

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

April 15, 2010

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

Members present were: Chairman Starr, Commissioner Loftus, Commissioner Skidmore, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Duffy, County Administrator Baltz, County Attorney Knowlton, Minutes Secretary Carleton. The following members were absent: None

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

1. Review of 2010/11 Citizen Survey

Mr. Burger gave an update on the Citizen Survey and outlined the Citizen Survey Comparison for 2009 vs. 2010.

Commissioner Skidmore asked about the ranking of services. Mr. Burger responded that each service is ranked individually and reviewed Citizen Survey Comparison Largest Rating Variances and Citizen Survey Service Rating Comparisons. **Commissioner Cummings** asked about normal distribution of responses to which Mr. Burger responded. **Commissioner Skidmore** inquired about there being no dollar amounts attached on the comparisons. Mr. Burger responded that there are four options available: services to be increased or decreased, maintained, reduced, or eliminated, and commented that 257 written comments had been received. **Commissioners Skidmore** and **Loftus** requested to see the comments. Mr. Baltz commented the survey is a snapshot for the **Commissioners** to have, indicated the method used, commented the nature of the questions were kept the same as the previous year in order to review, and asked about the way people responded to this year's survey other than by computer technology. Mr. Burger indicated that last year, out of 1800 responses, 20 responses were hard copies, this year, out of 800 responses, 120 were hard copies.

Commissioner Duffy asked how the hard copies from the survey were acquired. Mr. Burger responded that people picked up copies at public buildings.

3. Fiscal Update - 5 Year Projections

Mr. Burger reviewed the Five Year Projections for the Public Safety Fund and the General Fund with a 3% Annual Expenditure Reduction.

Mr. Burger fielded questions from **Commissioner Cummings** regarding the 3% reduction assumption and continued with the presentation, outlining the General Fund Five Year Projection with a 3% Annual Expenditure Reduction and Partial Millage Rollback.

Commissioner Duffy inquired about Building Construction Services as an Enterprise Fund. Mr. Burger responded in detail, outlined the General Fund with a 3% Annual Expenditure Reduction, Partial Millage Rollback and Capital Transfer, and a scenario with a 5% Annual Expenditure Reduction, Millage Rollback and Capital Transfer. Mr. Burger addressed inquiries from **Commissioner Cummings** regarding the millage rollback.

4. Strategic Focus Areas - Public Safety

Mr. Burger outlined the Public Safety Strategic Focus Area, where the money goes, where the money comes from, Historical Trends Total Expenditures, and Historical Trends Percentage of Total. **Commissioner Cummings** commented on percentages of funding to Public Safety. **Chairman Starr** asked about amounts collected ad valorem in relation to Sheriff, Jail, Fire, and EMS. Mr. Burger responded in detail, outlined FTE Historical Trends, Comparable Counties (Dollars Spent/Capita on Public Safety), Operational Efficiencies, Analysis of Key Issues, and Review of Sheriff's Budget Historical Trends.

Mr. Burger and Mr. Sandrock responded to questions from **Commissioner Skidmore** regarding the jail expansion, the 2006/07 jail budget, and construction costs.

Commissioner Duffy commented on the upward trend in the 06/07 jail budget, pointed out the population and crime rate shot up

after Hurricane Charlie, and commented on the results. **Commissioner Skidmore** commented on a plan for federal prisoners to possibly return to Charlotte County.

Mr. Burger outlined Comparison to other Counties for the Total Sheriff's Budget and Per Capita Expenditures. **Commissioner Loftus** asked about the Hernando County Sheriff's budget. Mr. Burger outlined the Comparison to other Counties Law Enforcement Per Capita Expenditures, Corrections Per Capita Expenditures, and Sworn Officers Per 1000 Capita. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked about a consultant survey completed three years prior. Mr. Sandroock responded. Mr. Burger outlined the Jail Expansion and Average Daily Population. **Commissioner Duffy** commented on correctional facilities across the state. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked where the projections are coming from and the formulary involved. Mr. Burger indicated the projections came from an assessment done by Carter Goebels. **Commissioner Skidmore** commented on judges related to costs and on projections versus actual inmate population. **Chairman Starr** commented on another variable being the State of Florida and the federal government related to building jails, on various capacities per year, spoke in opposition to bringing federal criminals into Charlotte County jails, and commented on not opening the jail until the population goes to 500.

There was extensive Board discussion.

Mr. Burger outlined the Jail Expansion Timeline, Next Steps, and Issues. **Commissioner Cummings** commented on expenses from bringing in convicts related to the potential for more lawsuits. Board Discussion ensued. Mr. Burger outlined Budgetary Costs related to Facilities Management and the Sheriff.

Commissioner Skidmore commented that all costs incurred to the jail are not capped, mentioned curbing medical costs of prisoners, commented on the jail being a test pilot for an energy consultant, and asked if any savings had been achieved. Mr. Baker addressed **Commissioner Skidmore's** concerns regarding the energy efficiency coordinator and the total budget. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked when there would be enough data to be on a trend line and about hydroponic food costs. Mr. Sandroock responded. **Commissioner Loftus** commented on utilizing solar panels at the jail. Mr. Baker stated that solar panels did not

work because of the nature of the operation and commented on variables with FPL rate increases. **Commissioner Loftus** asked the reasons for not using solar panels. Mr. Baker responded in detail.

Commissioner Loftus asked about energy costs for the jail and about the possibility of using solar panels for lighting to which Mr. Baker responded. **Commissioner Duffy** asked for reasons not to use solar panels. Mr. Baker responded the main reason is the cost of installation, commented that the lighting cost is a small portion of the electrical costs, that solar cannot power a lot of systems in the jail, and that it is cost prohibitive to use solar panels on water heaters. **Commissioner Duffy** expressed concern that the County is behind on using solar energy. **Chairman Starr** commented on turning down air conditioning in the jails as a potential savings.

Mr. Baltz advised that there will be a certificate of occupancy for the expansion of the jail by this summer, commented on the possibility of the County operating the jail, and solicited questions from the Board in regard to the expansion. **Commissioner Skidmore** inquired as to what research had been done to look at possible operation as a BCC department. Mr. Baltz indicated that staff has reached out to other colleagues around the state but have not done any in-depth analysis. Mr. Sandrock commented on results from the research that had been completed. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked about best practices gleaned from other locations and commented on the possibility of who should control the jail.

Mr. Sandrock commented that there is no regional jail concept in Florida, mentioned the tracking of transporting, court systems, and cost of health care for inmates. **Commissioner Loftus** commented on rising jail costs three years prior, networking with other commissioners, resolving the problem of jail costs by working collectively, and commented on diversion programs to keep inmates out of the jails. **Commissioner Duffy** mentioned recommendations discussed, commented on moving inmates into new pods, on increasing efficiency and reducing reliability, opined the Sheriff does an excellent job and that he should run the jail, and spoke in favor of the recommendations made.

Commissioner Cummings clarified the recommendation for pursuing a contractual arrangement to house federal inmates with potential revenue has to come back to the Board before it is finalized and spoke in support of the recommendations. **Commissioner Skidmore** inquired about variable costs, the term of the contract, operation and maintenance costs, and indicated he was uneasy with the recommendations. Mr. Sandrock expressed concerns regarding the contract. **Commissioner Cummings** gave reasons why he approved the recommendations. **Commissioner Loftus** opined that there needs to be more information and oversight in reference to the operation of the jail.

Chairman Starr commented on the survey results, proposed doing a Request for Proposal on privatizing the jail, and commented on the amount of the budget. **Commissioner Skidmore** stated he wanted to make sure the costs to run the facility are in line and proposed doing a feasibility survey. **Commissioner Loftus** commented on privatized jails in the state and on doing a study that doesn't cost any money. **Commissioner Skidmore** commented on a conversation with the Sheriff in regard to doing a feasibility study to see where efficiencies could be gleaned and spoke in opposition to privatization of the jail.

Chairman Starr suggested not opening the new part of the jail and not bringing federal prisoners into Charlotte County.

Commissioner Loftus stated that the County had federal prisoners before and did not have any problems with them. **Commissioner Duffy** mentioned a meeting with the Sheriff regarding having federal prisoners in which the Sheriff had indicated that there had not been any additional problems. **Commissioner Skidmore** commented on additional costs for privatizing the jail, mentioned a visit to the jail in DeSoto County, and spoke in opposition to bringing in more inmates. **Chairman Starr** mentioned a conversation with the Sheriff regarding bringing in inmates and proposed having an MSTU for law enforcement. **Commissioner Skidmore** spoke in favor of bringing the taxing authority closer to the people and commented that he does not want to increase the tax burden for Charlotte County. **Chairman Starr** commented on funding for the MSTU and pointed out that the Sheriff does not have to justify anything to the Board because he is a constitutional officer.

Commissioners Loftus and **Duffy** both stated they would like to have more information. Mr. Sandrock clarified that a portion of the Sheriff's budget is an MSTU and mentioned another extreme type of example to create and fund an MSBU thereby taking it out of the millage rate and putting it into an assessment mode. **Chairman Starr** stated he had no preference and expressed concern on having to raise ad valorem taxes. **Commissioner Skidmore** inquired regarding MSBU/MSTU's whether there would be some delineation between law enforcement services, court services, and jail services. **Chairman Starr** commented on the expense to run the jail and expressed concern that it increases every year.

Commissioner Cummings asked for clarification that there is no way to abdicate responsibility for the Sheriff's budget regardless of doing an MSBU or MSTU. Mr. Sandrock clarified. **Commissioner Cummings** commented on the Sheriff's budget as a separate stand-alone account and pointed out the consequences if changing to an MSBU or MSTU. Mr. Sandrock stated that the Board would have to make the decision to keep the millage rate and revenues the same and not subsidize the law enforcement side. **Commissioner Duffy** pointed out the amount of the public safety budgets, opined that the amounts are in line with other counties on law enforcement and corrections and stated she did not agree with **Chairman Starr's** comments.

RECESS: 3:25-3:35 PM

Fire/EMS Chief Dennis DiDio outlined Stations Located in West County, Mid-County, South County, Station Zone Coverage, Station Move Ups, Rescue Responses, Fire Engine Responses, Current Level of Service, Impact of Closing Stations, and Comparisons.

COMMISSIONER SKIDMORE MOVED TO NOT CLOSE ANY FIRE STATIONS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOFTUS.

MOTION CARRIED 5:0.

Chief Didio fielded Board questions regarding comparables on call activity, the proposal for non-emergency transports, number of transports a day, the pilot program, and the cap on the number of units.

Commissioner Loftus expressed concern with the plan as presented regarding there being no cost to the department for operation. Chief DiDio stated that the unit is already included in the fleet. **Commissioner Loftus** confirmed that there is a cost for the ambulance. **Commissioner Duffy** commented that the revenue and Medicare/Medicaid projections are inaccurate, mentioned collections calls, opined that it would be a bad financial decision for the taxpayers, and spoke in opposition. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked about the collection return rate, mentioned an affinity collections program with Florida Association of Counties whereby an RFP went out through Pinellas County, and indicated he had asked staff to look at the program that guarantees a 400% return rate. Mr. Burger stated that an analysis had been completed, that it would be available to the Board, but that it would not increase revenue for the County. **Commissioner Cummings** asked about the length of the operation for the pilot project. Chief DiDio responded that it would be a year. **Commissioner Cummings** asked about the preventative maintenance budget for units used versus units that are not used. Chief DiDio responded in detail.

Mr. Burger clarified that staff is to bring back to the Board the Break Even Analysis for various costs at the jail, including fixed costs, step costs, variable costs, and potential revenue streams, and options and information around the potential for a law enforcement MSTU.

ADJOURNED: 4:10 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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