

BUDGET WORKSHOP

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JULY 14, 2004

A budget workshop of the Board of County Commissioners was held at the Murdock Administration Complex, Room 119, in Port Charlotte, Florida. The following members were present: Chairman Matthew D. DeBoer and Commissioners Thomas C. D'Aprile, Sara Devos and Mac V. Horton. **(Commissioner Cummings was not present for this portion of the meeting.)** Also in attendance were County Administrator Bruce D. Loucks, Deputy County Attorney Brendan Bradley, Chief Deputy Board Services Tommy Q. White and Deputy Clerk Karen S. Mitchell. The meeting was called to order at **1:03 P.M.** followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. **(Commissioner Cummings was present for the remainder of the workshop.)**

Chairman DeBoer said due to unforeseen circumstances the budget book wasn't made available to the Board until a late date and suggested everyone stick to just general conversation on where they want the millage rate and those things they need to accomplish today.

I. Presentation - General Budget Overview

II. Board Discussion

➤ **Questions on individual budgets**

Ann Navan, County Budget Officer, explained the purpose of this workshop was to adopt the tentative millage rates for the fiscal 2005 budgets, those rates will be mailed out on the TRIM notices that go out in August, and after the tentative rates are set they cannot go up but they can go down by the September, 2004 public hearings. Ms. Navan said her presentation would focus on the General Fund and the Public Safety Unit which were the two funds that affect the millage rate and apologized for the circumstances that led to the budget book being late. Ms. Navan gave a brief slide presentation that paralleled the material and detailed the following: Total County Expenditure Summary, General Fund - Valuations, and General Fund - Increases. **Chairman DeBoer** said he will want to discuss individually the 2% COLA, the 4% Pay for Performance, and the 10% Health Insurance

totaling \$2,509,000. **Chairman DeBoer** stated he will be comparing various line items 'approved budget' to 'approved budget' not just the amended budget. **Chairman DeBoer** said he really wants to get a handle on Bad Debt EMS expense and he wants to discuss the percent being set aside for their contingency funds. Ms. Navan clarified the reserves were really only about 2.6% of General Fund once you take out the phosphate monies. **Chairman DeBoer** said that's really low. Ms. Navan responded that's higher than it's been. **Commissioner Devos** said her greatest concern was having only \$2.4 million in reserves which just wasn't enough and opined they need to discuss making it higher. Ms. Navan continued with the slide presentation material which detailed the following: Sheriff Budget Request. **Commissioner Devos** noted the increase over the amended was almost \$4 million, said she wants to make sure this includes everything and asked if any of this money would go toward resource officers. William Cameron, Acting Sheriff, stated the budget doesn't include any additional school resource officers but everything else was included. Ms. Navan pointed out last year at the end of the budget cycle the Board established \$140,000 in the reserves for school resource officers and said she has not removed that from the budget. **Commissioner Devos** voiced support for using the money for that and suggested the Sheriff make a presentation to the Board in the near future on how to use those dollars. **Chairman DeBoer** noted they need to remember the \$140,000 was a non-recurring revenue. Sheriff Cameron said he was working with the School Board and the City Chief of Police on combined strategies for next year which should help address a lot of the Board's issues and concerns. Ms. Navan continued with the slide presentation material which detailed the following: Article V - Impact on General Fund, Staffing Requests - General Fund, General Fund - Other New Requests, Public Safety Fund, Other Department Staffing Requests (Funded), and Other Department Requests-Funded. **Commissioner Horton** requested someone from the insurance area update him on retiree benefits and the wellness program. **Commissioner Devos** said she would like to know that as well and also how the Designated Provider Fund might influence the retirement fund. Ms. Navan continued with the slide presentation material which detailed the following: Unfunded Items (General Fund). **(Discussion ensued regarding the Children's Services Council and adding a line item to cover the approximate \$25,000 cost to do a survey of needs; the Neighborhood Redevelopment Specialist position; landscaping maintenance; and**

the need to discuss at the next goals meeting areas on U.S. 41 like Easy Street that need redevelopment efforts.) Ms. Navan continued with the slide presentation material which detailed the following: Summary of Tentative Millage Rates, Marine Advisory - Unfunded Items, and Proposed Millage Rates. **Commissioner Horton** said he felt they were going to need more than \$3 million for phosphate, at least another \$1 million in their contingency, another \$1 million in unfunded projects that need to be funded and asked what it would take to generate \$4 million. Ms. Navan responded an increase in the millage rate of about 0.35 mills. **Commissioner Horton** said there were other things they keep talking about doing like the County-wide dredging program and opined they need to raise the millage rate. **Commissioner Devos** said she would support the 0.35 mills increase knowing it can't go up but it could be reduced. **Commissioner Cummings** asked the desired reserve amount. Ms. Navan responded at least 3% of the General Fund or about \$3 million. **Commissioner Cummings** said he has a concern regarding their MSBU system, one in particular was the Ranchettes but there was no money in the MSBU to fix the problems and opined at some point that MSBU will require some County-wide subsidization to fix what's needed. **Commissioner Cummings** said they may need a road paving module especially with trying to get all the marl roads paved and he wasn't sure he could support the 0.35 mills increase without a little more time for review. **Chairman DeBoer** recalled the Board put together a formula and put it out to a referendum - revenue should increase by growth, inflation, new facilities and mandates, and asked what that number was; and what the internal phosphate debt amount was. Ms. Navan said she would have to get back to him on the internal phosphate debit issue. Ms. Navan responded to the issue of the referendum, reviewed a slide titled 'Millage Rates - Referendum Calcs' and summarized the estimated figures result in a millage reduction of 0.1222 mills. **Chairman DeBoer** said then if they weren't continuing the phosphate fight and the numbers work out right, they'd be decreasing the millage by 0.35 mills. Ms. Navan said that's correct. **Chairman DeBoer** said admittedly he did miss the executive session on this so he's not convinced yet that they weren't still going down a road that just ends at a cliff and at this point he's not in favor of continuing to fund this until he sees that there's something on the horizon that's going to tell him they're going to bear some fruit out of this fight when in fact they have so many needs internally. **Chairman DeBoer** recalled when they put the

referendum formula together it put a 3% budget cap on the County, said it seems they're forgetting that if they were to stick to what they put together they'd be decreasing the millage not raising it, without a doubt he was not going to vote in favor of any millage increase and he would be a lot happier if they stuck to their words since it was the Board who put the referendum out. **Chairman DeBoer** said that doesn't mean he didn't think they could fund some of the extra things like mental health by eliminating some of the things they could do without for a year or two because he was still in that mode. **Commissioner Cummings** recalled they were over the cap last year, opined people expect a higher level of service which wasn't reflected in the referendum and they need to meet those rising expectations. **Commissioner Devos** said she was in the same mode as **Chairman DeBoer**, agreed with **Commissioner Cummings** the referendum didn't consider things like maintenance of the new parks coming online due to the 1% sales tax, said they also know there's been tremendous pressure on the Board during the last few years to beautify U.S. 41, agreed there's greater expectations from the citizens and said she wants the flexibility the higher millage rate affords. **Commissioner D'Aprile** said they go through this every year, they must look at the priorities, he felt they can keep the millage rate increase at zero, he knew the phosphate fight would cost a lot of money but they didn't get the money they'd hoped for from the surrounding counties, opined they just can't quit now and reiterated they need to prioritize and keep the millage rate where it is.

III. County Health Department Facility

(Mike Sheridan, Facilities Construction & Maintenance Director)

No discussion.

IV. Set Tentative Millage Rates

Commissioner Horton opined if they're going to increase services they need to raise revenues, said he felt they'd made promises and they need to keep the promises they'd made. **COMMISSIONER HORTON MOVED APPROVAL TO INCREASE THE MILLAGE RATE BY 0.35 MILLS FOR A MILLAGE RATE OF 4.7037 IN THE GENERAL FUND, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DEVOS. CALL ON THE MOTION: COMMISSIONERS**

CUMMINGS, DEVOS AND HORTON VOTED "YES" AND CHAIRMAN DeBOER AND COMMISSIONER D'APRILE VOTED "NO." MOTION CARRIED: (3:2).

Commissioner Horton said he had to leave but he hoped to be back before the 5:01 P.M. hearing later today. **Chairman DeBoer** said they could stop where they were now and continue it on Friday as originally scheduled. **Commissioner Horton** said he wanted to keep the workshop scheduled for Friday. **Chairman DeBoer** summarized they would keep Friday on the calendar. **(Commissioner Horton was not present for the remainder of the meeting.)** **Commissioner Devos** suggested they use Friday to discuss what they can do to reduce the 0.35 mill increase because the motion was for discussion purposes only. Ms. Navan asked if these were the tentative millage rates the Board wants to set. **Chairman DeBoer** responded that was his understanding. **(Board consensus.)** Ms. Navan read the following tentative millage rates into the record: County-wide Funds - General Fund at 4.7037 mills, Capital Projects Fund at 0.4145 mills, County Health Unit at 0.1027 mills for a total County-wide millage rate of 5.2209 mills; Special Districts - Ackerman Waterway Maintenance at 0.0000 mills, Alligator Creek Waterway Maintenance Unit at 0.4900 mills, Charlotte Public Safety Unit at 1.8524 mills, Greater Charlotte Street Lighting District at 0.2000 mills, Manasota Key Street & Drainage Unit at 1.000 mills, South Charlotte Marl Street & Drainage Unit at 0.0000 mills, Sandhill Municipal Service Taxing Unit 0.8500 mills, Don Pedro/Knights Island Taxing Unit 1.7100 mills, and Stump Pass Beach Nourishment Unit 0.1927 mills. **COMMISSIONER DEVOS MOVED APPROVAL TO ADOPT THE TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATES AS READ INTO THE RECORD BY ANN NAVAN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS (4:0).**

Commissioner Cummings said he needed to meet with Ms. Navan regarding the unfunded mandates because there were more than were listed in the material. **Chairman DeBoer** agreed it was important to list everything because it will help justify what the Board does and opined it was important to be as accurate as possible. **Commissioner Devos** concurred that was very important.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 2:20 P.M.

Matthew D. DeBoer
Chairman

ATTEST:

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

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

/ksm