

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BUDGET WORKSHOP  
COURTHOUSE ANNEX – COMMISSION MEETING ROOM  
JULY 20, 2018  
10:00 AM  
MINUTES**

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

**Others Present: Marcia M. Johnson-Clerk of Court, Michael Moron-County Coordinator, Linda Phillips-Finance Director, Erin Griffith-Assistant Finance Director, Lori P. Hines-Deputy Clerk to the Board.**

Chairman Parrish called the Budget Workshop to Order.

Mrs. Griffith provided an update on the budget after the yesterday's meeting. She stated the preliminary budget that was submitted to the Board on July 15, 2018 required a millage rate of 6.3460 for 2018-2019 but after the changes approved yesterday, the Sheriff's revised budget request, removal of items that were not approved on the capital improvement list for the Sheriff's Department and late revision for the Supervisor of Elections' budget the proposed millage is now at 6.1602. She reported the current millage rate for 2017-18 is 6.3065. Mr. Moron said he made contact with the USDA yesterday and he should hear back from them this afternoon or Monday about financing for buildings which would help with the Supervisor of Elections, Road Department and the Sheriff. He stated he will have more information at the first regular meeting in August. He explained they could possibly do one big package. Mr. Moron informed the Board he received a call from the Emergency Management Department and they are putting the FEMA trailers in place right now. Commissioner Sanders reported the Division of Forestry is helping move the trailers. Mr. Moron stated he will let the Board know later today how many are in place.

Mr. Jay Reeve, CEO of the Apalachee Center, appeared before the Board and said they are seeking continued statutory funding for the Crisis Stabilization Unit and Detox Unit at Apalachee Center. He stated they request this funding every year and he believes the numbers are the same. He offered to answer any questions for the Board. He introduced the new CFO Dean Hilton. He reported Ms. Ginger Kelly retired and Mr. Hilton has taken her place. Commissioner Sanders stated the Board appreciates everything they have done for our county. Commissioner Lockley tentatively approved the budget. Commissioner Lockley asked if the Apalachee Center is open every day. Mr. Reeves reported they have gone through some personnel changes and have hired a new case manager and full time assistant and he

anticipates two weeks from now their hours will be Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. He pointed out right now they are open three days a week. Commissioner Lockley stated sometimes he knew they were not open. Mr. Reeve said they had some challenges but two weeks from now they will be open five days a week.

Mr. DeWitt Polous, Mosquito Control Department Director, stated there are no increases to his budget and it is the same as last year. He reported there are some issues they may have to address in the future such as personnel. He stated sometimes they are overwhelmed but they keep the three trucks running as much as they can. Mr. Polous explained he has to purchase some more pesticide and that is going to take money from the operating expense and repair and maintenance line items. He reported the trucks and sprayers are in good shape now but if he runs into problems he will come back to the Board. Commissioner Sanders said when the Board talks about the new facility for the Road Department the Mosquito Control Department is included too. Mr. Polous stated he was consulted about what he needed and has seen the drawings. He said they offered him plenty of room and it would be wonderful. Commissioner Sanders asked Mr. Moron to get with Mr. Polous and put the spraying schedule on the website because people are calling and then they will know then know when he is spraying. Chairman Parrish agreed and said he had people in his office yesterday and he had to call Mr. Polous to do some spraying. He stated the next day people said it was better. He explained this is a health safety issue and the county may need to do more spraying because the mosquitoes are extremely bad. He said he does not know how they will incorporate it in the budget but the Board may need to address it. He explained the part time employees can only work so many hours but in speaking with Mr. Polous they may be able to hire someone full time to spray after the part time hours are up or more part time help so they can spray longer at night. Chairman Parrish asked the Board to think about it but also said in speaking with Finance they cannot increase the budget after it is set at the workshops. Chairman Parrish said the only thing with part time help is sometimes they miss spraying for someone but it is easier because they do not have to provide benefits. He stated this is a decision for the Board but he did discuss it with the Finance Department earlier in the week. Commissioner Sanders asked what the Board can do between now and their next meeting. Chairman Parrish said his understanding is if they do not add it now then they cannot raise it after the workshops or they can wait until next year. Mr. Polous reported they can try to work with the help they have this year and maybe do something next year. He discussed spraying in the county and how many homes are off the right of ways and down driveways. He suggested the Board add some money for overtime for the part time employees. Mrs. Griffith stated the part-time help cannot go over 29 hours. Mr. Polous provided the schedule for mowing. Mr. Moron pointed out the last few months the majority of complaints on the website have been about mosquito control so they may need to think about some changes. Mr. Polous said they usually spray until the end of October. Commissioner Sanders stated if the Board is going to spend extra money then it needs to go for spraying mosquitoes. Mrs. Griffith explained the car for the Extension Department is still in the budget so the Board could shift those funds to Mosquito Control and address the car next year. Commissioner Sanders agreed the Board may need to do this since mosquito control is a health and safety issue. Chairman Parrish questioned how much extra money Mr. Polous would need.

Mr. Polous said two part time drivers cost \$14,000. He discussed the budget for pesticide and said they are pulling from other line items in the Mosquito Control budget to pay for the pesticide. Chairman Parrish asked how Mr. Polous felt about having additional part time employees. Mr. Polous felt 1 additional part time position would probably be what they need at a cost of \$7,000. Chairman Parrish asked how much the additional chemicals would cost if an additional person was spraying. Mrs. Griffith said maybe \$6,000-\$7,000. Mr. Polous agreed an extra \$7,000 for pesticide. Commissioner Lockley questioned if they allow them to spray in the daytime. Mr. Polous answered no, but they are starting earlier in the day because the salt marsh mosquitoes on St. George Island are daytime biters. He said it depends on the mosquitoes they are addressing but normally they spray from dusk to dawn. Mr. Polous explained in Apalachicola there are a lot of bee keepers so they wait until it is dark to spray so the bees will be back in the hives. Commissioner Massey asked if they have ever asked the state to help spray for the marsh mosquitoes. Mr. Polous said they have discussed it but the seafood workers are worried about aerial spraying around the bay. He stated they do it in other areas and will do it but it is not free. Mrs. Griffith commented they will also need more money in the fuel line item if an additional person will be spraying. She suggested increasing the budget by \$18,000 to cover the additional part time employee, pesticide and fuel. Commissioner Jones said the Board can tentatively approve the budget and discuss it later but they cannot add to it later. Chairman Parrish agreed that is correct. Mr. Polous agreed this is a good start. He said maybe next year will not be as bad. Chairman Parrish said he does not think the public will be opposed to the Board increasing this budget to try and protect them from the mosquitoes. Mr. Polous stated the public has always been very supportive of mosquito control. Commissioner Lockley reported there is no choice as it is their job to protect the public. Commissioner Sanders tentatively approved the Mosquito Control budget with an \$18,000 increase. Mr. Polous stated this is the last budget meeting with Commissioner Sanders and he wants to thank her for all the support and said he will miss her. Commissioner Sanders thanked him and said to remember they are there to take care of the people of Franklin County. Commissioner Lockley asked about the larvae. Mr. Polous said he is okay with larvacide as he purchased some at the beginning of the year and when he puts it out it is good for up to 5 months but it is very expensive.

Mr. Chris Teaf, Dog Island Conservation District Treasurer, appeared before the Board and requested funding for the 2018-2019 year. He discussed the duties of the Dog Island Conservation District. He stated they appreciate the help they get from the county. He addressed the items they are responsible for on the island. He said Mr. Randy Cannon is their manager. He explained their costs have increased but what has changed is their property taxes have decreased by about 65% since 2007. He reported their recently conducted a successful referendum to increase the millage rate by 1 mill and this will help them. He stated their budget request is the same including the 2% decrease they put in previously at the Board's request. He offered to answer any questions. Commissioner Sanders tentatively approved their budget. She said they worked hard to get this for Dog Island because they were not getting any services when she first came on the Board. She asked the Board to continue to fund the Dog Island Conservation District in their amounts so they can get some services for their

taxes that they pay. Mr. Teaf said they will miss Commissioner Sanders greatly and look forward to working with her successor.

Chairman Parrish said the Board will address the request of Franklin's Promise. Ms. Lori Switzer, Coordinator of the Franklin County Food Pantry, appeared before the Board and said they have no increase. Commissioner Massey tentatively approved this budget. Chairman Parrish asked how much this request is for. Mrs. Griffith stated \$9,765.00 which is the same as last year.

Ms. Jeannie Miller, Carrabelle Food Pantry Board Member and part of the Distribution Team, appeared before the Board. She said she appreciates everything the Board has done for them. She reported the \$4,883.00 in funds given by the Board was sufficient and their members and volunteers have made an effort to utilize these funds the best they could. She stated their mission is to feed people below the poverty level. She said 13,829 residents of Franklin County passed through doors and she provided a breakdown by age. She explained 63% of the people they served were children or older adults. Ms. Miller reported the money comes from the county, city, local churches and individuals. She stated in the 2016-2017 year their food expenditures were \$26,287.04 and their administrative expenses and fees were \$426.61. Ms. Miller said their total revenue last year was \$24,358.56 and their administrative fees dropped from 4% to 1.6%. She explained this year in October they will celebrate 10 years as a registered charity. She recognized the people that started with them and are still there. She thanked the Board for the support and invited anyone to help with distribution on Thursday from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Commissioner Sanders tentatively approved the budget.

Mr. Eric Lovestrand, County Extension, appeared before the Board. Mr. Moron said there are no vehicles on the FEMA surplus list that Mr. Lovestrand would be interested in. He reported there are cars on the sheriff's bid list but he prefers to discuss this matter with Mr. Lovestrand and maybe work toward this for the next budget year. He explained if a good car shows up on the GSA list during the year then he will bring it to the Board. Commissioner Sanders stated she found out some of the counties get help with vehicles for the Extension Agent so the Board needs to check into this matter. She suggested Mr. Moron meet with Mr. Lovestrand and contact the UF and find out what they can do. Mr. Moron said a lot of the vehicles they supply are the vans but Mr. Lovestrand stated they are moving away from this kind of vehicle. Mr. Lovestrand reported some of the Commissions want them to have a large vehicle for youth activities but he did not feel like it was the most practical use in their program in the county and their district director does not want them to transport the youth. Commissioner Jones stated he agrees with Mr. Moron because it is not just the cost of the vehicle. He suggested moving slower on this matter may be better. Commissioner Jones tentatively approved the budget without the car or the insurance. Mr. Moron said he will work with Mr. Lovestrand on this matter. Mr. Lovestrand thanked the Board for their consideration and staff for all their work.

Mr. Bud Hayes, President of the Franklin County Humane Society, appeared before the Board and said they are requesting the same funding as last year. He thanked Commissioner Sanders

for her support. Ms. Karen Barton, Franklin County Humane Society Director, said they took in 718 animals compared to 573 in 2016. She reported they have a 96% live release rate and even with a lot of sick animals they maintained a rate of 92%. She stated 90% is considered no kill and they have maintained their no kill status. Ms. Barton said they have taken in 381 animals as of June 30<sup>th</sup> including 18 displaced from the fire. She reported the 18 from the fire have been reclaimed or adopted. She stated they distributed 109 spay/neuter vouchers in 2017 in their effort to reduce pet overpopulation. She said as their numbers increase they are more dependent on the funds the Board provides. Chairman Parrish thanked them for their work in the community. Commissioner Sanders asked if they still receive funding from the Ben Watkins' estate. Ms. Barton answered no. Mr. Hayes said there was a small stipend. Commissioner Sanders stated he was a big supporter of the Humane Society. Commissioner Sanders tentatively approved the budget.

The meeting recessed at 10:44 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 10:56 a.m.

Commissioner Lockley brought up the cost of living adjustment (COLA) increase for employees. Chairman Parrish referenced an email the Board received from the Finance Department. Mrs. Griffith suggested they take the next two organizations before discussing the raises. Commissioner Lockley said he does not want to forget to address the COLA.

Ms. Emily Mitchum, Refuge House, stated they have 2 full time employees, a domestic violence counselor and a sexual violence counselor, in the county. She reported they also have a counselor that comes over to address groups at the Franklin County Jail. She explained they are also offering free therapy for children with a licensed clinical social worker/mental health therapist. She explained in the last year they are going into the jail once a week and working with the female inmates. She detailed the services that are provided through these jail programs. She said the counselor that comes over has years working with the inmate population and substance abuse and they are having good successes. She offered to answer any questions. Commissioner Massey asked how many children they served this year. Ms. Mitchum said they had about 10 referrals. Commissioner Massey stated they are doing a good work because he knows of 2 of the children they are helping. Chairman Parrish reported the paperwork says they served 74 citizens for domestic violence or sexual violence. Commissioner Sanders tentatively approved the budget of \$4,466.00.

Mrs. Griffith stated the Gulf County ARC Disadvantaged Transportation has the same request as last year which is \$10,077. Commissioner Sanders tentatively approved the budget. Commissioner Lockley stated they came in the county and are doing a good job and treating the drivers better. Chairman Parrish said you can tell when someone is doing their job because you do not get any complaints. He explained he never gets any complaints from the airport and it is in his district. Commissioner Sanders reported this is a small county and if they were not doing a good job especially during the budget then the room would be packed with people.

Commissioner Lockley stated Franklin County had the Transportation for the Disadvantaged before and he was concerned when it moved to Gulf County but the drivers got a raise and are doing better. Mr. Moron said it was rough in the beginning but they worked out the issues and it has been a long time since he has received a complaint about the service. Commissioner Massey reported they are picking the residents up on time and transporting them. Commissioner Jones stated as the County's representative on the Disadvantaged Transportation Board he thinks things have gotten better than they were. He reported the number of trips and the cost is amazing and they are doing a lot with a little.

Ms. Lisa Bretz, Area Agency on Aging, informed the Board she is pleased with the partnerships that are existing in the county for senior citizens between the Liberty County Senior Citizens Association, Elder Care Community Council (ECCC) and the Franklin County Senior Center. She reported all the organizations are doing great things in the community with the allocation of \$51,581. She said they would like to maintain this request and do not maintain any funding at their agency and are providing contract management at no cost to the county. She explained their intentions for their allocation for 2018-2019. She stated they did not receive the \$150,000 Alzheimer's funds from the legislature so she does not know if they can expand services in the community but she will be referring contacts in the community to the Alzheimer's Association. Ms. Bretz reported she would like to hold back \$3,000 for special project opportunities. Commissioner Lockley asked if the budget is the same as last year. Mrs. Bretz stated it is the same but they are shifting money and increasing the organizations that are funded with the exception of the Alzheimer's project. Commissioner Massey asked how much money has been given to the Senior Citizens in Carrabelle. Ms. Bretz said all their funds except the last quarterly payment. She explained they are getting written reports from all of the organizations that they are funding and they are being copied to Mr. Moron so they can provide the justification that they are providing services. She reported these reports are available to the Board so they know where their money is going. Commissioner Massey tentatively approved the budget. Commissioner Jones asked for copies of the reports. Chairman Parrish said Mr. Moron has these reports. Mr. Moron clarified Commissioner Jones would like a comprehensive report from Ms. Bretz on how the money is disbursed throughout the county. Ms. Bretz agreed to send a spreadsheet. Mr. Moron said they also want to know how much money went to each agency. Ms. Bretz commented she can provide that information. She pointed out the bulk of the money is going toward home based individuals. Chairman Parrish reported that is how the money was allocated. Ms. Bretz informed the Board they are expecting retirement from the director of the Liberty County Senior Citizens Association so they may need another emergency provider. She was not sure of the current staff would be supportive of providing these services. Chairman Parrish asked if there was someone in Franklin County who wanted to assume this role. Mr. Moron stated ECCC wanted to provide the services. Ms. Bretz said she wanted to groom them to be able to fulfill the requirements of the RFP. She stated the RFP process does not open for 3 years but she might need to open it early. Mr. Moron questioned what will happen if Liberty County cannot provide these services anymore. Ms. Bretz stated her responsibility is to find another local provider that can but right now ECCC does not have the capacity or experience to be able to do this so she would need to use one of her existing lead

agencies. Mr. Moron asked what services Liberty County provides. Ms. Bretz reported they manage a license from the state to be able to provide respite and companionship in the home. She explained ECCC would have to apply to be a provider for that license before she could consider contracting with them. She agreed to keep the Board informed of what is happening. Chairman Parrish asked Mr. Moron to coordinate with Ms. Bretz so if Liberty County leaves they have a plan in place. Ms. Bretz assured the Board there will be no interruption of their services. Commissioner Jones stated his understanding from the minutes is when they moved to the current provider it was temporary until they got someone local. He said he is in favor of what they are doing. Ms. Bretz explained her responsibility to the Board is to insure they are using the funds for what they indicated they would and also to the state to insure there is no lapse in services. Commissioner Lockley stated she is doing a good job. Ms. Bretz said she is pleased to report they have fantastic coordination in the county. Commissioner Sanders reported if is earlier for the Board since Ms. Bretz has the requests sent to her instead of to the Board. Chairman Parrish reported there are no complaints so it is going well.

Mrs. Griffith asked if the Board wanted her to provide cost estimates for the COLA. The Board agreed they would like that. She reported right now the millage is at 6.1530 and will change based on whether the Board awards a COLA. She presented the options for percentage based increases or across the Board increases and the millage rate for the options. Commissioner Lockley asked what the millage is right now. Mrs. Griffith answered the millage rate in the current budget is 6.3065. She stated the millage rate at this time of the proposed budget is 6.1530 so any raise will increase the millage rate from where they were this morning. She also presented the figures for a one time allocation similar to a bonus. Commissioner Massey stated he is not for the bonus. He explained he does not want to go up on the millage rate but do the best across the board COLA they can. Mrs. Griffith explained the less expensive across the board would be the \$800 and would require a millage of 6.2507. Commissioner Jones said he started talking to Mr. Moron about COLA's about a year and half ago because he does not like the Board having this discussion each year and if it is a COLA then it is built in. He stated every time he watched this process before he got elected it looked like the Board cared about employees last. He stated the biggest reason he talked with Mr. Moron about doing the COLA is the county departments have a serious issue with compression of wages and over time the COLA would help correct that issue. Commissioner Sanders reported she is also in favor of a COLA. She asked Mrs. Griffith for the figures on a 3% COLA. Mrs. Griffith presented the figures for the 3% COLA. Chairman Parrish said if they want to put the COLA in and have it reoccur every year at 3% then in 5 years the county budget would have increased \$1 million. He stated as the property values comes up then the millage rate can be reduced and still generate the same amount of money but if the property values go down then the millage rate must go up to generate the same amount of money. He explained if the property values drop and they are locked into these salaries then the Board would have to either cut services or employees. Chairman Parrish stated he is not in favor of a 3% COLA because of these issues. He said if the COLA is approved the Board should emphasize that they may not do a COLA next year or the year after. He reported it would depend on the property values and all the other items that go with it. Commissioner Sanders stated she is in favor of the COLA because the

County needs to bring some of the employees at the bottom up. She explained she does not want to push the new hires up and the long term employees stay down. Commissioner Sanders reported this may be a onetime shot to get the old employees up where they belong. Mrs. Griffith stated the 3% COLA would require a millage rate of 6.2762. Commissioner Lockley said he is for the 3% COLA. He stated the COLA does not have to be permanent and could be removed if necessary. Commissioner Massey agreed with Chairman Parrish that it does not need to be for every year in case the property values go down. He explained this is the reason the cities cannot give raises today is because their millage rates are at the maximum. Commissioner Lockley agreed the COLA should not be automatic as the Board needs to be able to take it out. Commissioner Sanders asked Mrs. Griffith to present the raise amounts for different salaries. Mrs. Griffith presented the salaries with a 3% COLA. Commissioner Lockley tentatively approved a 3% COLA for this year and said if they are able to do it next year then they will do it. Commissioner Sanders reported this still keeps the millage rate down. Commissioner Lockley stated he will not vote for anything that raises the millage rate. Mr. Moron clarified this COLA will be for this budget only. He stated if they would like this to be a regular increase then they would need to address it at a regular meeting. Mrs. Griffith pointed out that whatever the Board decides today is what will go out on the TRIM notices. She explained the Board can change their mind and reduce the budget at the public hearing Commissioner Sanders stated the Board can reduce the budget but cannot increase the budget at that time. Mr. Alan Feifer, Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, pointed out this is more than the \$1,000 across the board raise. He stated the 3% COLA is higher than the usual 1% or 2.2%. He reported the 3% does raise the millage rate well above the roll back rate. He clarified this will represent an increase in taxes. Mrs. Griffith stated it is an increase in taxes because it is an increase over the roll back rate. She explained the roll back rate is the rate the county would need to be operating on to stay the same as the current year. She reported anything over the roll back rate is deemed to be a tax increase. Mrs. Griffith clarified the county could have a millage rate decrease and still have a tax increase at the same time. Chairman Parrish said there is going to be an increase in the budget because there was a \$140,000 increase in health care costs and there is also an increase in retirement so they were not going to make the roll back rate. He stated the salary increases are in their control but not the other things. Mrs. Phillips suggested the public hearing dates of September 4, 2018 at 5:15 p.m. and September 18, 2018 at 5:15 p.m. Commissioner Sanders tentatively approved the public hearing dates. Mrs. Griffith reported the millage rate is 6.2762 which is 2.01% over the rollback rate of 6.1524. The Board discussed the 3% COLA versus the across the board raise of \$1,000.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

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Joseph A. Parrish - Chairman



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Marcia M. Johnson - Clerk of Courts