

**MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
JULY 17, 2007
(9:00 A.M.)**

Proceedings of a special meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, held in the auditorium at the County Administration Building, 4020 Lewis Speedway (County Road 16-A) and U.S. 1 North, St. Augustine, Florida.

Present were: Ben Rich, District 3, Chairman
Cyndi Stevenson, District 1
Ron Sanchez, District 2
Thomas G. Manuel, District 4
Waldemar Kropacek, Interim County Administrator
Patrick McCormack, County Attorney
Doug Timms, Director OMB
Terry Bulla, Deputy Clerk

Absent: James Bryant, District 5
Also present: Cheryl Strickland, Clerk of Court

(07/17/07 - 1 - 9:05 a.m.)
CALL TO ORDER

Rich called the meeting to order.

(07/17/07 - 1 - 9:05 a.m.)
ROLL CALL

Rich stated that three commissioners were present with Bryant absent. Manuel arrived at 9:12 a.m.

(07/17/07 - 1 - 9:06 a.m.)
Rich gave the invocation and Stevenson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

(07/17/07 - 1 - 9:07 a.m.)
Doug Timms, Office of Management and Budget Director, opened the meeting and reviewed the budget process. He gave an overview of the General Fund, and emphasized the impact of tax reform on the General Fund and said there would be a second tier of legislation, which if passed, would create a significant impact on the General Fund. He said they were planning in the event it should pass.

1. FY 2008 ST. JOHNS COUNTY FINANCIAL PLAN

Sheriff's Office - David Shoar, Sheriff St. Johns County, gave the presentation along with Mark Simpson. Shoar said he was prepared to answer any questions they might have. Rich commented that his budget was escalating and stated that Shoar should continue to work with the budget staff in order to reduce his budget. Shoar said some fruits had come already from their efforts to trim the budget. He said they would continue to work with OMB and would continue to plan for the next several years, where the real challenges would be.

(9:17 a.m.) Manuel said over the next 30 days they could fine tune this year and come into compliance by next year in order to come into the wishes of Tallahassee.

Law Enforcement Operations
Corrections Division
Bailiff Operations
Special Programs
E-911 Communications Fund
Law Enforcement Trust Fund
Crimes Prevention Trust Fund

(9:18 a.m.) Other Constitutional Officers

Manuel said he looked to the other Constitutional Officers to come into compliance by next years budget and urged them to take another look at their budgets for other areas to cut.

Court Services

(9:20 a.m.) General Fund – General Government
General Fund – Public Safety
General Fund – Physical Environment

(9:22 a.m.) General Fund – Health & Human Services - Timms reviewed the independent agencies and said the recommended budget started at \$900,000 based on the Health and Human Services Advisory Council recommendations.

(9:23 a.m.) Stevenson expressed concern with the extent of the cut within one year. She asked to hear about the process. Rich said the difficult part was giving the bad news and he had been the representative, as well as Sanchez, to the HHSAC. He said he had told the council that the amount of funding was not going to be able to stand over time and said that he had warned them over the past two years that donations from the County to charitable groups would be drying up immediately, and they would have to seek other avenues of funding from outside sources. He said these were the most expendable items in the discretionary spending budget, but they were not being cut off entirely. He said for future budgets funding for the 501(c)(3) agencies were going to dry up, period, and they should seek other sources for funding.

(9:29 a.m.) Stevenson asked if they could talk about what funding was this year, and asked Dr. Colavito to come forward. Sanchez said he would like to find out if they could legally fund their advertisement to show people what some of the agencies did and the volunteer level involved with the agencies to encourage private donations. He said some of the agencies could fall back to the State for additional funds.

(9:32 a.m.) Dr. Maria Colavito responded that she could answer some of their questions. She said misperceptions of the independent agencies possibly existed and she said they were vendors for the County. She said the County purchased services from them by an RFP process, and they were partners in the system of care and were providers of very valuable services. She said all of the services, their clients and outcomes of that service, were already on the website. She said they were posted every month and were updated every six months. She said they weren't actually giving anything to anyone; they were purchasing their services. She said regarding the budget cuts, they were 100 percent aware of the issue.

Rich wanted to know which services were mandated by law and which were discretionary. Ann Henry, Social Services, said they were all discretionary items. He asked about the matching of grants with County funds and which ones could only be matched by County funds.

(9:39 a.m.) Cathy Brown, Council on Aging, 180 Marine Street, said that some Federal grants that passed through the state, State Block Grants, required local government matches which sent a message that the money was welcomed in that community and that the local government was for it. She said historically, the County government has had a covenant to draw those funds down. She said that in 1973 when Dan Mickler sat in Ben Rich's seat and agreed to accept federal funds, they made a covenant that the funds for its elders would never be abandoned. Brown made an appeal for the non-governmental organizations. She said that collectively they could do the job better. She said they did not give money to independent agencies, and that it was an exchange for services process. Rich said they were looking at having to cut anything that was discretionary first, before they cut mandated projects. She asked what it would take to provide a better way, and asked them to work the workshop and not to make those cuts behind closed doors. Rich said the order had changed and he had been warning them. He said he had asked the Board to consider the possibility of funding the programs through the United Way with a \$1 million grant to be matched by United Way raised funds.

(9:46 a.m.) Manuel said the HHSAC was performing the function that Rich just outlined. Colavito said that was not correct and the difference was that they just described the process of the purchase of services. Manuel said they were talking about distributing of capital resources. Brown said the process was different and explained the process for United Way versus HHSAC. She said the HHSAC was fractured and did not have a clear message, but Dr. Colavito had gotten it on a better footing. General discussion ensued regarding the process for requesting the purchase of services. Stevenson said staff first assessed the need for services and the Board was independent from the agencies that had experience in the related fields. Sanchez said he attended the rating service and it was a horrible process which should be redone. Brown asked that since the State had pushed them so far down, where were they going to go. She said they needed to figure it out as we were all in this together. She pleaded with them to stay the course with flat funding, and with a total triage process.

(9:55 a.m.) Manuel asked if they would be leaving matching dollars on the table. He said they were talking about less than one percent of their aggregate funding. He said he was trying to develop matching methodology with underlying principles.

(9:56 a.m.) Rich said the million dollar amount he was proposing for the United Way would involve all of the matching funds, with the exception of transportation, which could be met with the funds granted to United Way. General discussion ensued.

(9:58 a.m.) Colavito said the County had received a \$20+ million State grant over five years to build an infrastructure for community based care, and part of that infrastructure was to integrate the public/private partnership amongst the independent agencies for Health and Human Services under a community based care structure. She said that by making that one small move they would disintegrate the system of care model, to build a safety provider service network for the human services, that they had been working on for the last three years. Manuel said a community based care delivery system was appropriate, but they had a cap on how much the budget could grow, mandated by law, that had to be met. Colavito said she was concerned about the methodological issues, and they could work around the cap. She said if they allocated directly to United Way, it would disintegrate the system of care model and the \$20 million grant with CBC.

(10:01 a.m.) Stevenson said she had read about a community chest cooperative type model with the county. General discussion ensued.

(10:03 a.m.) Rich said they were having expanded requirements for services with reduced funding. He asked what they could do to work out the process without raising new taxes.

(10:05 a.m.) Brown reviewed the historical procedure used within the County and how the current system evolved. She said the sensible continuum of community care had evolved with Dr. Colavito that finally made sense. She said it was working and getting stronger. She said they were all pulling in their belts. Manuel argued that they had to look at the fundamental way the County financed itself. He said they had to change the paradigm of how they did what they did. He said the plan would require them to change the way they operated financially; they could not continue to take operating cash and assign it to capital items. Stevenson agreed that 40 percent of the budget was capital items, and too much capital was coming from the general fund. She expressed concern about how fast the cut being proposed was to be taken down. She suggested it should be work shopped.

(10:12 a.m.) Sanchez said he agreed with Rich's suggestion regarding the United Way and expressed concern on how they would be rated by United Way. General discussion ensued.

(10:19 a.m.) Beth Hughes, Betty Griffin House Executive Director, said that while they needed to look at funding on the macro level, she had to figure out how to provide services with a 70 percent cut for the next two and a half months. She said a lot of her federal funding was straight funding and did not require a lot of matching funds.

(10:21 a.m.) John Edwards, 1645 Inkberry Lane, Executive Director of the Northeast Florida Community Action Agency, 79 Bridge Street, said they had operated in the county for 42 years. He said they secured funds from many sources and they were asking the county to match what the Federal Government said they had to match with local government funds. He said they were not a United Way agency and had been locked out of that system. He said that would definitely be a concern if the county went to that system, and they would like to have some input into that process. There was discussion about the funding necessary to add new programs. Rich said all the agencies now funded would be funded at one level or another by United Way, and they could enter into an agreement with United Way. Edwards said that was great if they could get it.

(10:26 a.m.) There was discussion about the United Way matching \$1 million with the \$1 million the County would be providing which would double the amount of United Way.

At 10:28 a.m., the meeting was recessed and reconvened at 10:41 a.m.

Rich said discussions had taken place with staff during the break and a lot of reaction had taken place with staff regarding the United Way issue. He said he was going to go forth with a proposal, and they were facing a time crunch issue and they had a system that was working somewhat. He said that for this year he would like the United Way proposal to be submitted to each board member by staff for their consideration for implementation beyond this year, due to time constraints.

(10:44 a.m.) Timms said they had a balanced budget and they would move quickly through the rest of the budget.

General Fund – Economic Environment
General Fund – Culture & Recreation

General Fund – Non-Operational
Transportation Trust Fund
Health Department Fund
Building Services Fund
State Housing Initiatives Partnership Fund
Mental Health Fund
Community Based Care Fund
Utility Authority Fund
Beach Services Fund
County Pier Fund
Tourist Development Tax Fund

(10:46 a.m.) Tree Bank Fund - Rich said they needed to be spending some of those funds as it was ridiculous for them to just be sitting there.

(10:46 a.m.) Impact Fee Funds - Stevenson discussed proportionate fair share and getting the roads done in proper sequence. She said they should explore prioritizing regarding impact fee credits, to utilize resources more effectively. She asked that staff take a look at that concept.

(10:49 a.m.) Timms said the Sheriff had not asked for funds from the Impact Fees and about \$830,000 would be available.

(10:50 a.m.) Timms said the following funds were restricted.

Court Innovation Fund
Legal Aid Fund
Law Library Fund
Court Technology Trust Fund
Communications Surcharge Fund
Alcohol & Drug Abuse Trust Fund
Florida Arts License Plate Fund
Florida Boating Improvement Fund
Northwest Tower Fund
Court Facilities Trust Fund
Juvenile Alternative Programs Fund
Choose Life License Plate Fund
Driver's Safety Education Fund
Davis Park Fund
Sidewalk Mitigation Fund
World Commerce Center DRI Fund
CRA Funds
Housing Abatement Fund
Special Districts Funds (MSBUs and MSTUs)

(10:51 a.m.) Timms said the Enterprise Funds were next.
Solid Waste Fund -Timms said there were anticipated increases including fuel costs.

Utility Services Fund
PV Utility Services Fund

(10:53 a.m.) Golf Course Fund -Timms said they were financially in the best shape they had ever been in. Blevins said that fees were under \$50. General discussion ensued.

Convention Center Fund

(10:55 a.m.) Amphitheater Fund - Timms said this would be re-evaluated as an Enterprise Fund and might be removed from that category.

Worker Compensation Insurance Fund
Health Insurance Fund

(10:56 a.m.) FSA Funds -Stevenson said there had been discussion on the Insurance Committee about looking at those funds.

Debt Service Funds
Detention Facilities Lighting Fund
Sewer Construction Fund
Library Expansion Fund
Northwest Road Project Fund
Park Projects Fund
Beach Re-Nourishment Fund
04 Sales Tax Bonds Projects Fund
North Holmes Boulevard Fund
Southeast Annex Construction Fund
03 Bond Transportation Improvement Fund
06 Bond Transportation Improvements Fund
Fair Share Transportation Projects Fund
Transit System Capital Project Fund

(10:58 a.m.) 800 MHz Communications - Timms said it would not be funded this year.

05 Revenue Sharing Projects Fund
06 Sales Tax Bonds Projects Fund

(10:59 a.m.) Fire District Fund - Bobby Hall, Fire and Rescue Chief, said they had deferred all capital projects at this time. He said it was important to wrap up the 2008 budget and they needed to sit down and talk. He said they had submitted a budget that complied with the mandate. Rich said they had discussed the capital issues project. He said the work they had done on the budget was commendable. He said he wanted to bring the idea of placing a referendum on the ballot for capital projects such as building new fire stations in the major population areas of the county. Stevenson complimented Hall on staffing of the World Golf Village fire station and noted it had been a very difficult task with challenges for funding. Hall said they should be running calls out of that station by September 1. General discussion ensued.

(11:08 a.m.) Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY 2008-2012 - He said they would be working on this during the final budget process for September, and it was the best information to date.

County Personnel Request Summary
County Vehicle Summary
County Computer Hardware/Software Summary
County Capital Outlay Summary

Timms said they would add Capital Project carryovers in August and would bring it to the Board for approval in September.

Rich thanked Timms and his staff for the hard work they had done on the budget.

There was discussion regarding the gross number of the budget figures as compared to Duval County. Stevenson said there were some things that they did differently in the accounting process and it made the figures appear differently. She said there were fundamental differences and she asked that they show the general fund and the special funds in a summary.

2. OTHER BUSINESS AS NECESSARY

(11:13 a.m.) Manuel asked the board to consider enacting the Sunshine Ordinance.

He said concurrency was a critical issue in growth management strategy and asked they do a review of concurrency and have it on the consent agenda and if there were issues that needed to be discussed they could be moved from the consent agenda to the regular agenda.

Manuel congratulated Stevenson for being elected to the Florida Association of Counties.

Manuel commented on the Capital Allocation Formula of the budget. He said if the amendment were to pass, they needed to look at long term dollars for long term capital assets and look at long term financial strategies at a workshop.

(11:16 a.m.) Rich said, regarding bonds, that they be brought to him before they were sent to staff. He said they needed to understand fully where they were going before they went into a workshop situation.

(11:17 a.m.) Sanchez thanked everyone for their work on the financial dilemma and asked them to continue to look for ways to cut expenses.

(11:18 a.m.) Stevenson asked about concurrency, whether they were talking about changing definitions. Manuel suggested she look at the tape as they had a long discussion at the last meeting. Stevenson commented on proportionate share and the three methods available and said one of those was pretty safe. She said one of the concepts she did like was the system and access management issues.

(11:21 a.m.) Manuel gave an update on the Mariposa situation and said an appeal had been voted on and was approved. He said staff and the Administrator would be attending a meeting on August 8 in which they would make the point that St. Johns County was not invited to participate in the process. He noted that Mariposa sat on the County border and said it was not without precedent.

(11:23 a.m.) McCormack commented regarding Mariposa and said the first step was for the County Administrators to meet. He said it had been advertised as a public meeting. He said they afforded Putnam County all due respect. He noted that Mariposa would affect many residents of St. Johns County who were perceived at the "little guys". General discussion ensued regarding the impacts on St. Johns County.

McCormack commented on fireworks provision as part of the Land Development Code and said the language had to be approved by the board. He said an applicant had requested a 5 minute show on July 21. He said they should set certain criteria and if those criteria were set it could be approved by the County Administrator. He cited the necessary requirements.

(11:29 a.m.) Rich commented on the issue involving the county doing an ordinance involving the Sunshine Law. He said if it was a repetition of the Sunshine Law, they did not need an ordinance, they could do it by resolution.

(11:30 a.m.) **Motion by Manuel, seconded by Sanchez, carried 4/0 with Bryant absent to adjourn the meeting.**

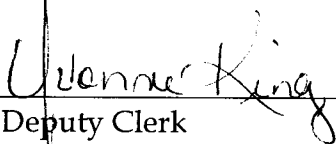
With there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Approved August 7, 2007

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: 
Ben Rich, Chairman

ATTEST: CHERYL STRICKLAND, CLERK

By: 
Deputy Clerk

