

**MEETING: BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, BUDGET WORKSHOP**

**CALL TO ORDER:** July 12, 2001, at 9:40 a.m. in the Palm Beach County Governmental Center, West Palm Beach, Florida.

**ROLL CALL** - None

**MEMBERS AND OFFICERS PRESENT:**

Chair Warren H. Newell  
Vice-Chair Carol A. Roberts  
Commissioner Burt Aaronson  
Commissioner Addie L. Greene  
Commissioner Mary McCarty  
Commissioner Karen T. Marcus  
Commissioner Tony Masilotti  
County Administrator Robert Weisman  
Deputy Clerk Joseph Smith

**I. STATUS OF PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2002 BUDGET**

**A. REVIEW OF TENTATIVE BUDGET DOCUMENT DISCUSSED 7-12-2001**

County Administrator Weisman pointed out that the proposed budget document included separate budgets for each county department and constitutional officer. The board agreed by consensus to consider the budget for the sheriff's office on July 19, 2001, at 12:30 p.m. Mr. Weisman said that a next step in the budget workshop would be to set millage and to advertise for public hearings in September.

**B. ADJUSTMENTS IN THE TENTATIVE BUDGET SINCE MAY 30 WORKSHOP DISCUSSED 7-12-2001**

County Administrator Weisman outlined adjustments of revenue in the tentative budget made since the May 30, 2001, budget workshop. The total increase in reserves as a result of the changes was listed as \$12,897,552. The changes included:

REVENUE INCREASES OF:

- \$12,650,245 from property appraiser's June 1 estimate of values and 4.6 mills;
- \$15,032 from departmental revenue adjustments;
- \$765,000 from additional franchise fee revenues;
- \$379,864 from adjustment in property appraiser funding based on receipt of the appraiser's budget;
- \$591,175 from additional funding for Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs) based on new values;
  - \$300,000 from reduction in transfers to Palm Tran; and

## I.B. - CONTINUED

- \$1,602,478 from reduction in transfers to capital (an addition to the General Fund resulting from the Computer Task Group [CTG] lawsuit settlement).

### REVENUE DECREASES OF:

- \$503,878 from Article V state funding veto;
- \$646,320 from additional statutory reserves;
- \$866,000 from adjustment in tax collector funding estimate based on total county and School Board taxes;
- \$387,101 reduction in indirect cost chargeback;
- \$31,593 from adjustments to county departments;
- \$921,350 from additional funding for County Transportation Trust Fund resulting from reduced gas tax revenue estimate; and
- \$50,000 from drowning prevention funding (erroneously left out of the previous budget estimate).

Commissioner Marcus inquired where the Article V state funding had been used and was told by staff that it had been allocated for court administration.

She suggested that taxpayers be notified that because of the governor's veto, it was costing the county a half-million dollars in property taxes for a state-mandated program.

Commissioner Marcus noted that she had written a letter to the governor on behalf of the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) regarding Article V funding cuts.

Commissioner Aaronson agreed that it was up to the board to let the public know that the county was trying to provide all the services that it could, but that it could do a lot better if it had the money the state owed it.

## C. CHANGES FROM TENTATIVE DOCUMENT BASED ON JUNE 28 PROPERTY VALUES DISCUSSED 7-12-2001

County Administrator Weisman outlined changes that resulted in a \$4,228,047 increase in reserves based on June 28, 2001, property values. They included:

### REVENUE INCREASES OF:

- \$5,723,315 from additional taxes on the property appraiser's June 28 certified values and 4.6 mills countywide.

### REVENUE DECREASES OF:

- \$286,166 from additional statutory reserves;
- \$114,466 from adjustment in the tax collector's funding estimate;
- \$500,000 for improvement of Dillman Road west of Jog Road; and
- \$594,636 for community development agencies.

## **I.C. - CONTINUED**

Commissioner Masilotti asked what percentage of taxes levied were actually collected. He was informed that for all taxes levied, 96.14 percent, or \$443 million, was collected in 2001.

Mr. Weisman reported that by statute, only 95 percent of taxes levied can be budgeted.

He noted that after all the expenses that had been listed in the tentative budget, \$24 million was available for allocation--for tax reduction, alternative expenditures, or reserve. That did not include any extra money (other than previously proposed) for the sheriff, financially assisted agencies, or any other request that might materialize.

Mr. Weisman suggested adding \$2 million to the contingency account, bringing it to \$8 million.

Commissioner Masilotti asked Mr. Weisman what the difference would be in having county tax reserves at 8 or 8.5 percent since Palm Beach County was the only county in Florida with a AAA bond rating and that that had been achieved with a 7.3 percent reserve. Mr. Weisman replied he did not think there was a material difference between 8 and 8.5 percent. Commissioner Masilotti then suggested 8 percent as a target.

Commissioner Aaronson observed that 8 percent would allow keeping the same ad valorem tax and leave \$16.4 million that could be allocated to provide extra money for the sheriff's office, a reduction in taxes, additional programs, or, what he favored, a substantial payoff of the new voting machine system.

The board agreed by consensus to aim for a minimum 8 percent reserve.

## **II. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **A. CULTURAL ARTS COUNCIL DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 7-12-2001**

The Cultural Arts Council sought funding of \$400,000, the same amount it was granted last year, to underwrite cultural programs for children and minorities.

William E. Ray, president, submitted a list of programs approved by the council board for funding.

Commissioner Masilotti saluted the council for its wonderful work. He said he would like to see the program expand, perhaps with the participation of municipalities.

Commissioners generally were distressed that some smaller programs were disapproved for funding by the council board, while some larger ones, notably programs at Good Samaritan and St. Mary's hospitals, were approved by the council board. The commissioners said the larger organizations could fund their own programs.

Mr. Ray explained that proposed funding of the council programs was based on a point system. He said he would carry the commission's concerns to his board and submit a revised list for funding.

**II. - CONTINUED**

**TIME CERTAIN 10:00 A.M.**

**B. SHERIFF POSTPONED UNTIL JULY 9, 2001, AT 12:30 P.M. – 7-12-2001**

The board agreed by consensus to postpone the budget hearing for the sheriff's office to July 19, 2001, at 12:30 p.m.

**C. PARKS LAW ENFORCEMENT POSTPONED UNTIL JULY 19, 2001 -- 7-12-2001**

**TIME CERTAIN 10:30 A.M.**

**D. CLERK OF COURTS DISCUSSED 7-12-2001**

The clerk of the circuit court submitted a request to fund an additional eight clerk positions to handle the influx of traffic tickets anticipated with the expected approval of the sheriff's request for 22 additional road patrol deputies. The request listed total expenses of \$253,993 for the eight new employees and \$24,210 for an additional 97,000 case file folders.

**TIME CERTAIN 10:45 A.M.**

**E. COURT ADMINISTRATION**

**E.1. DOMESTIC RELATIONS DEPENDENCY COURT DISCUSSED 7-12-2001**

The Domestic Relations Dependency Court program sought funding for the general masters program in conjunction with foster care cases. Before the program was instituted, the cases had been considered by a Foster Care Citizens Review Committee, which was funded by Children's Services.

Commissioners generally said they should have been consulted before the changes were made since the county was being asked to fund the program, and they again expressed concern about funding a state-mandated program.

Chief Judge Edward H. Fine told the board that attorneys working as general masters had the legal authority to help move children out of foster care as quickly as possible and that personnel from Foster Care Citizens Review could act only as intermediaries and could not be given any legal authority to move cases along. He said \$145,000 was being sought to finance an office management staff for the program. The board said that ultimately, the authority in both cases rested with the judge.

The board consensus was that the program would not be funded from county funds.

**E.2. ELDER JUSTICE CENTER NOT DISCUSSED 7-12-2001**

**E.3. JUVENILE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MEDIATION PROGRAM DISCUSSED 7-12-2001**

The board in June 2001 had decided not to fund the Juvenile Domestic Violence Mediation Program. Upon learning that the Quantum Foundation was willing to provide a 50 percent grant for the \$79,900 court diversion program, however, the board consensus was for its support.

## II. - CONTINUED

### F. TRUANCY INTERDICTION PROGRAM DISCUSSED 7-12-2001

Truancy Interdiction Program (TIP) funding was cut from the state budget for fiscal year 2002, and program officials sought \$100,000 in interim funding from the county (as well as \$200,000 from the School Board).

Officials anticipated future funding by working with the School Board through its Youth Court program.

Speaking on behalf of the program, State Attorney Barry Krischer told the board that TIP had a demonstrated success rate of reducing daytime juvenile burglaries by 85 percent.

Board consensus was support of the program.

### G. TRIM NOTICE INSERT DISCUSSED 7-12-2001

Commissioners agreed to include a notice with property tax bills regarding state funding cuts, including Article V issues, to inform taxpayers of the funding the county had to pick up.

Commissioner Roberts observed that it is only when constituents contact their state legislators that it makes a difference in the legislature. She said commission members had been active in the Florida Association of Counties to get other counties to follow the lead of Palm Beach County in protesting the funding cuts and informing the public about them.

No backup submitted.

H. See pages 7-8.

## RECESS

**At 11:55 a.m., the chair declared a recess.**

## RECONVENE

**At 2:00 p.m., the board reconvened with Commissioners Aaronson, Greene, McCarty, Marcus, Masilotti, Newell, and Roberts present.**

## TIME CERTAIN 2:00 P.M.

### III. FINANCIALLY ASSISTED AGENCIES DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 7-12-2001

Assistant County Administrator Jean Creamer noted that the budget proposed \$6,741,045 for financially assisted agencies (FAAs), with an option for the board to consider reinstating \$395,000 in Tier 2 funding and United Way matches that were in the current budget but which the board originally specified as nonrecurring. A 3 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) was also to be considered.

### III. - CONTINUED

Ms. Creamer disclosed that nine agencies were on probation because they had not met their requirements and would be reviewed at the end of the year regarding funding.

Community Services Director Edward Rich told the board that the Citizens Advisory Committee had recommended that the commission use \$6,943,276 as a base figure for FAA distributions and that it consider adding the 3 percent and reinstate the \$395,000 and from that, grant \$90,000 to 45th Street Mental Health Center for its children's day treatment program.

The board had earlier expressed hope that some agencies could develop their own funding strategies to supplant county funding, and Commissioner Newell asked if any agencies had been "weaned" from county funding. He was told none had been.

Mr. Rich reported that the Citizens Advisory Committee asked that no time limit be set on the weaning of agencies from county funding but that FAA agencies be encouraged to seek other financing, through either fund-raising, third-party billing, or volunteer services. The committee also recommended holding the 15 percent cap on administrative costs but would require agencies to document their administrative costs.

Commissioner Roberts noted that the county population had risen dramatically in recent years and asked what the base for FAAs was 10 years previously. She was informed by staff that it was \$4,321,194 in 1991. Commissioner Masilotti observed that this year's proposed total was about 40 percent higher and that the figure had kept pace with the population.

Commissioner Roberts said she favored giving agencies their current funding, which had included July 2000 United Way matches and the Tier 2 auxiliary funding, plus the 3 percent increase. That totaled \$7,350,126. Ms. Roberts noted that one of the roles of government was to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of those it governs and that \$7.3 million was a small percentage of the total allocated to help people.

Commissioner Roberts moved for the allocation of the funds. Commissioner Masilotti seconded the motion. The chair noted that motions had not been entertained during this workshop meeting, that it was being conducted by consensus, and that he was "keeping count" of board actions.

Commissioner Marcus asked if any agencies had not been proposed for funding because they had missed scheduled deadlines. She was informed that the Nelle Smith Residence for Girls was one. Mr. Weisman noted that, if the board agreed, the agency could be funded, pending an application being submitted.

Commissioner Greene inquired about the status of homeless shelters and was told that the Lord's Place, Adopt-A-Family, and Florida Housing Corporation were among agencies that received county funding.

Both Commissioner Greene and Commissioner Masilotti expressed hope that funding also could be investigated for the Operation Hope homeless shelter. Commissioner Masilotti said it had been denied funding in the past since it was volunteer-based.

### III. - CONTINUED

Commissioner Aaronson reiterated his concern about having a cap on administrative costs for FFAs and noted that smaller agencies and agencies just starting have a harder time sticking to a 15 percent cap. He proposed a program that had two or three tiers to track administrative costs and noted that criteria would have to be developed. He said that agencies generally had done a good job with administrative costs since only six agencies were over the 25 percent mark. Commissioner Marcus suggested the board oversee the program.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT:

Susan K. Buza, director at Center for Information and Crisis Services, told the board that, effective in January 2002, people can access services for crisis information and referral by dialing 211. She requested \$28,000 in additional funds for the crisis line. Ms. Creamer said the agency was part of the county's comprehensive plan for health and human services and suggested the board entertain putting it in general budget funding.

Kathy Cohn, president of Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies, told commissioners that the agency maintained eight offices in the county and that the county provided sole funding for its education program for middle and high school students and pregnant women. None of that funding, she said, was used for administrative costs.

Linda DePiano, associate director at the 45th Street Mental Health Center, skipped a prepared presentation and simply thanked the board for its support.

Gigi Tylander thanked the board for an opportunity to submit a proposal for funding on behalf of the Nelle Smith Residence for Girls, a group foster home for girls aged 12 to 18. Commissioners had expressed support for giving Nelle Smith the money that had been considered for the Rebekah's House organization.

Following discussion, the board agreed by consensus on the \$7,350,126 figure as an allocation for FFA agencies, an increase of \$213,081. Commissioners also said the \$7,350,126 should be the base for next year's allocation and expected to use the consumer price index or a cost of living factor as a guide for future increases.

### II. - CONTINUED

#### H. COUNTY COMMISSION STAFF SALARIES AND SALARY CAP DISCUSSED 7-12-2001

County Administrator Weisman noted that a budget proposal allowed the funding of an additional part-time secretary for each commission district office.

A consensus of the board favored the proposal, which would provide \$23,005 to each district for salary and retirement contributions.

Commissioner Masilotti, who originally requested the additional staff funding, observed that with the county's population growth came the need for additional staffing and that he was among commission members who needed an additional part-time person on staff.

Commissioner Aaronson also voiced support for the measure, noting that his district had grown from 112,000 to 178,000 people since he had taken office.

## II.H. - CONTINUED

Commissioner Roberts and Commissioner Greene inquired about funding for additional computers for their offices. Mr. Weisman said that under the proposal, each commissioner would also receive \$2,400 to provide furniture and a computer for the new person or for other office use. In addition, each office was also to receive \$5,000 for computers or furniture or for whatever use commissioners chose. He explained that commissioners not needing another staff person could use the designated money for other salary needs, but not as a base salary.

A list of commissioners' staff salaries and comparison of county commission staffs in other counties was distributed.

IV. See pages 8-9.

## V. **BOARD COMMENTS AND DIRECTION** DISCUSSED 7-12-2001

The board discussed a variety of other funding concerns. They included:

- Two additional staff positions for Animal Care and Control, including a rabies tag person and an additional dispatcher, and for temporary kennels for pet redemption, with projected costs totaling \$58,800. The board by consensus agreed. Commissioner Marcus later suggested a performance audit of Animal Care and Control to assess problem areas and options to rectify them.
- Funding of Countywide Community Revitalization Teams (CCRTs) for municipal service taxing units (MSTUs). Commissioner Newell said he favored setting aside \$500,000 for CCRTs and the board by consensus concurred.
- Reducing years of debt obligation on the new voting machines.

Commissioner Newell told the board that he was concerned about increasing costs to manage the county's environmentally sensitive lands. Commissioner Aaronson suggested taking a look at a 5-year or 10-year projection.

Commissioner Masilotti expressed a need for more code enforcement. County Administrator Weisman noted that no additional personnel had been requested for that division.

No backup submitted.

## IV. **PROPERTY TAX ALTERNATIVES** DISCUSSED 7-12-2001

Commissioner Newell presented a proposal to the board of:

- Dropping tax millage to 4.55 mills from the current 4.6 mills, which would result in a tax reduction of \$3.8 million, or 1 percent;
- Funding the extra services that were board priorities;
- Funding of the new voting machines, with a minimum amount to be financed; and
- Increasing funding as requested in the sheriff's budget.



**IV. - CONTINUED**

Commissioner Aaronson said he could not support the 4.55 mills figure or any other until he examined all the proposed allocations, including the sheriff's.

County Administrator Weisman noted that a proposed maximum tax figure needed to be established to use in advertising the July 24 public hearing. He observed that 4.6 mills was the millage that the board set five years ago and wanted to hold for five years.

The board by consensus agreed to consider the 4.55 mills as the proposed new tax base.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ed McJobian supported the proposal to pay for the new voting machines and objected to the sheriff's office purchasing a boat.

**VI. UNSCHEDULED ITEM**

**A. PROPOSAL FOR SUPPORT AND FUNDING OF A COUNTY EQUESTRIAN COMMISSION DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 7-12-2001**

The board was presented with a proposal asking for its support and funding of a county equestrian commission.

Commissioners Roberts, Marcus, and Aaronson said they would rather consider the matter as a proposal from the Business Development Board.

Commissioner Marcus said that more information was needed and perhaps the matter could be considered in a fall workshop.

No backup submitted.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m.**

ATTESTED:

APPROVED:

Clerk

Chair