

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

MUNICIPAL SERVICE BENEFIT UNITS (MSBUs)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

JULY 17, 2007

Public Hearings on MSBU rates were held at Lemon Bay High School, 2201 Placida Road, Englewood, Florida. The following members were present: Chairman Loftus, Commissioner Duffy, Commissioner D'Aprile, Commissioner Moore, and Commissioner Cummings. Also in attendance were County Administrator Loucks, Deputy County Attorney Gallagher, Executive Assistants Joann Dillon and Bonnie Stoner, and Minutes Supervisor Nice. The public hearings were called to order at 5:01 PM.

Commissioner Moore reminded people in the audience that residents from West County are civil and likeable.

Assistant Budget Director Linda Carr explained she would provide a brief overview of the rates for each MSBU Unit; Tara Musselman, Public Works, and Jeff Pearson and Debra Smith, Utilities, would describe work programs; followed by public input, Board discussion and action; and advised the purpose of the meeting is to set tentative millage rates for TRIM mailings.

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS TO SET MSBU RATES

A. Rotonda Sands Wastewater (Page A-1)

Advertised Rate for FY 07/08	
All properties	\$225.94 per ERU
Proposed Maximum Rate	\$248.53 per ERU
No rate change - First time assessed	

Ms. Smith explained this is the second year of the assessment with no rate change, requested addition of an ERU, and lowered the Proposed Maximum Rate from \$688.06 to \$248.53.

Public Comment

Kendall Leach stated Ms. Smith answered his question regarding reduction of the maximum rate and expressed support.

Board Action

COMMISSIONER D'APRILE MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MOORE AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS. Commissioner Cummings questioned the location of the territory within the Suburban Area. Jeff Pearson stated it is not within the Suburban Area. Commissioner Cummings stated the Board does not encourage development in the Suburban Area while there are numerous other lots available for development. COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS MOVED APPROVAL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2007-098 AS REVISED ON THE RECORD SETTING THE FY 2007/2008 FINAL ASSESSMENT RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$225.94 PER ERU WITH MAXIMUM RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$248.53 PER ERU, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER D'APRILE AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS.

B. Rotonda Meadows Wastewater (Page B-1)

Advertised Rate for FY 07/08	
All properties	\$223.57 per ERU
Proposed Maximum Rate	\$245.93 per ERU
No rate change - First time assessed	

Ms. Carr stated the purpose is to add five more ERUs to the Unit. Ms. Smith explained this is the second year of the assessment with no rate change, concurred with the addition of five ERUs, and requested a reduction in the Proposed Maximum Rate to from \$616.95 to \$245.93.

Public Comment

Peter Traverso indicated 100% support and acknowledged the efforts of Utilities staff to implement the MSBU work program and reduced assessment.

Board Action

COMMISSIONER MOORE MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING, SECONDED BY COMMISSISONER D'APRILE AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS. COMMISSIONER

MOORE MOVED APPROVAL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2007-099 AS REVISED ON THE RECORD SETTING THE FY 2007/2008 FINAL ASSESSMENT RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$223.57 PER ERU WITH A MAXIMUM RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$245.93 PER ERU, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER D'ARILE AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS.

C. Rotonda Villas and Springs Wastewater (Page C-1)

Advertised Rate for FY 07/08

All properties	\$310.11 per ERU
Proposed Maximum Rate	\$341.12 per ERU
Fund expansion of sanitary sewer system	

Ms. Carr explained the proposed new maximum rate is \$341.12. Ms. Smith advised many meetings have been held with homeowners resulting in the reduction of the assessment and maximum rates. **Commissioner Moore** corrected the agenda to read Rotonda Villas and Springs Water and Wastewater.

Public Comment

Kendall Leach stated additional review should be conducted with Utilities on costs relating to the design and construction of water and sewer lines in order to bring back a lower amount in September. Peter Traverso reported the Association fully supports the proposed assessment and work program and encouraged approval since very little work has been done since installation of the system in the early 1990's. John Meagher and Dennis A. Cline opposed the proposed assessment because utilities have already been installed and paid for.

Board Action

COMMISSIONER MOORE MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS. **Commissioner Duffy** questioned how the reduction was achieved. Mr. Pearson explained meetings with homeowners and DMK Group resulted in elimination of short services for \$1.6 to \$1.7 million but under-road cuts were retained in order to make the lines ready for hookups. **Commissioner D'Aprile** requested an explanation of the allegations on double dipping. Mr. Pearson referenced the Giffels-Webster Report that indicated infrastructure was installed by the original developer, however, the lines were

never permitted by Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for service or found in compliance with FDEP standards; none of the seven lift stations have electricity and the lift stations have been vandalized; and pipe restraints will be utilized to reduce costs. **Chairman Loftus** concluded that a dry line permit was issued. **Commissioner D'Aprile** suggested residents seek recourse against the original developer. **Commissioner Cummings** stated this area as well as areas in the first two MSBUs are being opened up for more development in an area that needs better response times and emergency evacuation and indicated opposition. **COMMISSIONER MOORE MOVED APPROVAL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2007-100 SETTING THE FY 2007/2008 FINAL ASSESSMENT RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$310.43 PER ERU WITH A MAXIMUM RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$341.12 PER ERU, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER D'APRILE. MOTION CARRIED: 4:1 WITH COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS OPPOSING.**

D. Gulf Cove Street and Drainage Unit (Page D-1)

Advertised Rate for FY 07/08

Vacant	\$136.00 per ERU
Occupied	\$125.00 per ERU
Proposed Maximum Rate	\$136.00 per ERU
Fund minimum level of maintenance and drainage pipe replacement	

Ms. Carr explained the increases in the assessment rates. Ms. Musselman reported the work program includes mowing, vegetation removal, and landscaping; explained 9 residents attended the town hall meeting held about one month ago; and requested approval rate increases.

Public Comment

Sheila Leik commented in opposition to the assessment based on conversion of drainage pipes to concrete pipes that took six months to complete; stated there is more of a drainage problem than before; suggested supervision to make sure the job is done right within a reasonable time period; there are over 6,000 lots in Gulf Cove and questioned the need for one additional mowing per year; and expressed opposition to additional beautification efforts. Randy Roberson thanked Board Members in advance for considering the proposed increase; pointed out many residents

are on fixed incomes but he supports the proposed increase; commented on the \$277,000 Reserve for future paving; the full fledged paving program is to start in 2009 if culverts are installed; explained people who attended the town hall meeting were in unanimous support for the proposed budget and the program; South Gulf Cove is about two years behind paving in Englewood East; and expressed appreciation to Tom O'Kane and Tara Musselman for working with residents. Mr. Roberson read a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Al Beninati indicating support for the work program and proposed assessment increase. Mr. Roberson commented on deterioration of his roadway and the need for road and drainage improvements and beautification efforts at the front entrance and reiterated support. Richard Van Acker stated he has never heard of an MSBU; commented in opposition because he and his wife cannot afford any more tax increases due to her inability to work for the first time in 35 years; opined nature should be allowed to take care of the beautification; 280+ people left last year because they cannot afford to live in Charlotte County; stated his taxes are \$1,600 for a 2/2 house; and suggested taxes go back to 2004 rates. Claire Kuhlman pointed out all 6,000 property owners cut their grass; everyone is experiencing increases in taxes and insurance costs; reported Brazilian Peppers are over growing roadways and this is the reason for the additional mowing; road resurfacing is scheduled for 2009 and money is being set aside in Reserves; plans have been submitted for beautification; every penny collected on assessments can only be expended on roads and improvements in the MSBU territory; and commented in support. **Chairman Loftus** requested respect be shown to everyone as a common courtesy. **Commissioner Cummings** stated he wants to make sure that he hears both sides and encouraged people to let everyone who wishes to speak be allowed to do so. **Chairman Loftus** advised proper decorum should be followed. Chuck Crafton stated he is totally opposed to this type of taxation without proper representation and advised he received the MSBU public hearing notice prior to receiving any information from the Association, Board and the MSBU Committee. Christine Perry proffered photographs of the front entrance, medians, and other areas of Gulf Cove to the Board; recalled she submitted a letter for appointment to the MSBU last year; reviewed increases in her assessments since 2004 to the current assessment rate to \$125.00; there will be over \$363,000 in a slush fund if this increase is approved; line items of \$50,000 for landscaping at the front entrance are not

necessary; \$65,000 for contracted mowing, \$50,000 for vegetation removal, and \$10,000 for waste disposal are not needed; the budget is padded; and requested the assessment be maintained at \$100 instead of raising it to \$125.00. Ron Wozniak stated he and his wife, Gerry, oppose the almost 68% increase because they are on fixed incomes as well as a lot of other residents and retirees; about 78% of the proposed budget deals with Public Works programs and questioned the availability of detailed allocations; and opposed the \$50,000 for beautification when \$5,000 would be sufficient for ground cover plants. Betty Lyttle advised every penny in Reserves has been utilized for maintenance and there is no slush fund to her knowledge; she sympathized with residents regarding increases in homeowners insurance and taxes; recalled the \$22 annual assessment when surrounding communities were being proactive and charging higher rates to cover costs of paving, parks, and drainage; and indicated support of the increased assessment. Rebecca Wirth advised she received an email regarding the \$50,000 for the front entrance beautification and the \$756 per lineal foot for plants and stated maintenance is needed for existing front entrance plantings. Julie DiPietrantonio opposed the amount of the increase although she understands that roads will need to be paved in the future and the \$50,000 for beautification is not needed. Ron Molway opposed the 68% increase and asked the Board to join with Governor Crist in lowering taxes; commented on an email sent out after the June meeting regarding his tax increase; he obtained \$32,500 for the design and construction of the signage at the front of which only \$7,000 was utilized and the remainder was used for repairs on Gillot Road; recalled the sidewalk project was eliminated and the money for the project was placed in the General Fund instead of into the MSBU; \$80,000 has already been expended; opposed a few people making the decision for everyone in the MSBU; and he is 100% against the high tax increase. Stephanie Molway stated she is very much against the 68% increase; she has complained about drainage issues in front of her house over the last six years and nothing has been done other than providing a lake in front of her home when it rains; she was on the beautification committee when the signage was installed; and requested a copy of the beautification plan. Les Wyant expressed the belief that a ferry will not fix road and drainage problems and reviewed the photographs presented to the Board reflecting drainage problems. Geraldine McGary stated she and her neighbors protest a 68%

increase and the project should be reconsidered and replanned. Christie Carlomany stated she has paid \$6,700 in impact fees and questioned what was included since roads and drainage are not included; questioned what is she paying for; what are her taxes paying for and what are MSBUs; stated Charlotte County is the only county in Florida that has MSBUs; advised she will donate plants and Waste Management will provide free mulch; and there are others who think the same way as she does. Zac Extejt recalled his original taxes were \$2,500 and now they are \$6,500; expressed opposition against tax increases and he is a republican who believes in lowering taxes; government is spending hand over fist; the County needs to better control costs just as families and residents are being forced to do; drainage for new homes are paid for by homeowners; he has not seen any drainage repairs; and reiterated opposition. Karen Klein commented on drainage problems that caused flooding 11 years ago and to date nothing as been done in the Jennings and Gillot area; her street has not been paved in 14 years and she does not need drainage, paving, pipes, signs, or beautification; every year the assessment goes up but she has not seen any benefits; questioned what is being done with the money being given to the County; stated she is tired of paying for absolutely nothing; and advised she is totally against the proposed assessments.

Board Action

COMMISSIONER D'APRILE MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MOORE AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS. Ms. Musselman stated the mowing is for the right-of-way for vacant lots and the difference from \$125.00 to \$136.00 will cover the cost of that mowing and no occupied lots will be subsidizing the mowing this year; a town hall meeting was held on May 1, 2007 and several MSBU meetings were held prior to mailing of the notices. Thomas O'Kane explained unexpended funds go into the MSBU Reserve Fund and reiterated monies collected in MSBUs are utilized within the specific MSBUs; a plan has been developed for the curb and cutter as well as landscaping; recalled **Commissioner Moore** has worked on the flooding on Jennings, he has contacted the Division of Forestry to divert runoff; and Committee members agreed on the need to implement a Reserve for paving in 2009. **Commissioner D'Aprile** commented on increases to homeowners insurance, gasoline, and assessed values from the

Property Appraiser; MSBUs are important to develop work plans and getting the work done in a cost effective manner; and expressed the belief that this increase will not be acceptable to most of the residents in the MSBU. **Commissioner D'Aprile** requested verification regarding the \$362,933 balance. Ms. Musselman stated that includes the paving and contingency until taxes are collected and the projected balance on October 1, 2007 will be \$362,933. Ms. Musselman stated the increase will generate \$478,000 and \$110,000 will be needed to perform the proposed program. **Commissioner D'Aprile** suggested maintaining the current assessment rates. **Commissioner Moore** requested answers to citizens' questions. Mr. O'Kane reiterated monies not expended are retained within the MSBU and not placed in the General Fund and the \$25,000 for pipe repairs from beautification may have been expended for emergency repairs. Mr. Loucks stated most cities and counties in Florida have some form of MSBU/TUs. **Commissioner Duffy** acknowledged requests to eliminate the \$50,000 for beautification and increase the assessment from \$75.00 to \$100.00 instead of \$125.00 and suggested a compromise on an increase by half. Mr. O'Kane stated if the increase is only \$25.00 there will not be any Reserves but cuts can be done if paving Reserves are maintained and advised no paving is to be done this year or next year e.g. 2009 if funds are available; recalled a paving plan was developed several years ago; and it has been reconfigured to have the work performed in phases. **Commissioner Duffy** requested input from the MSBU on only increasing the assessment by half. Mr. O'Kane expressed uncertainty. **Chairman Loftus** opined delay of the work program will increase costs in the future and a Reserve needs to be built up for the paving program. **Commissioner Cummings** questioned if the curb and cutter at the entrance will service any purpose other than esthetics. Mr. O'Kane explained a curb would prevent damage to landscaping, medians, drivers, and their vehicles. **Commissioner Cummings** commented in support of moving ahead with drainage and paving improvements and redirecting the \$50,000 for beautification into paving. **Commissioner Moore** calculated \$6.00 per ERU for beautification. Ms. Musselman advised elimination of the \$50,000 for beautification and \$15,000 for mowing would save reduce the per ERU assessment by \$7.83. Mr. O'Kane suggested staff re-work calculations and the work program. **Commissioner Moore** stated any decision made by the Board tonight may be lowered but not increased at the budget public hearings in

September. COMMISSIONER MOORE MOVED APPROVAL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2007-101 SETTING THE FY 2007/2008 FINAL ASSESSMENT RATE FOR OCCUPIED PROPERTIES AT \$125.00 PER ERU, VACANT PROPERTIES AT \$136.00 PER ERU WITH A MAXIMUM RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$136.00 PER ERU AND DIRECT STAFF TO REWORK THE PROGRAM, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS. Commissioner Duffy requested clarification that the motion is to increase the assessment rate as proposed with reductions at the budget public hearings. Chairman Loftus stated a decision should be made now. Commissioner Duffy expressed support with the understanding that the assessment will be lowered. Commissioner D'Aprile stated the people do not want to pay the increase and they should be careful for what they wish for and the impact. Commissioner D'Aprile commented on the need for more communications between MSBUs and property owners and suggested keeping the current rate and perform only what work can be done. Commissioner Duffy agreed about the need for more communication and indicated opposition. Commissioner Cummings stated notices are sent out as evidenced by the people present; final decisions are not made until the budget public hearings in September; recalled Tropical Gulf Acres MSBU actively opposed the proposed work program and now they have sought subsidization from the entire County; a decision needs to be made especially on maintenance before it gets out of line; and he would support elimination of the \$50,000 for beautification. COMMISSIONER MOORE WITHDREW THE MOTION. COMMISSIONER DUFFY MOVED APPROVAL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2007-101, AS REVISED, SETTING THE FINAL ASSESSMENT RATE FOR OCCUPIED PROPERTIES AT \$100.00 PER ERU AND \$111.00 PER ERU FOR VACANT PROPERTIES WITH A MAXIMUM RATE OF \$111.00 PER ERU, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MOORE. MOTION CARRIED: 4:1 WITH COMMISSIONER D'APRILE OPPOSING.

RECESS: 7:05 PM - 7:15 PM

E. Placida Area Street and Drainage Unit (Page E-1)

Advertised Rate for FY 07/08	
Vacant	\$235.33 per ERU
Occupied	\$229.80 per ERU
Proposed Maximum Rate	\$235.33 per ERU
No rate change - First time assessed	

Ms. Tara Musselman explained the purpose of the public hearing is to approve a first time assessment on one property that was never included in the MSBU.

Public Comment

Thomas A. Knight opposed the assessment because he has a problem with all MSBUS and \$30,000 is missing, suggested cutting Commissioners' salaries, people are leaving this area because residents and long time property owners are being taxed out of their homes, he has no lights or sidewalks for which he has been paying for over the last 15 years, and he will be paying for mowing that he will not be getting. Melissa C. Knight stated she has lived at the same address for 34 years, drainage problems have not been fixed, her parents own the property where she lives and her grandmother also lives in Charlotte County, she is taking a stand and putting her foot down to save her family and her future, she is willing to sacrifice even knowing the ramifications, she does not know who is on the Placida MSBU, the will of the people is not driving the County government, the people of Charlotte County need to come first, people need to get involved and if Board Members do not fulfill the requests of the people, then they can be replaced, no Charlotte County department represents her, and Board Members have lost the trust of its citizens. Bob RenFranz recalled his attendance at the MSBU meeting in July 2004 and discussions with Judy Hunter about not having the road paved; advised four dead-end roads have since been paved but no drainage was installed; remarked on the public notice in the newspaper on tonight's public hearing and difficulties associated with ascertaining the area involved.

Board Action

COMMISSIONER DUFFY MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS. COMMISSIONER MOORE MOVED APPROVAL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2007-102 SETTING THE FY 2007/2008 FINAL ASSESSMENT RATE FOR OCCUPIED PROPERTIES AT \$229.80 PER ERU, VACANT PROPERTIES AT \$235.33 PER ERU WITH A MAXIMUM RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$235.33 PER ERU, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS. Commissioner D'Aprile requested clarification. Mr. O'Kane advised the assessment is applicable to the one additional ERU since there is no rate change for

properties that were previously assessed. **CALL ON THE MOTION:
DECLARED UNANIMOUS.**

F. Rotonda West Street and Drainage Unit (Page F-1)

Advertised Rate for FY 07/08
All properties \$156.54 per ERU
Proposed Maximum Rate \$191.54 per ERU
No rate change - First time assessed

Ms. Musselman reported \$106.54 would be allocated for paving and \$50.00 for the maintenance, one additional ERU would be added to the MSBU, and there is no rate increase.

Public Comment

None.

Board Action

COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MOORE AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS. COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS MOVED APPROVAL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2007-103 SETTING THE FY 2007/2008 FINAL ASSESSMENT RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$156.54 PER ERU WITH A MAXIMUM RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$191.54 PER ERU, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MOORE AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS.

G. West Charlotte Stormwater Unit (Page G-1)

Advertised Rate for FY 07/08
Vacant \$ 45.46 per ACRE
Occupied \$ 50.00 per ACRE
Proposed Maximum Rate \$ 50.00 per ACRE
Fund clearing primary drainage outfalls and projects/programs required by existing permits

Ms. Musselman explained the proposed rates are above the current assessment and maximum rates, the proposed increase to occupied properties is \$25.00 per acre and \$22.73 per acre to vacant properties for a difference of \$6.25 to \$12.50 per year to an average ¼ acre occupied lot, this is the same request submitted by the Committee last year, work does need to be done in this

area, and a town hall meeting was held during which all but one person voted in support.

Public Comment

Dr. Bill Coy commented in support of the proposed assessment increase on a per lot not per acre basis relative to the \$6.25 and encouraged the Board to allow the \$6.25. Tony Hofstede stated he is in favor of the increase because of the large amount of work needed on the Newgate Waterway. Nick Gizzie, stated the 26 miles of canals are the primary drainage system, the outfalls need repair work before flooding occurs from a hurricane, and there is a breach in the Buck Creek and Coral Creek dam structure. Norbert Zoltowski stated research has been done over the last five years regarding three specific outfalls that have fallen into disrepair; questioned the inclusion of these major outfalls in the budget; commented on water quality monitoring issues; the Placida dam is a major impediment for drainage; a rip rap berm was constructed instead of a concrete capped structure at the end of the Placida River; questioned who is supposed to maintain these structures e.g. the original developer or the County; a drainage easement was accepted under Resolution 2000-023 for which no maintenance has been performed; and the problems need to be solved. Ray Warner stated stormwater runoff from East Englewood goes into the Butterford Waterway before going to an inceptor; main ditches have become plugged and cause water back up; and commented in support of the small increase. Marvin D. Dunlevy stated he consolidated three parcels but he is still being charged for three properties and it is not right; he is on a fixed income; and almost to the point of not being able to afford his house. **Commissioner Moore** suggested Mr. Dunlevy call him in the office to get to the bottom of this. **Commissioner Cummings** stated a process exists for consolidating properties in a conservation easement. Mr. Dunlevy recalled the Board adopted an assessment last year for non-waterfront owners instead of only on waterfront owners and stated everyone in the County should pay for it. Audrey Shinske commented in support of the assessment for ditch and drainage improvements. John Paine commented in support of the \$6.25 for drainage repairs. Alan Arena opposed the proposed increases to assessments and taxes; recalled he has attended meetings when people have requested reductions in taxes and millage rates; he has had enough and he would not pay \$6.25

for ditch repairs and maintenance; and stated no new taxes. Mike Post commented in favor of the small increase because the work is needed; recalled the June 25, 1995 rain and flood event and the 1998 100-year storm event; bridges were lost in various parts of the County as a result of the June 1995 event because maintenance and repairs were not done; the health, safety, and environment are at risk as a result of flooding; the increase is less than \$.02 per day and it is small price to pay to eliminate flooding in West County; property values are still higher than four to five years ago but flooding and drainage issues preclude sales; and stated it is the right thing to do. James Atkinson stated even though he retired several years ago, he has had to go back to work to pay for insurance and taxes and commented in support of the increase for water quality monitoring and removal of cattails from the outfalls. Christine Perry stated she has three public notices for property owned by her parents, her business, and her home; Charlotte County elected officials opposed the Governor's tax cutting proposals; Murdock Village is not needed; in May and June 130 foreclosures occurred for each month; 46 tax deeds were sold in auction, one of which was not bought for over \$850,000; gasoline and food costs are going up; questioned why outfalls are plugged since assessments have been paid and work should have been done; opposed doubling the assessment; cattails provide wildlife habitats and existed long before residents; and requested the budget be tightened up. Mary Burney requested the boundaries of the Unit, advised the Association owns about four acres of common ground and service is paid on a monthly basis; part of the property is for mailboxes, and taxes increased from \$104.00 to \$207.00 which is a big jump for nothing. Bob Aspery stated he is in favor of the increase and a great job is being done for Englewood East. Gary M. Dailey stated increases for insurance and taxes are driving residents out of Charlotte County. Holly Giblin opposed comments and statements made by previous residents. **Commissioner Cummings** reminded Ms. Giblin of Board procedures not allowing personal attacks. Ms. Giblin commented on the "mud pit" constructed by the County as a result of cleaning outfalls and ditches; questioned the plan of action for water quality monitoring and testing; and opposed the increase. Robert Johnston opposed the 100% increase, stated he has lived in the same house in Rotonda for over 9 years, noted that some canals have a small ditch that runs from them and they are no longer clear because of the weeds, these ditches should have been

maintained, and requested expenditures of tax monies. Richard Gullotta stated he is against any more increases from now on; every time the Board wants something, taxpayers have it socked to them; FPL has never cleaned a ditch in back of his property and runoff goes into the street; it better stop or Commissioners' jobs are out the door; referenced the tax dollars lost on Murdock Village; and Commissioners need to get their act together. Christine Perry stated she does not want increased taxes; she is tired of paying for peoples' mistakes and bailing people out; taxpayers are paying for Murdock Village; either give the money back or use it to clean the ditches and budget it accordingly; there should be accountability with facts and figures; she has been here 34 years and she has not seen a whole lot done and there is no excuse for it; and suggested Commissioners stand up and be responsible and do not make property owners pay the price. **Commissioner D'Aprile** clarified that no Commissioner went to Tallahassee to raise taxes. **Chairman Loftus** agreed. An unidentified woman stated she has seen some good in the County e.g. the Bayshore lineal park; questioned the difference in street and drainage MSBUs and the stormwater MSBU; and opined she can no longer afford \$6,700 for taxes and \$3,000 for insurance on her dream waterfront home. Zac Extejt expressed understanding that Commissioners are trying to run the County to the best of their ability; pointed out the reduced number of permits in the last few months; growth has paid for this County not tourism; fees and costs need to be capped; referenced an agreement with FDEP regarding South Gulf Cove cattails and seawalls; and opposed raising taxes that will kill growth. Michael Hadsell expressed support for the \$6.25 increase, stated everyone wants services but they are not willing to pay for them, he lives on the Newgate Waterway, there has been an ongoing program, and it needs to continue. Jimmy Philman stated there are no roads, ditches, outfalls, or anything this is listed as part of the proposed work program on his 176 acres; he does not understand why he is a part of this program; and he pays school taxes but he has no children. Kathy Kirsch stated she attended the public hearing last year, her ditches have not been cleared nor has she received any assistance from the County, she is being taxed for access to the Gulf of Mexico but she cannot access the canal unless she clears it, invited Tim Free to go with her in her boat down the canal, she has absorbed all of the increased expenses, and now it is the principal of paying all of these years and not getting

anything in return. Brian Sullivan stated he and his wife bought land seven years and built a house two years ago, the tax bill on a similar home in Brandon, FL was \$1,800 and last year the tax bill on the home in Rotonda was over \$4,000 and it will probably go up to \$5,000 in a few years; it is totally out of hand; any increases in taxes are unacceptable. Harry Buland stated over the last four years, residents on his street have complained about drainage problems; sometime between December and April, County employees came out and took elevations in preparation for cleaning swales in three years; questioned the waste of time when the work will not be done for three years and elevations will have to be redone; and questioned if Parakeet Road will be done. Harry Benotti stated residents cannot afford any more tax increases and he will fight to save his home; County government is way too big; referenced Building Services procedures on building permit extensions; and the County government should be for and by the people. An unidentified man recognized Board Members based on watching CCTV-20 and stated the Members are doing what they think is right but it all comes back to Public Works; what is \$110,000 for replenishment of equipment; where is the breakdown for the \$517,000; suggested Board Members ask for a detailed breakdown; stated there is over \$110,000 for labor and materials - question what labor and materials; this small amount is only the tip of the iceberg; and where is the cut on any of three items. Richard Van Acker stated he does not support this increase or any more taxes; commented on the arsenic in the muck from Lake Okeechobee; and there is a health problem and testing should be done. Frances Perry stated she has listened to people saying they cannot afford to pay increased taxes, food, and gasoline; she is only 15 but she may not be able to go to college because her family cannot afford it; questioned allocation and expenditure of monies for maintenance of canals, ditches, and dams; stated problems could have been avoided if they were maintained; \$6.25 is too much and questioned what the extra money will be used for; and suggested one-half of the increase. Tim Sawyer stated he and his wife attended the public hearing last year and recalled the proposed increase at that time was to double the assessment and Commissioners were all against it; sounds like Rotonda residents are trying to get everyone to help pay for their problems; 100% salary increases are out of the question; and opposed the increase.

Board Action

COMMISSIONER MOORE MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER D'APRILE AND DECLARED UNANIMOUS. Mr. O'Kane pointed out the State has passed to localities the obligation to pay for and comply with stormwater standards; offered to provided details of budget items; stormwater utility pertains to major drainage in three sectors of the County; drainage work on Parakeet Road is not included in this program; canals are not included in the Stormwater Utility Unit; many street and drainage units have had waterway maintenance units established; there is a five-year plan and at the current rate most of the ditches can be done in this program but increases have been requested to expedite the work in the next two to three years; explained all of West County is included; recognized issues relating to the Newgate Waterway; advised many entities are involved in stormwater utility matters; stated monies from this fund cannot be used to pay for private issues; offered to work with citizens on Rotonda stormwater issues including a meeting that has been scheduled for next Wednesday; the County takes easements over waterways for emergency purposes but maintenance is not accepted. **Commissioner D'Aprile** questioned how the individual who owns 167 acres benefits from this program. Mr. O'Kane stated that water will runoff of his property and it will impact surrounding property owners. **Commissioner D'Aprile** stated he does not appreciate people who said he or another Commissioner has gone to Tallahassee to raise taxes since the Board is trying to reduce taxes. **Commissioner D'Aprile** stated a lot of destruction was caused by Hurricane Charley, assessed and market values increased significantly but they have gone down; this Board does not levy the taxes; he has always fought to reduce taxes; depression in the area is taking place right now; and this is a small portion of the monies collected. **COMMISSIONER MOORE MOVED APPROVAL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2007-104 SETTING THE FY 2007/2008 FINAL ASSESSMENT RATE FOR OCCUPIED PROPERTIES AT \$50.00 PER ACRE, VACANT PROPERTIES AT \$45.46 PER ACRE WITH A MAXIMUM RATE FOR ALL PROPERTIES AT \$50.00 PER ACRE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS. MOTION CARRIED: 4:1 WITH COMMISSIONER D'APRILE OPPOSING.** **Commissioner Cummings** stated he did not go to Tallahassee, he has only spoken the truth to residents and citizens of Charlotte County, he could make more money in the private sector but he loves working for the people,

Charlotte County tried the tax cap before and it did not work, counties are paying more of what use to be the State's obligations, counties are at the bottom of the totem pole under Federal and State governments, referenced State direction on the closure of G. Pierce Woods and the impact and increased cost to the County, Senate Bill 360 directs Charlotte County to build roads without any funding, how do we meet the needs of the community without taxing people out of their homes, commented on the need to address issues before the train wreck happens, and offered to converse with residents.

ADJOURNED: 9:45 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

By: Signature on file in Commission Minutes
Deputy Clerk

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