**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**BUDGET WORKSHOP**

**COURTHOUSE ANNEX – COMMISSION MEETING ROOM**

**JULY 20, 2016**

**9:00 AM**

**MINUTES**

**Commissioners Present: William Massey – Chairman, Joseph Parrish – Vice Chairman, Noah Lockley, Cheryl Sanders, Rick Watson**

**Others Present: Michael Morón – County Coordinator, Michael Shuler – County Attorney, Marcia M. Johnson-Clerk of Court, Lori P. Hines-Deputy Clerk to the Board.**

**Call to Order**

Chairman Massey called the Workshop to Order.

Mrs. Erin Griffith, Finance Office, stated the Board has been presented with copies of the budget requests and other budget materials pertaining to the tentative budget for fiscal year 2016-2017. She reported the millage rate set for the tentative budget is 6.3065. Mrs. Griffith read the following statement:

The Property Appraiser is required to certify to the County Commission the taxable value of real property by July 1st of each year. The certified value is the basis for calculating a proposed millage rate. I am very pleased to announce, for the third year in a row since 2007, Franklin County has an increase in taxable value, 4.26% over the prior year. The proposed millage rate represents the amount of ad valorem tax proceeds per $1000 of taxable property value. In 2016 one mill will generate $1,762,445; in 2015 one mill generated $1,690,427.

In the current budget, the millage rate of 6.3065 generated $10,660,682. In the preliminary budget for 2016/2017, the millage rate of 6.3065 would generate $11,114,864. The rolled-back millage rate is the rate that nets the same ad valorem proceeds that a taxing authority operated on in the prior budget year (takes into account the effect of amounts transferred to a tax increment district in the prior year). The rolled-back rate is also reflected in column 2 of the TRIM notice ‘Your Property Taxes if No Budget Change Is Made’. The rolled-back rate is 6.0987 and would generate $10,748,628 in ad valorem proceeds – the preliminary budget is currently 3.41% over the rolled-back rate, which equates to $366,236 over in ad valorem proceeds. Excluding the effect of the tax increment transfers, property tax proceeds are $454,182 over the budgeted proceeds in the prior year.

The Commission asked that all requests be turned in at the same level as last year, if there were any increases they were to be justified to the board.

Sheriff Mike Mock appeared before the Board to discuss his proposed budget. He said he will highlight the increases where they feel there need to be adjustments. He read the amounts for individual line items. Sheriff Mock said last year they got 3 vehicles and this year they need 5 as they are getting behind and need to catch up. He reported the cost of the vehicles is $104,000. Commissioner Sanders asked if this is a $62,200 increase. Mrs. Griffith stated $62,200 and the $90,000 for inmate medical has been removed from the budget request. Commissioner Sanders inquired about the Machinery & Equipment Less than $5,000 and Machinery & Equipment more than $5,000 for $34,000 and $70,000. Sheriff Mock said this is the vehicles. Commissioner Sanders reported they need to keep this budget down because money will still need to be budgeted for inmate medical. Commissioner Sanders discussed the increase in wages due to retirement. Commissioner Sanders stated it looks like the money has shifted around and the inmate medical was taken out but then the money was added in and they still have to address inmate medical. Mrs. Ginger Coulter, Sheriff’s Department, explained the reason the inmate medical was taken out was they did not know what direction they would be going and they still do not know. Chairman Massey said they are waiting on Weems Memorial Hospital to provide a report. Mrs. Coulter reported an email was sent stating they are not interested in handling the inmate medical and recommended the for-profit company. Commissioner Sanders reported the increase in the Sheriff’s budget is $152,200. Chairman Massey stated he did not receive the email. Mr. Moron agreed to forward a copy to Chairman Massey. Sheriff Mock recommended Armor Medical for the inmate medical costs. He explained Jefferson County has Armor Medical and it eliminates a lot of the liability. He said Armor Medical covers a lot of the state and is one of the best companies. Commissioner Parrish stated the proposal for Armor Medical was $300,000. Commissioner Sanders expressed concern about tentatively setting the Sheriff’s budget when the inmate medical has not been resolved. Mrs. Coulter explained the Armor Medical proposal that was presented last month was their contracted price plus the costs of keeping the 2 doctors and the $32,500 that the County pays. Mrs. Griffith asked if Armor Medical is strictly the staffing so the County still has to address the claims. Mrs. Coulter provided the breakdown of the estimated costs in the proposal from Armor Medical. Sheriff Mock stated Armor Medical will treat a lot of the inmates in-house and not send them out. Commissioner Lockley asked how much the Sheriff’s Office has spent on claims. Mrs. Coulter estimated close to $200,000. Commissioner Sanders reported there is no way they can tentatively approve the Sheriff’s budget until the inmate medical issue is addressed. Commissioner Lockley asked if the contract with Armor Medical is cheaper. Mrs. Coulter said initially the contract will be more but she thinks it will save in the long term but they will not know until the try the program. Chairman Massey reported Jefferson County said they only had to send a couple of inmates out with Armor Medical handling their inmate medical as they took care of most of them onsite. Commissioner Watson asked if there are other areas that can be decreased to offset these costs. Mrs. Coulter highlighted the decreases in the budget but said the ammunition increase offset the decreases. She reported the building repair is one of the areas they can compromise on if they need to. Commissioner Parrish asked why the Sheriff’s Office would keep doctors and nurses on staff if Armor Medical is providing the staff. He explained some items need to be backed out of the budget to offset the costs for Armor Medical. He stated they are trying to balance the budget without significantly increasing taxes. Commissioner Parrish agreed the Board cannot tentatively approve this budget without addressing the inmate medical issue. Mrs. Coulter pointed out that whether they do the contract or not, the $90,000 will not be enough for inmate medical. Commissioner Parrish discussed purchasing additional cars. Mrs. Coulter stated the repairs to vehicles this year is over $60,000 and the fleet is not good so she does not feel comfortable cutting the cars as the deputies need them to respond timely. She requested the Board consider this information before cutting the vehicles. Commissioner Watson and Lt. Tommy Summerhill, Sheriff’s Department, discussed the inmate population rates. Commissioner Watson asked about alternatives to incarceration for the inmates. Lt. Summerhill said they do not have any programs of this kind at this time. Commissioner Watson questioned if they try and offer different kinds of programs to get the individuals out of jail. Sheriff Mock said the State Attorney and Judge would have to look into the program because he is not familiar with the program but they could look into it. He said the number of inmates will fluctuate but they provided an average to Armor Medical. Mrs. Griffith questioned what line items the Sheriff Office has used to pay the additional funds for inmate medical. Mrs. Coulter stated they bought fewer vehicles to offset the increased cost of the inmate medical. Mrs. Phillips and Mrs. Coulter discussed the cost for medical claims and the amount paid by Armor Medical. Mrs. Coulter said the County is responsible for all claims over $40,000 according to the contract with Armor Medical. Mrs. Coulter explained they will treat more on site and not send them out. Mrs. Phillips stated some things cannot be treated on site and the County would be responsible for the bills. Mr. Moron suggested a meeting between the Sheriff’s Office, the Finance Office and Attorney Shuler to try and determine, according to the contract, what the County is responsible for and what the Sheriff’s Department is responsible for. Commissioner Sanders agreed they cannot tentatively approve this budget with this many unknowns. Mrs. Phillips estimated the County would need $254,000 for this proposal and they are trying to estimate the cost of the bills for off-site care. Commissioner Lockley asked if some of these people can be put on house arrest. Sheriff Mock explained they are still saving a lot of money. He said the problem is they do not have adequate staff as the nurse, doctor and PA are all part-time. He reported the State Attorney and Judge are responsible for releasing people from jail. Commissioner Parrish suggested the Sheriff’s Office take back the inmate medical for one year until they can look into the matter. He said the County cannot come up with $300,000 unless taxes are raised. He asked for a proposal to take this back. Mrs. Coulter stated they presented alternate proposals for keeping it in house. Commissioner Lockley asked if the proposal is $162,000. Mrs. Coulter answered yes, with the additional staff and the EKG machine but this does not address the medical claims. Commissioner Sanders suggested they leave the budget where it is until they get a clearer understanding and Finance lets them know what they need to do. Mrs. Griffith asked if they can have some time to work on this item. Commissioner Sanders agreed and said they can come back at the next Board meeting. Mrs. Phillips reported the Board does not need to drop the millage so they can advertise like it is today and work down. Commissioner Sanders agreed they do not need to change the millage. Mrs. Phillips said the trim notice will go out with the millage and then the Board can reduce it if possible. Commissioner Sanders questioned if the Finance Department can meet with the Sheriff’s Department and Mr. Moron and report back at the Board meeting on August 2nd. Commissioner Parrish questioned the amount for inmate claims. Mrs. Coulter said that was the$90,000 removed from the budget. Commissioner Parrish discussed the proposals for in-house care. He said the cost of the existing nurse and doctor is already in the budget. Mrs. Griffith said the insurance cost is also already in the budget. Commissioner Parrish suggested they review each proposal including keeping inmate medical in-house. Commissioner Watson said it sounds like other line items are impacted also so they need to know to make a decision. Mrs. Coulter stated they do not have a preference for how it is handled but they need help and $90,000 is not enough for the claims. Mr. Moron suggested the Sheriff’s Office have another position that just addresses inmate medical. Mrs. Coulter agreed this would be good. Sheriff Mock said they are down to one finance person and another person would be a huge help. Mr. Moron asked if the Board would like them to look at adding another employee to the Sheriff’s budget for this item. Commissioner Parrish said they need to look at the total package and where cuts can be made and not just increase the budget. Commissioner Sanders inquired if the Sheriff intended to fill the position left vacant when someone took another job. Sheriff Mock reported he cut several positions and people doubled up and this is what happened. Commissioner Sanders asked if they can bring this up again on 8/2/16 and have staff work on this and maybe present 3 proposals. Mr. Alan Feifer, Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, said they value everything the Sheriff’s Office does for the people of Franklin County but all his comments are business related. He stated the Sheriff’s Office has disclosed their budget is up for greater costs of ammunition and increased number of vehicle purchases. He explained under careful review of the previous year’s budget and conversations it highlights other drivers making up the majority of the increase. He stated the Sheriff has built in large increases in personnel costs of approximately $100,000 additional this year. He reported the top 10 employees average $50,621 under this proposal with a lot of supervisors relative to the size of the department. He said the Sheriff’s Department is one of the five highest spending sheriff’s offices per capita in the state. Mr. Feifer stated they support the Sheriff but cannot support an increase in the budget again this year. He agreed with adding the $90,000 back to the budget for inmate medical. He stated the Sheriff gave back $30,000 last year and $50,000 the year before. He explained one of the things that is lacking is the projections of where they will be at the end of the year. Mr. Feifer asked with 3 months remaining in the year, if it possible to find out where the Sheriff’s budget is at this time. He said there was a substantial increase last year. He asked the Board to please look at the personnel costs in order to be fair to the other employees in the county. Mr. Feifer stated there will be budgets presented today that do not include salary increases.

The meeting was recessed at 9:55 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 10:08 a.m.

Mrs. Rhonda Skipper, Property Appraiser, appeared before the Board and said her budget is the same as last year. The Board tentatively approved this budget.

Mr. James Harris, Jr., Tax Collector, appeared before the Board and said his budget is the same except for an additional $1,500 for a bankruptcy attorney. The Board tentatively approved the budget.

Mrs. Marcia Johnson, Clerk of Court, said her budget request is $322,445 with less than a 1% increase due to retirement rates. The Board tentatively approved the budget.

Mrs. Pinki Jackel, Supervisor of Elections, appeared before the Board. She stated her budget has a 2.11% decrease. The Board tentatively approved the budget.

Mr. John Graham, Weems Memorial Hospital, said their only increase is for the ambulance. Chairman Massey reported Mr. Cooper needs to be present for this discussion. Mr. Graham agreed to contact Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Curt Blair, Tourist Development Council, appeared before the Board. He estimated the TDC revenues for the next year will be about $1 million. He stated the budget is less than last year, mostly because of expenditures for the Armory that they do not have this year. The Board tentatively approved this budget.

Mr. Howard Nabors, Road Department, appeared before the Board and said their budget is the same as last year. Commissioner Sanders reported there is a little decrease. The Board tentatively approved the budget.

Mr. DeWitt Polous, Mosquito Control Director, appeared before the Board. He said there is a 4.9% increase for software and monitoring updates. Mrs. Griffith stated the workers’ compensation rates increased state wide also but Mr. Polous could not control this increase. Commissioner Lockley asked about the zika mosquitoes. Mr. Polous reported he submitted a grant for zika funding but does not know if they will receive the grant. He said as part of a program through the Department of Agriculture, mosquitoes have been trapped and sent for testing to see if they actually have the virus. He informed the Board it costs $80.00 to ship two small vials of mosquitoes and his department absorbs all the shipping costs. Mr. Polous estimated the cost of the software to be $2,500 a year for the monitoring the systems to keep up with the records. Commissioner Watson asked if this will be a recurring annual cost or one time cost. Mr. Polous answered only a one time increase. He reported the State has informed him they will help if there are problems with zika. Commissioner Parrish asked for the budget for last year. Mrs. Griffith said last year’s budget was $177,138 and this year’s budget is $185,621. She explained the increase in local funding is about $6,000. The Board tentatively approved this budget. Commissioner Sanders said the vehicles are getting older and he has more money in repair of vehicles. Mr. Polous discussed maintenance of sprayers and vehicles.

Mr. Mike Cooper and Mr. John Graham, Weems Memorial Hospital, appeared before the Board. Mr. Cooper said the only increase is in the ambulance service for the 3rd ambulance. He discussed the number of ambulances, response times and upgraded service. Commissioner Parrish said with the 3rd vehicle and chase vehicles being added, there is going to be some added expense. He stated they have received letters and comments liking the service being provided. The Board tentatively approved the budget. Commissioner Watson and Mr. Cooper discussed the volume of calls during the high season. Commissioner Watson asked if they could only keep 3 vehicles during the high season. Mr. Cooper stated it will be hard to recruit employees for just a few months. Commissioner Watson asked if the increase is for operations and not equipment. Mr. Cooper answered yes, but explained the ambulance service is not charged for all their expenses as it is better to get federal reimbursement through the hospital. Commissioner Sanders asked if this increase for the ambulance service has been added to the budget. Mrs. Griffith answered yes; it is included in the budget presented. She reported the increase is $258,660. Commissioner Sanders asked if this is coming out of the ad valorem tax base. Mrs. Griffith answered yes. Commissioner Sanders reported in the ballot language of the Health Care Trust Fund (HCTF) it said they would build the clinic in Carrabelle, then the hospital in Apalachicola but the third item they could fund was the ambulance out of the healthcare tax. She explained they have been using money out of the capital outlay to give the Hospital to make payroll. She stated Mr. Jarod Wester, Ambulance Service Director, has done a fantastic job and she is in favor of this but she is concerned about all of it coming out of the ad valorem tax base and at some point she would like to see these costs come out of the healthcare tax. Commissioner Watson said capital expenditures for equipment already come out of the HCTF so he is concerned about taking more funds out of the HCTF. Commissioner Sanders said she is going by the ballot language about the ambulance but it did not say whether it would be the operational side or the capital outlay side. Commissioner Lockley asked why this administration is taking more out of the HCTF than the previous administration. Mr. Cooper discussed the computer system and said their options to fix the system were limited. He reported the new system and company are better and even after 16 months, they still are looking at another 5 months until it is completed converted. He explained the problems that have occurred with the conversion. He said the problem was not the revenue but the ability to bring the cash in. Mr. Cooper stated the June collections were the best in several months and July is looking the same but they will not be where they need to be for some time. He estimated the latest projections from Athena Health show they will be fully implemented by January, 2017 which will make the ability to bring money in easier for collections. He discussed LIP funding and the delay in receiving these funds. Mr. Feifer said the Hospital needs to address why they are taking more from the HCTF. He stated the revenues have been relatively the same since 2014 but the expenses are up $1 million a year. He said the County EMS subsidy has been set at $505,592 for several years. He explained the subsidy went to this amount when the County went to 3 full time ambulances and now an increase of $258,660 is proposed which is an amount they do not understand. He questioned which entity is paying for which costs. He explained the EMS costs are steady and he read the figures for the last 2 years and the estimated amount for this year. Mr. Feifer said the problem appears to be collections for ambulance transports. He reported currently the write off amount is 47.6% versus 33% in2014 and 2015. He read the amounts written off by Weems Memorial Hospital. He reported there is also a problem with Medicare reimbursements. Mr. Feifer said non-emergency medical transports will be a problem for the county and they may need to look at alternative transporting costs. He reported not collecting for the ambulance service creates holes in the cash flow. Commissioner Parrish said at a conference they were told if they collect 50% of what is billed for ambulance service then they were doing excellent. He said the HCTF was to complete a clinic in Carrabelle, the hospital and then the ambulance was next. He reported the Carrabelle Clinic has been completed but they have not completely moved forward with the hospital. Commissioner Parrish stated he would like to see the Carrabelle Clinic be self-sustaining and build the hospital and have it self-sustaining and then address the ambulance service. He reported at this time the Board has only completed half of what they told the citizens they were going to do. He discussed the money being provided to the hospital and said they are subsidizing a lot of things. He said this is why he was concerned about the hospital providing inmate medical and subsidizing it also. Commissioner Parrish stated no ambulance service in the state collects 100% and if you are collecting 50% then you are doing an extremely good job. Commissioner Sanders reported the ambulance service is funded this year by ad valorem taxes but in the future she would like the HCTF to address it. Chairman Massey said they need to look at the salaries of the ambulance staff. Mr. Cooper stated they review the salaries every year and compare with services around the area. He reported their salaries are in the middle of the comparable salaries. Commissioner Parrish stated some of them are county employees in other areas so their benefit package is different from other areas. He explained the salaries are in line with the others. Mr. Cooper stated one thing that is difficult is they work 24 hour shifts so there is built in overtime. He questioned the average pay period. Mr. Wester answered 120 hours. Mr. Cooper reported the salaries and staffing patterns for EMS are different. Mr. Cooper stated if the ambulance service was privatized, the private companies would still ask for a subsidy. Mr. Cooper said before he came here they changed billing companies because collections were around 40% and now they are higher. He reported because they were not also not collecting bills from prior years they accumulated a lot of bad debt and they have been writing these bills off over the last two years. Commissioner Lockley asked when they are starting the new hospital. Mr. Cooper reported in September they hope to bring a number the contractor can agree to. He advised the Board at that time it will be a go or not a go from this Board. He stated August 11th, the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA) will be on site for a review of the plans. He stated the equipment planner will be here Monday and the equipment budget will be finalized. He reported the architect and Adams Consultants are working with the City of Apalachicola on variances issues. Mr. Cooper said they will have a firm budget agreed upon by the contractors by September. Commissioner Lockley asked if this is taking longer than planned. Mr. Cooper said originally they thought it would be June or July but there was a delay in February so they are within a couple of weeks timeline. Mr. Moron asked if the ambulance service is trying to promote through the high school and Gulf Coast State College. Mr. Cooper said they attend Career Day and Mr. Wester is working on this item with the college. Mr. Jay Abbott, St. George Island Fire Department, reported he presented a letter and they are in favor of the increase for the ambulance service. He explained the change in the response time with the 3rd ALS unit is working out really well. Mr. Abbott presented the numbers of calls he responded to and said the calls are not seasonal. He stated he and Mr. Steve Fling, Alligator Point Volunteer Fire Department, have been pushing for this upgrade and it is working perfect. He asked the Board to keep this upgrade as lives are at stake. He reported money is coming in from TDC to bring in tourists and they need to provide the money to protect the tourists. Commissioner Lockley asked about the number of tourists. Mr. Abbott said 85% of their calls are tourists. He requested some fee through rental agencies for rental homes each week to come into the fire department or EMS as the majority of their calls are at rental agencies. He reported the number one call is people falling down steps. He said if the County wants to hold a workshop, he will be glad to provide some numbers. Commissioner Lockley said they estimate there are 12,000 people in the County, another 10,000 visitors on the Island, and 3,000-4,000 on Alligator Point and these people have to be taken care of. Commissioner Sanders reported the TDC keeps up with the amount of visitors coming through the visitors’ centers and also on the website. She reported the County has all these people and has to think about the increased volumes to the Sheriff’s Office and emergency vehicles. Mr. Abbott stated there are also a lot of people who travel down just for the day. He expressed concern about the lack of parking. Chairman Massey reported it is the same at Carrabelle Beach. Mr. Abbott explained Alligator Point hired a deputy to keep the visitors from parking on private property. Commissioner Parrish reported they have to look at the infrastructure since they are bringing the people here and make changes to handle the people. He said they need to pull back on advertising and start addressing the infrastructure. He expressed his opinion that they are at a max for handling services.

The meeting recessed at 11:02 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 11:20 a.m.

Mr. Fonda Davis, Solid Waste Director, appeared before the Board to address Solid Waste, Animal Control and Parks & Recreation. He reported the only increase is in Solid Waste and it is retirement rates. Mr. Davis reported Parks & Recreation Department is the same but they will need to buy a vehicle for inmates but he did not put anything in this budget. The Board tentatively approved the budgets of Solid Waste, Animal Control and Parks & Recreation. Commissioner Parrish discussed the letter Mr. Abbott submitted about the ambulance service and also about a flag system. Commissioner Parrish reported he would like to implement this flag system and Mr. Davis told him there is a flag but the color never changes. He said the county should get the place cards at each dune walkover stating what the flags mean. He stated they can better utilize the flag system they have at the public beach. He suggested they work with TDC on advertising and educating people about the flag system. He said at one time they were under the impression the County would be liable if the wrong flag was placed but the Legislature removed this from the law. He stated a lot of counties were not using the flags for that reason. Commissioner Parrish said this needs to be established at Carrabelle Beach also and the employees that go and clean the rest rooms can put up the correct flag. He explained the State park implements this system and DEP gives the flags and signs. Commissioner Parrish reported Mr. Abbott provided the information about the statewide flag system and he would like to see this system implemented. He asked if Mr. Davis sees any reason they cannot implement this system. Mr. Davis answered no, and asked if it is at the center point of the Island. Commissioner Parrish suggested this information could be included in the rental agreements to educate the public and let them know where the flag is and what the color system is for the flags. Commissioner Watson stated there could also be some public service announcements. Commissioner Sanders stated she will bring this information to the TDC and get some public service announcements. She agreed they should put the flag cards at the dune walkovers and the flag at the center of the Island and do the same thing at Alligator Point and Carrabelle Beach. Commissioner Lockley stated there may be some older people in these areas that would like to volunteer to put the flags up. Commissioner Sanders asked if the previous Commissioner from St. George Island was trying to get these flags up. Mr. Davis said they met about it but determined each beach access would not be possible but Mr. Abbott thought they might get a grant to help with this project. He went on to say the liability issue was brought up and they agreed to leave the red flag up at the Island but now they say the liability has changed. Commissioner Sanders asked Mr. Moron to contact DEP, Beaches and Shores, and see if any grants are available for the signs and flags. Commissioner Watson asked Mr. Moron to also confirm the status of the liability. Mr. Moron agreed to contact Attorney Shuler about the liability. Mr. Moron asked if Mr. Davis has employees that go to these areas every day. Mr. Davis reported they have one person but he gets a lot of calls and needs help. Commissioner Parrish asked if he is trying to replace the person who left. Mr. Davis answered yes, and said sometimes during the season it is very busy. Commissioner Lockley stated these flags will need to be changed early in the morning as people swim all day. Mr. Abbott said the real estate companies have the ability to call each rental home automatically and could use this feature to notify them of the flag color. Mr. Abbott stated the signs need to be on the public beach. He reported there are so many people at the public beach; he cannot even get down there with a vehicle for a rescue. Commissioner Watson reported the Plantation has a phone system for all the owners. Mr. Abbott said the Plantation is critical as they have no beach access for 911 vehicles. He said they have to use 12th Street or the cut for access to the beach. He stated the flags are free from DEP and the requests are submitted in October. Mr. Davis reported they have information about rip currents at each beach access. Commissioner Lockley asked if Mr. Davis will check and see if there is an electronic sign and what it will cost. Mr. Davis stated he will check. Commissioner Parrish said they may be solar powered.

Mrs. Ann Birchwell, Franklin County Library, appeared before the Board but said their budget did not change. She said the Carrabelle Library needs a full-time employee restored at a cost of $17,000. She explained they help with food stamp and unemployment applications. She reported the Eastpoint Library sees a lot of snowbirds in the winter. She stated the hours and services have been cut at the Carrabelle Library but they see a lot of people in the summer. Commissioner Sanders said when the grant funding runs out so does the position. The Board tentatively approved this budget. Commissioner Watson asked about grants. Mrs. Birchwell said she does not know at this time about grants. Commissioner Sanders asked if the extra employee was added in the budget. Mrs. Griffith answered no; the request was without the employee.

Mr. Moron reported there are no increases in the Courthouse Maintenance budget but it does include the other half of the HVAC for the south side. The Board tentatively approved this budget.

Mr. Moron stated the Building Department shows an increase due to a transfer of $20,893 from Administrative Services into the Building Department. He said this is for a part-time building inspection/code enforcement person to address all the complaints they are receiving. He reported this is a better use of the money. Commissioner Parrish asked if the Administrative Services budget will be reduced by this amount. Mr. Moron answered yes, and said the Board can address both of these budgets. The Board tentatively approved these budgets.

Mr. Moron stated Planning & Zoning does not have any increases. The Board tentatively approved this budget.

Mrs. Pam Brownell, Emergency Management Director, appeared before the Board and said her budget is the same. The Board tentatively approved the budget. She reminded the Board she is checking with Williams Communications to inspect the tower and will hopefully know something in a couple of days.

Mr. Charles Elliott, Veterans’ Service Officer, appeared before the Board and said his only increase is in retirement rates. The Board tentatively approved this budget.

Mr. Erik Lovestrand, County Extension Office, said his request did include capital outlay for a copy machine but since that time they may have resolved this issue in-house. Mr. Moron said they have a machine that is tied to a maintenance agreement that is not working out for them and they are talking with a vendor to get a smaller machine. Mr. Moron stated Mr. Lovestrand liked their machine but is checking to see if he can get another kind of maintenance agreement. He reported if this works out then it will solve this issue. Mr. Lovestrand stated this machine has the capabilities he was looking for if the maintenance agreement works out. Mr. Lovestrand reported the $6,000 could be removed from the budget. Commissioner Sanders stated she has a problem with a dedicated county vehicle for the Extension Agent and they have never provided a vehicle. Mr. Lovestrand said he is not trying to purchase a vehicle. Commissioner Sanders said it is not the responsibility of the Board to provide a vehicle for him. Mr. Lovestrand stated almost all the other counties support the County Extension Office with a county vehicle. He explained he is putting a lot of miles on his personal vehicle and getting reimbursement for the mileage. He stated he thought there might be something available in the fleet. Mrs. Griffith questioned if the $6,000 should be removed from the budget. The Board agreed to remove this amount. Commissioner Watson asked how many vehicles the County has. Mr. Moron said Planning & Zoning has 2 vehicles and 1 they are thinking about putting up for auction. Mr. Moron stated they just got the truck back today because it had problems. He reported they will drive it and see how it works. He said they will transfer the vehicle to Courthouse Maintenance for Mr. Shane Phillips as it has a tow on it. Mr. Moron stated they do not have any extra vehicle. Commissioner Parrish asked if there is a cost benefit to purchasing a vehicle versus reimbursing for mileage. Mrs. Griffith provided the amounts. The Board agreed this would not pay for the vehicle.

Mrs. Griffith explained with leaving the millage rate the same, there is $248,732.00 left over so the Board needs to make a decision where to apply it. Commissioner Parrish said the Board may need this money for inmate medical. Commissioner Sanders agreed it may be needed for this item. Mrs. Griffith reported they will still have $134,000 that is obligated to Weems Memorial Hospital and $65,000 for the Board side for inmate medical. Commissioner Lockley said to include raises. Mrs. Griffith reported the most the Board could include would be $1,000 and the cost would be $206,000. Chairman Massey said to add it for all County employees. Commissioner Watson asked if the constitutional officers include raises in their budgets. Mrs. Griffith answered no. Commissioner Watson asked about the Sheriff. Mr. Moron said the Sheriff may have provided raises at some point. Mrs. Griffith stated it was not included in the request as far as a line item request. Commissioner Sanders reported she does not feel like they should do anything with the $248,732.00 until the inmate medical item is cleared up. Commissioner Watson agreed with Commissioner Sanders. Commissioner Sanders stated everyone wants to include raises but they need to wait until the inmate medical is resolved because they do not know what they are facing. Mrs. Phillips asked if they want to have it figured just in case it works out. The Board agreed to figure the raises and then they will decide. Clerk Johnson reported the money can be dedicated to raises with the understanding it can change. Mrs. Phillips explained it takes 2 days to get the budget ad ready to advertise and get to the newspaper. Mrs. Griffith pointed out they will have to refigure FICA and retirement for each department. Commissioner Sanders suggested the vehicles be reduced for the Sheriff to offset the inmate medical costs. Commissioner Parrish said wherever they moved the $90,000; they will need to move it back. Commissioner Sanders agreed they will need to put the money back. Commissioner Parrish said the proposal was to give $134,000 to Weems Memorial Hospital for the inmate medical but now they are not going to take it so the money needs to go back to the County for inmate medical costs. Mr. Moron reported more bills are coming. Clerk Johnson discussed pre-trial release conditions. She reported the Sheriff, State Attorney’s Office and Judge can work together to get the cases to trial faster. She stated one of the biggest problems they have is keeping people in jail for over a year before they come to court on a felony case. Chairman Massey reported Wakulla County is using leg braces. Clerk Johnson reported it is not acceptable for people to be sitting in jail and waiting for a court date on non-violent crimes. Commissioner Parrish stated Miami-Dade County started issuing civil citations for small crimes instead of taking them to jail. Clerk Johnson said the County does not have a lot of this kind of charges but people are sitting in jail on felony charges. She expressed her opinion that there are a lot of people who could be out of jail on some kind of pre-trial release conditions. Clerk Johnson stated the Sheriff, State Attorney’s Office, and Judge have to all work together to figure this out. Commissioner Parrish reported there will also be a new state attorney and new sheriff soon and these issues can be discussed. Commissioner Sanders stated when Mr. Bruce Varnes was Sheriff, he approached the Board and they went to the judge and got people released for lesser offenses and that helped with overcrowding. She explained this is a burden on the County and there is something that can be done with the non-violent offenders. Clerk Johnson agreed they have to work together to get the cases moving and not keep continuing the cases. She explained her docket statements are 8 to 10 times more than clerk’s offices the same size as they keep continuing cases. She said this increases the work load for her staff. Chairman Massey agreed and said he saw them continue cases when he was present. Clerk Johnson said civil citations may be good for a certain kind of crime and they can pull reports at any time if the Board would like to know numbers for certain crimes to see if this is feasible. Mr. Moron stated he has already talked with the Deputy Clerks and will get some reports from them.

Commissioner Watson asked if any more is set aside for reserve. Mrs. Griffith stated $1 million is set aside in reserve for contingency which is the same thing they have had for the last 5 years.

Mr. Moron brought into discussion the dates for the budget hearings. Mr. Moron said the hearings are held at 5:15 p.m. and he suggested the dates of September 6th and September 19th. The Board discussed the dates and agreed to September 6th and September 19th for the budget hearings.

Mrs. Griffith said the trim notices will go out with the current millage rate of 6.3065. She said they can reduce the millage rate but cannot increase it. Commissioner Lockley said to make sure everything is just right with the Sheriff’s Department budget and make sure they took everything out. Mr. Moron stated they are meeting with them on Friday at 10:00 a.m. Commissioner Sanders reported they have 77 positions projected for next year and they have 76 for this year so they already have an extra employee. Mrs. Griffith stated they sent an email saying it was an overlap and one person was in training and one person was retiring. Mr. Moron discussed the positions and said there are already open positions in their department. He said there is already 1 extra position in the budget. Commissioner Sanders stated there may be 2 extra positions. She said to get in there and really look at the budget and if there are places that can be cut, let them know because she told them this is what they are going to do.

Commissioner Watson inquired if the millage rate that was set will generate the same tax for people. Mrs. Griffith explained it will be a tax increase as it is over the roll back rate. She stated they will have to advertise a tax increase and a spending increase as the total budget is higher than last year mostly because of the grants. Commissioner Watson asked the percentage of the increase. Mrs. Griffith said it is 3.41% over the roll back rate but it will also depend on what happened to the person’s taxable value. Commissioner Watson reported this is still a low millage rate. Mrs. Griffith agreed it will still be the same millage rate as last year right now on the trim notice.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ William Massey - Chairman

Attest:

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Marcia M. Johnson - Clerk of Courts