of working with our tourism partners to save on print advertising. Ms. Bovell explained the cooperative advertising, pointed out a recent ad, stated monies will not be diverted from cooperative marketing dollars, and advised the intention is to increase promotional avenues. **Commissioner Loftus** expressed concern with the \$150,000 Reserve transfer, indicated debt service should be paid from tourism tax revenue, asked if there is a separate reserve, and mentioned the importance of maintaining back-up reserves. Mr. Sandrock advised a reserve has been set up just for the debt service. Ms. Bovell explained further. **Commissioner Skidmore** said it is important to fund the Sports Park with non-ad valorem funding. Ms. Bovell projected an increase in available funding after the new amenities are completed. **Commissioner Loftus** questioned how many passengers used the airlines. Ms. Bovell indicated it had been determined the airlines had passed the 10,000 passenger mark. **Commissioner Skidmore** noted incoming numbers are greater than outgoing, pointed out several Recommended Reductions Scenario line items, and suggested they do not reduce advertising monies.

**COMMISSIONER SKIDMORE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE LEVEL OF SERVICE REDUCTIONS FOR #1, #2, #3, #4, #6, AND REDUCE #8 TO \$20,000, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOFTUS**

**Commissioner Skidmore** noted the monies collected will not count against the ad valorem shortfall, said he represents the Tourist Development Council (TDC) and will continue to monitor the growth of reserves. **Chairman Duffy** said many of the professional service items are similar to advertising and expressed the importance of photography. Ms. Bovell explained professional services is used to subsidize the advertising budget and discussed the process related to photography and the image bank. **Chairman Duffy** questioned the impact of the \$20,000 reduction to #8. Ms. Bovell indicated the importance of line item #8 and remarked last year's reduction was \$100,000. **Commissioner Starr** asked about the high cost of travel. Ms. Bovell indicated the importance of attending events when submitting bids, provided several examples, and discussed their results. **Commissioner Starr** said he understands the Devil Rays and Stone Crabs do all their management and promotions at the sports park. Ms. Bovell explained we provide awareness and generate economic impact.

**Chairman Duffy** stated the stadium is available for use by Charlotte County in October. Ms. Shoemaker mentioned the flexibility built into the Stone Crabs agreement and gave examples. **Commissioner Starr** suggested they shift sports marketing to other areas since we are locked out for six (6) months of the year. Ms. Bovell explained sports marketing in detail. **Commissioner Starr** questioned the \$10,000 phone bill. Ms. Bovell indicated the cost includes marketing outreach, media, event contacts, and noted they have reduced telephone costs in half. **Commissioner Starr** suggested they compare carriers. **Commissioner Starr** questioned the high cost of dues, publications and membership fees and suggested a reduction in that area could put funds back into advertising and promotion. Ms. Bovell indicated they have already made cuts, will continue to find additional reductions, and shift funds where needed. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked if there is a direct benefit to belonging to any organization and whether you are locked out by not being a member. Ms. Bovell said in some cases they would be locked out. **Commissioner Starr** asked if any cuts were mandated, questioned education expenses, and asked if additional savings could be found. Ms. Bovell said there were no mandates, indicated the education category referred to conference registration, suggested the County is finally moving forward with infrastructure and amenities, expressed confidence that they will do the best job with the present allocations, and opined they will create additional cost saving opportunities. **Chairman Duffy** stated the recommendation is to reduce the travel budget from \$44,000 to \$29,000. Mr. Baltz clarified the Tampa Bay Rays agreement related to revenue opportunities, explained the financial plan, and noted additional revenues are applied to stadium operations and maintenance.

**MOTION CARRIED 3:2. COMMISSIONER STARR, COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS OPPOSING.**

**Commissioner Skidmore** brought up a policy decision made by the prior Board in regards to the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, confirmed we have a \$19 Million infrastructure investment, noted the policy allows events under 365 days a year to be booked through Parks and Recreation, said events over 365 days are booked through Tourist Development, recommended the policy be changed to allow Tourist Development to handle the bookings at all times, opined they will do a

better job, and commented he would like to see the Stadium and Event Center booked as much as possible. **Commissioner Loftus** disagreed; suggested Parks and Recreation should handle short term bookings for in-county events and work with Tourist Development to be more productive, and expressed the importance that our local taxpayers are able to utilize the Center. **Commissioner Starr** said since we are going out for Request for Proposal (RFP) it would be prudent to allow each department to do what they do and have Event Center management handle the bookings. **Commissioner Cummings** commented on why the system was created and said the Event Center is first and foremost a Community amenity that was primarily paid for by our citizens. **Commissioner Skidmore** clarified his goal is to gain efficiencies through a centralized booking system. **Commissioner Cummings** remarked the facility is still operated by Parks and Recreation. **Commissioner Skidmore** opined that is a mistake and suggested the RFP will prove his belief. **Commissioner Cummings** disagreed. **Commissioner Starr** provided the reasons why they decided to go out to RFP and opined it will be more effective to have one entity manage the Event Center. **Chairman Duffy** suggested there may be a less expensive, more effective way to manage the Center. **Commissioner Cummings** advised the difference between Tourism and Parks and Recreation, opined we should make it as easy as possible for residents and outside events to make reservations, and remarked the Memorial Auditorium worked better with both rather than one. **Commissioner Loftus** commented he has not heard of any difficulties between the two working together. **Commissioner Cummings** opined the motion just approved will impact the professional line.

**b. Economic Development and Follow Up**

**RECESS: 2:28 PM - 2:42 PM**

Ms. Shoemaker read the Economic Development Mission Statement and its 2 Core Services into the record. Ms. Shoemaker described Core Service #1; provided its Linkage to Strategic Goal; gave its FTE, revenue sources, and budget; provided six Results; and pointed out its Time Allocation graph. Mr. Sandrock described Core Service #2; provided its Linkage to Strategic Goal; gave its FTE, revenue sources, and budget; provided three Results; pointed out its Time Allocation graph; reviewed four decision points and the Organization Chart; explained the Recommended

Reduction Scenario; and discussed the Impacts from Reductions per Discussion Point.

**Commissioner Skidmore** asked for detail related to the impacts of reduced Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for Capital Projects. Mr. Sandroock explained. **Commissioner Loftus** expressed concern with the financial impact to Charlotte Harbor CRA, noted the Advisory Board did well in the past, and suggested they look at eliminating the Redevelopment Manager position. **Commissioner Cummings** asked if we were doing any redevelopment outside the Charlotte Harbor CRA. Debrah Forester noted she manages the Murdock Village Advisory Committee; explained if the recommendation was approved, they would need to shift responsibilities related to that committee; said Economic Development has taken on developer recruitment in that area and stated they would need to also handle the administrative components; mentioned she handles the required annual report and minor work when needed; and confirmed she is not involved outside the CRA. **Chairman Duffy** asked why their long distance costs are so high. Ms. Shoemaker stated we are achieving savings, but was unable to provide specifics at this time. Mr. Sandroock advised they will review and come back with detail. **Chairman Duffy** expressed confusion with the budget. Mr. Sandroock explained further. **Commissioner Cummings** asked for clarification. Don Root provided better detail. **Commissioner Starr** questioned the value of the position to Economic Development. Ms. Forester and Mr. Root gave detailed specifics. **Commissioner Loftus** stated his opposition to a dedicated coordinator for the Charlotte Harbor CRA. **Chairman Duffy** agreed, said it was necessary at one time, and asked Mr. Baltz if the County could survive without a Redevelopment Manager. Mr. Baltz stated it was considered but was not a recommendation, commented on the Commissioners' strong emphasis for economic development, noted the position is part of a team, and indicated he would make the adjustment if elimination was the will of the Board. **Commissioner Cummings** asked if Murdock Village is shovel-ready. Mr. Root advised it is not shovel-ready, explained the infrastructure that still needs to be done, and said it is not permit ready. Ms. Forester said the zoning code is on hold until a developer comes along. **Commissioner Cummings** expressed the importance of retaining the Redevelopment Manager especially when the market returns. **Commissioner Loftus** agreed we need to be shovel-ready, noted a list of items to be addressed, and

again said he does not want the Charlotte Harbor CRA to pay the full amount. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked for the percentage of time Ms. Forester spends on Murdock Village beyond attending the Committee meetings. Ms. Forester said she currently spends about 25% of her time on Murdock Village, mentioned grant funds, and opined her time is better spent in Charlotte Harbor until Murdock Village becomes active. **Commissioner Skidmore** mentioned levels of service and travel expenses. Mr. Root said County vehicles are used for in-state travel. **Commissioner Skidmore** commented that there are 285 vehicles available under one half ton, and opined it is less expensive to utilize a County motor pool car rather than pay mileage. **Chairman Duffy** expressed concern that a policy change would cost the County more in the long run. **Commissioner Starr** indicated he suggested the use of a motor pool in the past and also mentioned considering the creation of a copy center on each floor of the building to reduce copier costs. **Commissioner Cummings** asked for clarification whether there are 285 vehicles under one half ton or 285 available vehicles. **Commissioner Skidmore** advised 285 vehicles under one half ton. **Commissioner Cummings** stated the importance of the Redevelopment Manager and explained other key position responsibilities including grant work. **Commissioner Loftus** commented on CRA grants already received, noted his knowledge of CRA responsibilities, and suggested we need a grant coordinator to write the grants. **Commissioner Cummings** reiterated the importance of retaining the position. County Attorney Knowlton explained it is appropriate to discuss funding of this position; however discussion to eliminate the position should be had with Mr. Baltz. **Commissioner Skidmore** commented on a past Board direction to eliminate a similar position. **Commissioner Cummings** explained the difference between the positions. Mr. Baltz clarified if the Board moves to eliminate the funding, they will eliminate the position. **Chairman Duffy** provided her thoughts related to the Redevelopment Manager position and its responsibilities and commented she does not want to reduce Economic Development. **Commissioner Cummings** agreed we should fully fund Economic Development, mentioned the Board's reduction plan to deal with the \$48 Million shortfall in great detail, and stated his opposition to the elimination of the position. **Chairman Duffy** said she is not in favor of increasing taxes even if she is in favor of increasing the Economic Development budget. **Commissioner Loftus** expressed his strong support of Economic Development. **Commissioner Skidmore**

questioned whether the Advisory Board was in support of the shift. Ms. Forester explained the CRA did not take an official vote, but noted her understanding is that most would prefer to fund 50% and move forward with their Capital projects. **Commissioner Skidmore** remarked on comments made earlier by **Commissioner Loftus**. **Chairman Duffy** mentioned possible options, indicated the position may fall under future redevelopment and planning within Growth Management, and suggested shifting 50% to the Growth Management Department. **Commissioner Skidmore** expressed his opposition. **Commissioner Cummings** remarked on the importance of future grant writing. **Commissioner Loftus** said Mr. Hebert is working in that area. Ms. Shoemaker said they have created a task force to work with grants. **Commissioner Skidmore** commented that Economic Development is now in a leased building and asked if they can achieve savings in that area. Ms. Shoemaker advised they are unable to get out of that lease until 2011 but noted they are taking steps to analyze all vacant space under County owned facilities. Mr. Root suggested the CRA's pick up the Economic Development administrative expenses to allow him to keep four (4) FTE's and continue to fund 50% of the Redevelopment Manager position. **Commissioner Skidmore** announced he would need to review further. **Chairman Duffy** recommended they hold off on that position and asked for the status of Murdock Village line items. Ms. Forester responded.

**COMMISSIONER STARR MOVED TO ACCEPT RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE ITEMS #2, #3, #4, AND DELAY ITEM #1 FOR FURTHER REVIEW, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOFTUS**

**Chairman Duffy** expressed concern with reducing Economic Development.

**MOTION CARRIED 3:2. CHAIRMAN DUFFY, COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS OPPOSING.**

Mr. Baltz clarified the recommendations, asked if the Board still believed redevelopment resources were needed as they have believed in the past, said he can review with Growth Management and come back with recommendations, and explained the Board is not compelled to reduce or change this function. **Commissioner Starr** stated that was much his intent, discussed several points, and requested recommendations from Mr. Baltz. **Chairman Duffy** also asked for recommendations. **Commissioner Loftus** discussed

his opposition and opined the job does not require a full time person. **Commissioner Cummings** indicated we will need the best people in place when we are ready to work on Murdock Village.

Ms. Shoemaker commented on Revenue Opportunities, reviewed Current Year Savings, and discussed Outsourcing Opportunities currently being used. Ms. Shoemaker announced the next workshop on Wednesday will cover Public Works.

**COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS MOVED TO APPROVE THE REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STARR**

**MOTION CARRIED 5:0.**

**ADJOURNED: 3:45 PM**

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**

Signature on file in Commission Minutes  
Deputy Clerk

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