

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET WORKSHOP
COURTHOUSE ANNEX – COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
JULY 21, 2017
9:00 AM
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Joseph Parrish – Chairman, Noah Lockley-Vice-Chairman, Cheryl Sanders, William Massey, Ricky Jones

Others Present: Linda Phillips-Finance Director, Erin Griffith-Assistant Finance Director, Lori P. Hines-Deputy Clerk to the Board.

Call to Order

Chairman Parrish called the workshop to Order.

Mr. Erik Lovestrand, County Extension Director, said his budget was submitted with no increase as requested. He asked the Board to consider a vehicle for his department at some point. Commissioner Lockley asked if there is money in his budget for a vehicle. Mr. Lovestrand answered no. The Board tentatively approved the budget as submitted.

Ms. Helen Cook and Ms. Sarah Hunn, Franklin County Health Department, appeared before the Board. Mrs. Cook reported their budget request is for \$49,000 the same as last year. She stated Franklin County averages about 113 births a year and the Health Department is providing services to 73 pregnant women. The Board tentatively approved the budget. Ms. Hunn explained she worked 9 years at Department of Health and worked closely with Mr. David Walker, who was employed at the Health Department. Commissioner Sanders said the Health Department has a partnership with Gulf County and the state is looking at more programs for small counties by using a regional effect. Commissioner Lockley asked if Mr. David Walker is still working with them. Mrs. Hunn said Mr. Walker has retired and is working with his ministry and will be a strong community partner for them.

Mr. Mike Cooper, Weems Memorial Hospital, appeared before the Board. He introduced Mr. Jordan Fulkerson, Interim Chief Financial Officer, who will go over the budget. Mr. Cooper reminded the Board there is a directive for the hospital and clinics to upgrade the radiology equipment to a full digital version. He said he hopes to present detailed information soon. He did not know the exact figure but said this will be a capital request. Chairman Parrish asked if the operating budget is the same as last year. Mr. Cooper answered yes. The Board tentatively approved the budget. Commissioner Sanders asked how the ambulance service is running and if all the paramedic and EMT positions are filled. Mr. Cooper stated they would like to have

more full time paramedics. He stated some of the employees are prn or as needed status and have full time jobs somewhere else. Mr. Cooper reported he and Mr. Michael Murphy, EMS Director, track the average rate of pay for their staff and the average length of tour every month. He reported last year the average length of tour was 40 hours and they do not want someone on the ambulance that long. He stated it has come down to 31 hours in the last month and is getting better but they would like more full time paramedics. Commissioner Sanders reported the pay in Gadsden County is much lower than Franklin County. She stated Mr. Murphy is doing a good job. Commissioner Sanders reported she received something from NACO that mentioned the extreme Medicaid cuts that are coming to hospitals. She said this information will be forwarded to Mr. Cooper. She reported this has to be looked at when they consider funding to the hospital. Commissioner Sanders asked how many employees they have. Mr. Cooper reported 135 employees which equates to 86 full time equivalents (FTE's). Mr. Cooper explained two part time employees make up one FTE.

Mrs. Deborah Davis, Tourist Development Council (TDC), appeared before the Board. The Board tentatively approved their budget.

Ms. Elizabeth Garber, Court Administration, appeared before the Board to address the Circuit and County Judges budget. She reported as requested they submitted budgets that are the same as last year. The Board tentatively approved the budget.

The Board tentatively approved the State Attorney's budget.

Mr. Brian Rogers, Public Defender Administrative Director, appeared before the Board. He introduced Mr. Andy Thomas, Public Defender, and Mrs. Nina Moody, Chief Assistant. He reported there is no increase in the budget. He stated they have talked to Court Administration and the Clerk's Department about small renovations to their office. Commissioner Sanders said the Board has already approved the bathrooms for their office. The Board tentatively approved the Public Defender's budget.

Ms. Deborah Moore, Guardian ad Litem, appeared before the Board. She presented annual reports to the Board. She said their numbers are staying steady and are similar to last year. She explained at this time they are serving 10 children. She stated they average 15-20 children and last year they served 16. Ms. Moore informed the Board their goal is to increase the number of guardian ad litem advocates from this community. She explained they did a training in Wakulla County and brought on 3 more advocates. She reported she met with Sheriff A.J. Smith and he is helping recruit retired individuals. She stated someone from the community is invaluable. She said she and Sheriff Smith are having a coffee on August 4th to help and identify people who would be good advocates. She explained they want to have good resources for advocates for the Judge to appoint. Ms. Moore commented there has been an increase in cases in South Florida and it has not hit here yet but they want to make sure they are prepared. She stated they continue to be one of the groups in this circuit that have enough advocates and they are proud to be able to serve 100% of the children. She referenced an article that will be

in The Apalachicola Times featuring one of the advocates. She said they will come here to train anyone that signs up at the coffee or provide online training so they do not have to travel to be trained. She stated they appreciate the opportunity to serve the children in this community. She stated even though they have not seen an increase in cases, they are seeing some sad situations for the children and some very complex cases. Ms. Moore reported they are trying to support the progress of the parents because that is what is best for the children. Commissioner Sanders discussed the opioid problem and the problem it is causing in families. She stated guardian ad litem is making a difference with their work. Ms. Moore reported they have 10 of the best advocates their program could hope for and they are committed to their work. She announced the coffee will be at Café Con Leche on August 4th. The Board tentatively approved this budget.

Mrs. Griffith reported the operating expenses for the Franklin Soil & Water has stayed the same. She explained this is a portion of a shared employee with Calhoun County. She said the only increase is a share of the health insurance premium. The Board tentatively approved the budget.

The Board tentatively approved the Dog Island Conservation District.

The workshop was recessed at 9:27 a.m.

The workshop reconvened at 10:10 a.m.

Mr. Chris Teaf, Dog Island Conservation District, appeared before the Board. He reported the District was established 40 years ago by the Legislature and their general responsibilities are to maintain and protect the environment, residents and visitors. He listed the costs they incur daily or weekly. He said the number of homes has increased and the visitors have increased. He reported their tax revenue has decreased but materials and service cost have increased. He explained their budget is \$5,880 in landfill tipping fee credit for the trash they take there and \$9,800.00 in unrestricted funds for District operations. He reported the allocation is essential and they are thankful. The Board tentatively approved the Dog Island Conservation District budget. Commissioner Sanders thanked Mr. Teaf for explaining what the County provides for Dog Island as Commissioner Jones is new. She said Dog Island is unique in relation to services rendered.

Ms. Ginger Kelley, Apalachee Center, said the funding request is the state required match for the operation of the emergency services they provide to residents who are Baker Acted or Marchman Acted into their Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) and detoxification center. She reported the approximate cost of operating the CSU is \$2.9 million and the detoxification center is just under \$1.4 million. She reported the match received from all 8 counties is 25% of the funding DCF provides. The Board tentatively approved the budget.

Ms. Jeannie Miller, Carrabelle Food Pantry, appeared before the Board. She said they are a non-profit agency registered with the Department of Treasury and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACs). She stated their mission is to distribute food and almost all the money they receive in funding goes toward the food. She explained they have very minimal expenses because their location is donated and the food is distributed by volunteers. She said the Board members are also volunteers. She reported out of the expenditures of \$27,585.99 last year only 4% was administrative. Ms. Miller said they distribute food, donated clothing and other household goods. She stated they serve families and individuals that meet the federal poverty guidelines. She reported in 2016-2017 they served 13,829 residents. She thanked Franklin County for everything they have done to help. She said last year they received \$4,483.00 from the County and they will make good use of the same amount this year. The Board tentatively approved the budget. Commissioner Sanders stated she likes that all of these individuals are volunteers and no one is paid and they use 100% of the money for nothing but food. Chairman Parrish inquired if they participate in Farm Share. Ms. Miller answered yes and the Second Harvest Program also. She reported some of the administrative expenses are for them traveling to Farm Share to pick up the food. She said now that someone can help with the computer part of the Second Harvest Program they are getting food at an incredibly reduced price. Commissioner Massey stated they are just starting to get meats now every two weeks. Chairman Parrish asked how people qualify. Ms. Miller said Second Harvest puts up an income qualification form. She explained if they qualify for food stamps or another program then this is how they check their eligibility. Chairman Parrish commented he is glad to know they check to see if the person is eligible.

Mr. Joe Taylor, Franklin's Promise Coalition, and Ms. Lori Switzer, Franklin County Food Pantry, appeared before the Board. Mr. Taylor thanked the Board for their assistance in purchasing food. He explained all their information is in the letter presented. He reported they serve 360 people every two weeks and are open every day. He said they work with Farm Share, local churches and Second Harvest. He stated the money allotted by the County goes directly to purchasing food. Ms. Switzer reported from October, 2016 until July 9th they have spent \$9,786.00 on food. She stated last fiscal year they spent \$16,877.00 on food. She reported they deliver to 46 people that are seniors or disabled and ECCC has started delivering for them. Commissioner Lockley asked if they volunteer. Ms. Switzer answered yes. Commissioner Lockley asked if the whole program is staffed with volunteers. Ms. Switzer stated she is paid from a grant that they apply for every year. Chairman Parrish said all the county money is going to buy food for county residents. Ms. Switzer answered yes. The Board tentatively approved this budget.

Mr. Pete Rich and Ms. Karen Martin, Franklin County Humane Society, appeared before the Board. She reported in 2009 they took in 210 animals and it has increased every year and in 2014 they peaked when their intake was 618 animals. She said in 2015 and 2016 they averaged about 575 animals. She reported in the last 4 years they have achieved a 93-96% live release rate. Ms. Martin said their no kill status is 90%. She reported they are finding homes and working hard to care for the animals. She stated they vaccinate and sterilize the animals. She

explained they get the animals healthy, socialize the animals and get them into homes. She said they depend on donations and the money they receive from the County. She thanked the County for the funds they provide. She discussed a situation that occurred this year with an individual hoarding animals. She explained 57 cats and 20 dogs were owner surrendered. She reported they have 12 cats and 1 dog left from this situation. She stated they spent \$1,000's and are still spending money on animals from this situation. She asked if there is any room in the budget for more money, they could use the help. She invited the Board to a tour of the shelter. She reported their biggest fundraising event is Brewfest on St. George Island. She stated they will also have the Second Annual Sizzler Run and some other fundraisers. Chairman Parrish said they are receiving funds from the County but are also fundraising on their own. He stated the County appreciates their work. The Board tentatively approved this budget. Commissioner Sanders asked about the Florida Statute that addresses animals being spayed or neutered before they leave the shelter. Ms. Martin reported it is a rule and it is not mandatory for a Humane Society or other rescue organization to spay and neuter their animals. She said the majority do spay and neuter. She reported they conduct pediatric spay and neutering. She stated they do not provide vouchers for this service as it is already done when the animals leave the shelter.

Ms. Jacqueline Davis, Refuge House, appeared before the Board. She thanked the Board for their support and for the Resolution they adopted recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. She said their Assistant Executive Director was on her way here but there was an accident blocking the road. She explained they offer services in the domestic violence area for women and men. Ms. Davis reported Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October gives them a platform to continue to share their message. She said she is a domestic violence counselor for Refuge House in Franklin County and works alongside the Department of Children and Families. The Board tentatively approved this budget. Commissioner Sanders thanked Ms. Davis for her work.

Ms. Kathy Ballentine, Gulf County ARC & Transportation, appeared before the Board. She said they are the community transportation coordinator that provides the transportation disadvantage services for Franklin County. Mr. Quinton Eastburg, ARPC, reported he worked with over 8 counties this year to coordinate these services. Ms. Ballentine thanked the Board for their support. She said over the last year they have provided over 4,000 trips to 211 different riders traveling 328,000 passenger miles. She stated over 95% of these trips were for medical purposes. Ms. Ballentine said the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged provides the funding for these programs. She explained the funding is in the form of a reimbursement grant and they are reimbursed at 90% of the cost of the trip. She reported the other 10% is supposed to come from local funds or a local match. She said their local match comes from the minimal co-pay or fair box they charge the passengers and the allocation provided by the County. Ms. Ballentine said the fair box represents about 2 1/2 % of the 10% match. She explained the County allocation this year is \$10,077.00 which makes up 4.9% of the 10% match. She stated they currently receive 7.4% of the total match which leaves them with a shortfall of 2.6% or \$5,300. Ms. Ballentine explained they hesitate to increase the

co-pays they charge customers to make up the shortfall since so many of the riders are extremely low income and either cannot pay or struggle to pay the co-pay. She reported the round trip co-pay is \$6.00 to travel to Panama City or Tallahassee. She thanked the Board for their allocation of \$10,077 and asked them to consider increasing their allocation to \$15,387.00 which would represent the 10% local match. Mr. Eastburg said his job is to find the providers and Gulf County ARC & Transportation are the reigning Transportation Disadvantaged Provider for the state and received this award last year. He pointed out there are individuals present to advocate for the Transportation for the Disadvantaged program. He said this is a great program and these trips are for people that are not sponsored in any other way. He explained this program is for the most disadvantaged in the County. He said Ms. Ballentine does a great job and they have some of the best drivers in the state. The Board tentatively approved their budget at \$10,077. Chairman Parrish questioned if the Board has the ability to make up this 10% match. Commissioner Jones said looking at the actual figures and what is being provided, this represents a cost of \$.10 per mile which is very cheap. He stated this also includes what the traveler is paying. He reported without the money contributed by the traveler, it cost \$.06 a mile.

Mr. Ashley Teat, a resident of Apalachicola, appeared before the Board. He said he has his firefighting certification and was approved by the Fire College. He stated other counties have hired Fire Coordinators and they help to bring the fire departments together. He reported Franklin County needs to do this to get help with more funding and complete fire inspections. He stated this will help the ISSO rating come down and that will help everyone. Mr. Teat explained they need to make sure the buildings are safe and protect the firefighters. He asked the Board to consider a Fire Coordinator/Fire Inspector position for the county. He said they could fund this through review fees and inspections and they could also look into grants.

Mrs. Griffith reminded the Board the Budget Public Hearings will be held on September 5th at 5:15 p.m. and September 19th at 5:15 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the workshop was adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Joseph A. Parrish - Chairman

Attest:

Marcia M. Johnson - Clerk of Courts