

MEETING: BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, PLANNING RETREAT

CALL TO ORDER: July 8, 2003, at 9:12 a.m., at the Lake Worth Casino ballroom, Lake Worth, Florida.

(CLERK'S NOTE: No formal roll call was taken.)

MEMBERS AND OFFICERS PRESENT:

Chair Karen T. Marcus
Vice-Chair Tony Masilotti
Commissioner Burt Aaronson
Commissioner Addie L. Greene
Commissioner Jeff Koons
Commissioner Mary McCarty
Commissioner Warren H. Newell
County Attorney Denise Dytrych Nieman
County Administrator Robert Weisman
Deputy Clerk Joseph Smith

1. OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

Commissioner Marcus introduced Patricia Bidol-Padva, facilitator for the meeting.

2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2.A. WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE NEXT EIGHT YEARS? DISCUSSED 7-8-2003

Board members were asked to write down their vision goals for the next eight years.

They included:

From Commissioner Newell: Create a new office of community and economic development; develop a plan to keep traffic flowing; provide for a plan that encourages/obtains workforce housing; develop a plan to sustain existing communities and assist redevelopment areas; develop a long-range plan for Criminal Justice funding.

From Commissioner Koons: Pursue aggressive redevelopment with cooperative spirit; restore and preserve ecosystems; implement county strategic planning and evaluation (inside the system); make Palm Beach County "the best place to raise kids in America."

From Commissioner Marcus: pursue development of community-based, safe neighborhoods with smaller schools; continue acquisition of public space and natural resources; make the county an affordable place to live with a mix of jobs; efficient and cohesive government; try harder to create the community we want by pushing the envelope and daring to dream; consider long-term financial impacts in budget analysis.

From Commissioner Masilotti: Increase Countywide Community Revitalization Teams (CCRTs) in entire county; enhance handicapped recreational services; take additional steps to protect the fresh water supply; pursue additional funding for home ownership; promote intergovernmental coordination of joint-use facilities agreements; evaluate staffing levels to complete approved projects.

2.A. - CONTINUED

From Commissioner Aaronson: Improve education to increase job market and improve economy; help depressed areas build an economic base; utilize waterfronts throughout the county; reevaluate homeland security and funding; work toward a binding agreement with school board to utilize schools to the fullest capacity; reevaluate restrictions that prohibit citizens in unincorporated areas from sitting on certain county boards.

From Commissioner Greene: Consider a building moratorium; increase District Improvement Program (DIP) funds and Recreational Assistance Program (RAP) funds; expand workforce development; reevaluate county hiring practices; combine activities of convention center and jai alai.

From Commissioner McCarty: Upgrade unincorporated urban areas with basic services; make Palm Beach County Number 1 in the state in education at the primary and secondary levels; develop ways to make our diversity an asset that is promoted; ensure permanent funding for beach renourishment and the environmentally sensitive land management program.

2.B. WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE COUNTY OVER THE NEXT EIGHT YEARS? DISCUSSED 7-8-2003

Commissioners then spoke on some of the goals they selected, combined related items, and voted on which they thought to be priorities. Those receiving the most votes were:

- Increase funding for CCRT's; help depressed areas build an economic base; sustain existing communities and assist redevelopment areas;
- Provide a plan for workforce housing and allocate additional funding toward home ownership;
- Improve education and make Palm Beach County Number 1 in the state in primary and secondary education;
- Restore and preserve the ecosystem; acquire public space; fund beach renourishment and the environmentally sensitive land program;
- Create a new office of community and economic development;
- Increase commissioners' District Improvement Program (DIP) funds and Recreational Assistance Program (RAP) funds;
- Re-evaluate county hiring practices; and
- Institute long-term budget planning, including cost-benefit analysis.

After discussion, the board by consensus agreed that all of the items were important as priorities, but that long-term budget planning and analysis was a preamble to the others. The board agreed that the items would be discussed in more depth in upcoming budget hearings and/or future workshops.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Commissioner Marcus noted that since certain items - notably obtainable housing, beach preservation, programs for families and children, and creation of additional CCRT's - had been discussed as goals, those topics would be removed as specific agenda items and the board would focus on remaining topics.)

2.C. SUCCESSION PLANNING. DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 7-8-2003

Commissioner McCarty said there was a need to have a program to develop staff for leadership roles, so that the county could move forward if it unexpectedly should lose key personnel. Every corporation in America goes through succession planning for their CEOs, she noted, and the county needed a similar plan.

Commissioner Newell noted that many senior department heads are at the age of retirement.

Mr. Weisman said the matter was something he personally was aware of and that Verdenia Baker's appointment was made with the intention that she could eventually be someone who could follow in his footsteps.

Commissioner Aaronson said organizations get stronger when they promote from within. Without that, employees look for other opportunities, he observed.

Mr. Weisman noted that consultants were available to formulate succession plans. He noted that the county tried to promote from within.

Commissioner McCarty said the issue was not so much one of promoting from within or hiring from without, but of preparing employees to move up so they can step in. It happens in the county, but in a haphazard way, she said.

Commissioner Marcus said that could become a priority as a hiring strategy.

Commissioner McCarty said she saw the measure as a means to prepare and protect the county.

STAFF WAS DIRECTED TO:

- Look into the matter and bring back recommendations regarding succession planning.

2.D. PUBLIC AFFAIRS SERVICES. DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 7-8-2003

Commissioner Marcus said not everyone knew the role of the Public Affairs Office, particularly in conjunction with the board, its funding and the funding of informational and promotional items.

County Administrator Weisman said it was not a substantial budget issue, but more important was the matter of equal treatment of commissioners.

Beth Ingold-Love, director of the Public Information Office, told the board that the office works to ensure balance and equal promotion of all commissioners. The office tracks the number of promotions and publications that it distributes, she noted. She reported that the office had drafted a policy for special events and was working on doing that in other areas.

Commissioner Newell noted that Public Information's principal mission was to disseminate information to the public, not necessarily just in commission offices. He also questioned Channel 20 programming priorities. He said when he tuned in, he saw street closures and ballet programming.

Commissioner Newell said Channel 20 needs more Palm Beach County programming and the board agreed.

2.D. - CONTINUED

Ms. Ingold-Love replied that while the cultural arts programming was very popular on Channel 20, staff did see a need to do more local programming. Staff had begun to address that need with the "On 20" news program, which provides more coverage of what the county does, she said.

The board favored programs profiling how tax dollars and bond issues are spent, as well as including features on county departments and volunteer groups.

Commissioner Marcus said a change in focus for Channel 20 programming might require additional staff. She asked for a breakdown of Public Information staff hours, so that some staff resources could possibly be reallocated to Channel 20.

Commissioner Masilotti asked that staff be allowed to bring a proposal forward to show how they would run things.

He asked if Channel 20 was being neglected because of other duties. Mr. Weisman said it was not being neglected from a financial standpoint, but the question was one of what services the board wanted.

Commissioner Greene complimented Channel 20. She observed that the news media compares Channel 20 favorably to other such operations.

STAFF WAS DIRECTED TO:

- Bring back a chart showing the percentage of time Public Affairs staff commits to various activities, as well as some suggestions regarding Channel 20, including programming involving the activities of county departments and its constitutional officers.

2.E. BCC RULES, PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES

2.E.1. COMMISSION BOARD REPRESENTATION. DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 7-8-2003

Commissioner Aaronson asked that board appointment requirements be examined so that some appointments could be made from unincorporated areas.

For example, the Metropolitan Planning Organization rules say no one from unincorporated areas can be appointed as a member and the Tourist Development Council requires that Commissioner Aaronson's appointment to the council be the mayor of a city, Commissioner Aaronson pointed out.

With 50 percent of the county being unincorporated, people who reside in those areas should qualify to be members of the various county boards, he noted.

County Administrator Weisman suggested the possibility of making some board appointments countywide with members being nominated at-large.

Commissioner Masilotti said district appointments should not have categories.

STAFF WAS DIRECTED TO:

- Examine boards to find an opportunity for the flexibility to make appointments from unincorporated areas

2.E. - CONTINUED

2.E.2. BCC MEETING RULES. DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 7-8-2003

Commissioner Marcus asked that board meeting rules be re-examined. She said she was particularly interested in establishing board consensus regarding items presented under commissioner comments.

She noted that rules currently precluded commissioners from spending money under commissioner comments items. She said she thought putting commissioner comments in writing before presentation at meetings might be a good idea.

Commissioner Newell said he had no problem putting complicated things in writing, but that doing that with simple things just created additional paperwork.

Items that are simply informational – like a meeting someone attended – would not have to be in writing, Commissioner Marcus observed. Written procedures would be helpful as a reference and for the chairman in conducting the board meetings, she said.

STAFF WAS DIRECTED TO:

? Advise the board on some procedural suggestions.

2.F. MANDATED AIDS TESTING FOR JAIL INMATES. DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 7-8-2003

Commissioner Greene read statistics that revealed that Palm Beach County had the highest jail inmate population rate of HIV infections in the country. In 1999, Florida rated third in the country in confirmed prison AIDS cases, she said. She said she hoped to find a way to test inmates as they entered and exited the jail system.

The process would require an amendment of state law and compelling state interest must be revealed. Commissioner Greene said she would attempt to get a state legislator to help do that.

Commissioner Newell noted the matter raised some issues regarding civil rights, but he had no problem moving forward with state statute change. Commissioner Masilotti asked County Attorney Denise Nieman about case law regarding damages in conjunction with the release of any HIV-related information. Ms. Nieman noted that with legislative enactment, those issues would have to be addressed.

Commissioner Greene said President Bush had sent \$15 billion to combat AIDS in South Africa and that she would rather take care of the home front first. The sheriff's department should foot the cost, she said.

Ms. Nieman said it was premature to discuss funding, pending state legislation.

L. Diana Cunningham, executive director of the Criminal Justice Commission, said she didn't know how much benefit would be gained on the county level from such a program because over 70 percent of the jail's population was there on pre-trial matters and they could be tested only on a voluntary basis.

She said the state prison system tested prisoners as they were released, not as they came in, because of the cost.

2.F. - CONTINUED

Upon a question by Commissioner Newell, Ms. Cunningham noted that the county has 45,000 to 50,000 bookings a year.

Commissioner Greene reported that Alabama put such a program in place and that she had the documentation of how it has been done.

Commissioner Masilotti observed that the sheriff has no taxing authority, and the money would ultimately come out of county funds. He wanted to know if the health care district, which has promoted the need for more AIDS education, was willing to underwrite funding.

Commissioner Masilotti asked that a letter be sent to the health care district to see if they were interested.

Commissioner Greene said she would pursue state legislation. She said the funding was not as important as the problem with the infection.

Commissioner Marcus said she thought the board ought to pursue the legislative change. However, she said she would like to have some idea of the cost.

Commissioner Newell cited a memo that Florida statutes required an AIDS test for individuals in jail convicted for crimes including sexual battery, incest, lewdness, aggravated assault, battery and child abuse.

STAFF WAS DIRECTED TO:

- ? Draft legislation seeking HIV testing for people entering the jail system, using the Alabama model and determine the cost.
- ? Determine involvement of the health care district.

2.G. FUNDING FOR HIV PREVENTION/EDUCATION AND TESTING. DISCUSSED 7-8-2003

Commissioner Marcus said the board previously had discussed the matter of funding HIV prevention, education, and testing with Health Department Director Dr. Jean Malecki. While the issue had been referred to the Health Care District, it apparently was never presented or discussed. Commissioner Marcus said Health Care District board members had been asked to attend a budget meeting tomorrow and the issue would be discussed. She acknowledged a letter from Property Appraiser Gary Nickolits questioning who should fund the program.

2.H. SENSITIVITY TRAINING FOR ALL COUNTY EMPLOYEES. DISCUSSED WITH DIRECTION 7-8-2003

Commissioner Greene expressed concern over staff not calling her by her title and that cleaning staff that spoke English in other offices did not speak English when they came to hers. Commissioner Greene said she was amazed that she had been a commissioner for three years and that there were still employees who did not know her. She also said she was surprised there was no training for new commissioners.

County Administrator Weisman observed that many who clean the county buildings did not speak English as they are hired through private contractors, and are not county employees.

Many employees in the building work for the clerk, the tax collector, or the property appraiser and not the county, he noted. Mr. Weisman said he liked to think that most county employees were very sensitive to such issues and that the county did have indoctrination for employees when they came on-board.

Commissioner Marcus said she thought it was a good idea to have introductory training for new commissioners and take them around to the county departments. The issue of respect needs to come down from supervisors, she said.

Mr. Weisman said two percent of county employees were terminated for not doing their jobs properly, which was a relatively high number for government.

STAFF WAS DIRECTED TO:

- Help develop an education program for new commissioners and to ask department heads and middle managers to understand the sensitivity issue and pass it on to every employee in the county.

Commissioner Masilotti said he felt it was more of a problem for county employees to disrespect the public.

Mr. Weisman noted that many employees are involved in regulatory functions like code enforcement and animal care, which can put them at odds with citizens.

Commissioner Marcus observed that "if we treat each other with respect, then they will treat us with respect and vice versa. I think we have to set the example."

2.I. BOND UNDERWRITER ROTATION PROCEDURES. DISCUSSED 7-8-2003

Commissioner Newell suggested that short of drawing names out of a hat, a new procedure was needed for bond underwriter rotation. He suggested a rotation list, regardless of the size of the job.

Commissioner McCarty noted that not every firm was qualified to do every bond issue. She proposed that each commissioner pick one firm capable of doing a \$100 million bond issue and then go in rotation, starting with District 7. If a commissioner changes bond underwriters, that firm would go to the end of the list, she suggested.

2.I. - CONTINUED

Commissioner McCarty also suggested that co-underwriters be rotated. That would preclude the issue of whether firms could handle the issue and any award would be without discussion, debate, favoritism, or subjectivity.

Commissioner Masilotti said he liked the idea of one bond company for each commissioner, but to encourage minority or small firm participation, maybe limits could be set at \$50 million or \$100 million an issue.

Commissioner Aaronson said he would like to find out which firms were capable of doing \$100 million bonds and which are not, so a commissioner could give the smaller firms an opportunity.

Commissioner Marcus said maybe a second list could be developed, with smaller firms on a separate rotation list.

Staff said using two underwriters for a major bond issue might present a dilemma as to who is responsible for running the books.

Commissioner McCarty asked if staff could investigate how to fairly incorporate smaller firms into the process.

Mr. Weisman observed that there was no rush to develop a new plan as no bonds were expected to be issued for the rest of this calendar year, but that he would bring back some workable proposals.

3. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY. DISCUSSED 7-8-2003

The board saw the meeting as cordial and productive.

Commissioner Masilotti said he felt all eight priorities could be accomplished with the prioritizing of dollars.

Commissioner Marcus said she would like to see the retreat as an annual process. She said when there is a new chairman, such discussions helped the board stay focused, and that the session had been helpful to staff also.

Commissioner McCarty suggested the possibility of single-year terms for commission chairmen for those commissioners who previously had served as chairs.

County Administrator Weisman said he thought the session was very helpful and observed that the only limitation on accomplishing things was money.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

ATTESTED:

APPROVED:

Clerk

Chair

