

**MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
AUGUST 8, 2017
5:00 P.M.**

Proceedings of a budget workshop of the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, held in the auditorium at the County Administration Building, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida.

Proof of publication of the notice of the budget workshop was received, having been published in *The St. Augustine Record* on August 3, 2017.

Present: James K. Johns, District 1, Chair
Henry Dean, District 5, Vice Chair
Jeb S. Smith, District 2
Paul M. Waldron, District 3
Jay Morris, District 4
Michael Wanchick, County Administrator
Patrick McCormack, County Attorney
Bonnie A. Putman, Deputy Clerk

(08/08/17 - 1 - 5:00 p.m.)
CALL TO ORDER

Johns called the meeting to order.

(08/08/17 - 1 - 5:01 p.m.)
ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll: All Board members were present.

(08/08/17 - 1 - 5:02 p.m.)
PUBLIC COMMENT:

Gary Easom, 125 Magnolia Hammock Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach, provided his opinion on funding needs for St. Johns County Parks and Recreation.

(5:05 p.m.) McCormack clarified the Board's intent of public comment, as pertaining only to the budget.

(5:05 p.m.) Ed Slavin, P.O. Box 3084, spoke on the need for police body cameras and requested the source and use of particular funds/fees. He suggested a raise in the bed and gas tax and those funds be utilized to replace the St. Johns County Ocean Pier; and mentioned there was no time limit on a Truth in Millage (TRIM) hearing.

(08/08/17 - 1 - 5:10 p.m.)

1. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET WORKSHOP. THE STATE OF FLORIDA, THROUGH THE TRUTH IN MILLAGE ACT (TRIM), OBLIGATES THAT THE COUNTY FOLLOW A PRECISE PROCESS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS ANNUAL BUDGET. A RECOMMENDED BUDGET WAS PREPARED AND PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (BCC) ON JULY 18, 2017. AS PART OF THAT MEETING, THE BCC REQUESTED A BUDGET WORKSHOP TO REVIEW THE ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET. THAT WORKSHOP HAS BEEN SET FOR AUGUST 8, 2017, AT 5:00 P.M. IN THE COUNTY

AUDITORIUM. ON AUGUST 1, 2017, THE BCC APPROVED THE TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATES FOR THE COUNTY'S TRIM MAILING AND APPROVED SEPTEMBER 5, 2017, AT 5:30 P.M. IN THE COUNTY AUDITORIUM, AS THE DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF THE FIRST PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE FY 2018 ANNUAL BUDGET.

Wanchick noted that the Board was presented a recommended budget on December 18, 2016, and that administration was asked to put together a budget, without utilization of reserves, which was also provided to the Commissioners for consideration, prior to the meeting. Johns thanked the administration for the responses to the questions that were submitting to OMB and the administration regarding the budget.

(5:12 p.m.) Smith provided his favorable opinion on a budget without utilizing reserves and urged the Board to make a decision on whether or not to use reserves, when approving the budget. Johns stated that he was in favor of a balanced budget without using reserves. Dean stated that he was comfortable with the recommended budget, utilizing reserves and stated his concerns with coming back to the Board for approval of funding items, which would require additional staff time. Morris agreed with Dean and was in favor of the recommended budget, utilizing reserves, which was a bottom-up, operational plan, directed by staffs, who were the ones that managed the departments. Waldron was in favor of a balanced-approach and questioned the increase in reserves.

(5:29 p.m.) Jesse Dunn, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), responded to Waldron's questions regarding the amount of reserves utilized in the budget. Discussion ensued on the Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) fund, the proposed public works facility, animal control air conditioned boxes, departmental equipment, and the County employees' health insurance. Dunn provided the budget recommendation from OMB, which utilized reserves.

Discussion continued on the administrative process of adding a grant funded full-time employee (FTE).

(5:46 p.m.) Stacey Stanish, Director of Administrative Support Services, spoke on grant funded positions and stated that the employees were made aware of the possible termination of the position, based on the grant, during the interview process.

(5:49 p.m.) Wanchick spoke on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

(5:50 p.m.) McCormack spoke on the intentions of the Board and suggested written acknowledgement by the employee for grant funded positions. Discussion ensued on CDBG funding and the allocation of funds.

(5:59 p.m.) Dean suggested utilizing \$3 million, instead of the recommended \$5 million, from reserves and stated he would rely on the staff to make the decisions on where to cut the budget. Waldron stated he still had concerns with how certain departments were operated, particularly, fleet maintenance; and the requests from the constitutional officers, including cuts to the Sheriff's budget.

(6:00 p.m.) **Motion by Dean, to utilize \$3 million of reserves for the Fiscal Year 2018 budget.**

Morris commented on the motion, stating that he was not in favor of the compromise.

(6:02 p.m.) Subsequently, Dean withdrew his motion.

Johns left the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

(6:03 p.m.) McCormack stated that during a workshop meeting, normally, there was not a formal action taken by the Board and that the Board could give staff direction.

(6:04 p.m.) Waldron spoke on the \$25,000 for air-conditioned animal control boxes versus \$24,000 on shade at a ballfield. Wanchick responded to the comment, stating that the boxes were not for the comfort of the animals, but for the convenience, limiting the number of trips back and forth to the pet center.

(6:06 p.m.) Smith questioned the compensation of County employees, which included the 2.1% Employment Cost Index (ECI) and the 1% merit pay component. Dunn provided an explanation and discussion ensued on the cost of living adjustment.

(6:07 p.m.) Stanish commented on employee development.

(6:09 p.m.) Smith asked the Board to consider basing the cost of living percentages on the employee's salary. Dean and Morris opposed Smith's suggestion and stated that the good employees would be lost to the private sector if the County's compensation was not competitive. Wanchick expounded on the inequity of Smith's suggestion, based on an employee's total income per household.

(6:12 p.m.) Neal Shinkre, Director of Public Works, responded to Waldron's questions on converting compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles and vehicle maintenance.

(6:13 p.m.) Jeff Nordsiek, Fleet Manager, responded to Waldon's question regarding the cost of an oil change. Additionally, Waldron questioned the amount budgeted for maintenance on a new vehicle.

(6:15 p.m.) Smith discussed the need for a benchmark, in regard to the cost of service per capita, in order to compare the Sheriff's office budget based on population. Discussion ensued on Smith's comments.

(6:22 p.m.) Smith questioned the request to convert temporary employees to permanent full-time employees, due to the competition in the market and the inability to sustain the Amphitheater.

(6:23 p.m.) Dean spoke to the success of the Amphitheater and was comfortable with the addition of the full-time employees (FTEs). Waldron had concerns, but spoke in regards to employees understanding the nature of the business and sustainability determining the position.

(6:24 p.m.) Ryan Murphy, General Manager and Gabe Pellicer, Assistant General Manager, St. Augustine Amphitheater, spoke on the successes of the Amphitheatre and provided details of the request to add FTEs. Discussion ensued and Morris, Dean, and Waldron were in favor of adding the requested Amphitheatre employees.

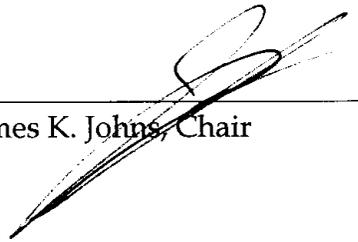
(08/08/17 - 3 - 6:35 p.m.)
ADJOURN

With there being no further business to come before the Board, Dean adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Approved _____ September 5 _____, 2017

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: _____
James K. Johns, Chair



ATTEST: HUNTER S. CONRAD, CLERK

By: Sam Halteima
Deputy Clerk

