

BUDGET WORKSHOP

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JULY 16, 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 workshop.)** Also in attendance were County Administrator Bruce D. Loucks, Deputy County Attorney Brendan Bradley and Deputy Clerk Diane J. Nice. 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.)**

Ann Navan, County Budget Officer, reported at the budget workshop on July 14, 2004 the Board voted to tentatively raise the millage in the General Fund by 0.35 mills for a new millage rate of 4.7037 mills and a County-wide millage rate of 5.2209 mills. **Chairman DeBoer** explained the Board received the budget books late due to the late receipt of the official property valuations that revenues were based on, said he hoped everyone had had a chance to review the various budgets and the cash flow that supports them and today they would be able to have more discussion on the General Fund budgets. **Commissioner Devos** recalled on Wednesday she agreed to the 0.35 mills increase to give herself more time to scrutinize the budgets, she now felt they could reduce the millage rate and recommended they decrease the millage by 0.45 which would actually be a 0.10 mill lower than what had been recommended to them on Wednesday. **COMMISSIONER DEVOS MOVED APPROVAL TO DECREASE THE TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE BY 0.45 MILLS FROM WHAT THE BOARD ADOPTED ON WEDNESDAY WHICH WAS A 0.10 MILL DECREASE OVER THE FISCAL YEAR 2003/2004 GENERAL FUND LEVY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER D'APRILE.** **Commissioner D'Aprile** said if **Commissioner Devos** hadn't pushed for a reduction he would have. **Chairman DeBoer** recalled the big push on Wednesday was replenishing the contingency reserves that have been pretty well eaten up over the years and asked how the proposed motion would affect that. Ms. Navan responded at the current millage rate they would have had a reserve of \$2.9

million going into fiscal year 04/05 and reducing the millage rate by 0.10 mills would take about \$1.2 million away leaving a reserve of \$1.7 million above the prior year levels but it would still mean a slower growth rate than planned. **Chairman DeBoer** summarized this kind of motion would affect the replenishment of the reserves but not necessarily affect overall budget expenditures. Ms. Navan agreed assuming the phosphate spending levels stay as projected. **Commissioner Horton** summarized the motion on the floor would result in a net reduction in the millage rate of 0.10 mills; referred to the unfunded items on pages 12 and 14; voiced support for the Neighborhood Redevelopment Specialist, Mental Health Department, Additional Requests for Contracted Services, School Crossing Guard Program, and Children Services Council; summarized all these total about \$900,000; opined he didn't know how they were going to fund any of these if they lower the millage; and said he was willing to cut the budget but not by cutting the contingency reserves. Bruce D. Loucks, County Administrator, said he was just concerned that they preserve the \$3 million they anticipated for phosphate. **Chairman DeBoer** opined a lot of the things brought up by **Commissioner Horton** can be funded even with this cut, clarified if the Board was going to give the Sheriff a 13.8% increase then the Sheriff should be able to find \$100,000 for School Crossing Guards, noted all the items on page 14 come out of the Marine Advisory Fund not the General Fund, said if the Board agrees with this cut then he will work with Budget and Administration to put together a list of items that could be changed to fund the desired things, and opined the 18.3% increase in the property valuations was significant enough to do it. **Commissioner Devos** agreed the money can be found to fund the desired items even with the reduction in the millage rate. **Commissioner Cummings** said his understanding regarding the phosphate was they had already spent \$1 million of the \$3 million budget. Ms. Navan clarified it was anticipated that they would spend by the end of the year \$1 million over and above what was allocated this year, and then \$2 million additional next year. **Commissioner D'Aprile** said for the past three years they have kept expenses down and made budget cuts to maintain the millage rate, this Board continues to try to be fiscally responsible and he feels strongly about cutting back in order to pay their bills. **Commissioner Horton** agreed the Board has done a wonderful job through stringent cuts without raising ad valorem millage, said his main concern continues to be the low reserves due to things

like the phosphate expenditures and he wanted to caution the Board that there was some danger in what they were doing. **Chairman DeBoer** agreed it wasn't right for Charlotte County to defend the entire southwest Florida area from phosphate mining and other counties need to step up to the table and be full partners. **Commissioner Cummings** noted the last \$3 million was matched dollar for dollar by Sarasota and Lee Counties. **Chairman DeBoer** said unless more partners step up to the table he won't continue to support the phosphate fight and if two other Board members agree with him then \$2 million will be freed up. **Commissioner Cummings** said he's willing to go to their neighboring counties to ask for more money in order to continue the fight. **CALL ON THE MOTION: DECLARED UNANIMOUS.**

MEETING ADJOURNED: 1:35 P.M.

Signature on file in Commission Minutes
Matthew D. DeBoer
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**

/ksm