

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
PUBLIC HEARING  
COURTHOUSE ANNEX – COMMISSION MEETING ROOM  
SEPTEMBER 4, 2018  
5:15 P.M.  
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 meeting to Order.

Chairman Parrish stated this is the first of two budget Public Hearings. Mrs. Griffith said at this meeting the Board must adopt the tentative budget and tentative millage rate to be advertised according to statutory requirements. She reported it will take 6.2762 mils to fund the budget. Mrs. Griffith stated the total of the tentative budget is \$50,853,175. She said the tentative millage rate of 6.2762 mils is 2.01% greater than the rolled back rate of 6.1524 mils. She stated the millage is 2.01% above the rolled back rate due to an increase in FRS retirement contribution rates as set by the Florida Legislature, an increase of 7.34% in the cost of health insurance, an increase in the transfer to the Tax Increment Districts, an increase in the Sheriff's budget, Sheriff's capital improvement requests, Supervisor of Elections' budget, Parks & Recreation budget and a cost of living increase. She reported the date set for the final budget public hearing to adopt the final millage rate and budget for Fiscal Year 2018-19 is Tuesday, September 18, 2018 at 5:15 p.m. at the Franklin County Courthouse Annex, County Commission Meeting Room, 34 Forbes Street, Apalachicola, Florida. Mrs. Griffith read the following prepared statement:

The Property Appraiser is required to certify to the County Commission the taxable value of real property by July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The certified value is the basis for calculating a proposed millage rate. I am very pleased to announce Franklin County has an increase in taxable value of 3.54%. At this increase in value, one mill will generate \$1,890,192 in 2018. The proposed millage rate represents the amount of ad valorem tax proceeds per \$1,000 of taxable property value. In the current budget, the millage rate of 6.3065 generated \$11,513,485. In the preliminary budget for 2018/2019, the current millage rate of 6.3065 would generate \$11,920,497. 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 (this does take into account the effect of amounts transferred to tax increment districts in the prior year). The rolled-back rate is 6.1524

and would generate \$11,629,219 in ad valorem proceeds – the millage and proceeds required to fund the tentative budget as presented today is currently 2.01% over the rolled-back rate, which equates to \$234,005 over in ad valorem proceeds.

The Commission encouraged all requests be turned in at the same level as last year, if an increase was still requested, the department or constitutional appeared before the Board to explain the increase. Prior to the budget workshops, the constitucionals and departments that requested increases were as follows: Sheriff's Department \$114,075, Sheriff's Department capital improvement request items \$295,000, Supervisor of Elections \$11,500, Parks and Recreation \$6,200 and Extension Office \$35,000.

There were several items that increased that are beyond the control of the Board. The county is a compulsory member of the Florida Retirement System and the contribution rates are set by the Florida Legislature each year. The rates increased on July 1st and the additional cost in the next budget year will be approximately \$64,011. As the cost of health care increases each year the cost of employer provided health coverage also increases. Capital Health Plan has renewed at a 7.3% increase which is an increase in cost of \$144,486. Capital Health Plan has proven to be a lower cost plan with single digit price increases that are less than industry average. Even with the 7.3% increase in the renewal rate for 2018/2019, the premium is \$1.19 per month less than the last stand alone renewal quote received from Blue Cross Blue Shield at the October 2012 renewal. There are two tax increment districts within the county and both districts increased in taxable value. This rise in taxable value increased the budgeted transfer to the districts by \$12,393. On a positive note, other revenues increased by \$19,061 in the general fund, transfers to other funds decreased by \$47,545 and the Sheriff's Department is receiving reimbursements in the amount of \$135,645 for the School Resource Officer Program.

At the start of the budget workshops, the preliminary millage rate to fund the requests was 6.3460 mills. This rate was over the rolled-back rate by \$365,941 or 3.15%. During the budget workshops, the Sheriff presented a revised request whereas his increase was reduced to \$30,489. The County Commission prioritized items from the Sheriff's capital improvement list and chose to fund two of the eight requested improvements in the upcoming budget at a cost of \$55,000 (the replacement of an AC unit in the administration building for \$15,000 and a new phone system for \$40,000). The Supervisor of Elections also came in with a last minute revision to her request with her increase pared down to \$1,500 for an upgrade of election system software. The \$35,000 increase that was requested by the Extension Office for a new vehicle was denied by the Board and removed from the budget. The county commission tentatively approved a 3% cost-of-living adjustment to all county employees – this was estimated to cost \$221,204. Upon conclusion of the budget workshops and the changes outlined above, the tentative millage rate was set at 6.2762, a millage rate less than the current year with tax proceeds over the rolled-back rate by \$234,005 or 2.01%.

Items that increased the budget (\$535,283) less those with decreases (\$202,251) result in a net increase that is approximately the difference in budgeted ad valorem proceeds. Please see the summarized items in the table below:

INCREASES TO THE BUDGET	AMOUNT
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT BUDGET	\$30,489.00
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT REQUEST LIST FOR JAIL	\$55,000.00
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS	\$1,500.00
PARKS & RECREATION	\$6,200.00
INCREASES IN TRANSFERS TO THE TAX INCREMENT DISTRICTS	\$12,393.00
HEALTH INSURANCE – 7.3% Rate Increase	\$144,486.00
FRS RETIREMENT RATE INCREASE	\$64,011.00
3% COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT FOR EMPLOYEES (Original Est. \$221,204 – actual \$206,303: \$14,901 Variance)	\$206,303.00
RESERVE FOR CONTINGENCY (Variance from above added after millage approved )	\$14,901.00
<b>TOTAL SUMMARIZED INCREASES</b>	<b>\$535,283.00</b>
OFFSETS/REDUCTIONS TO THE BUDGET	AMOUNT
INCREASES IN STATE SHARED REVENUES	\$19,061.00
DECREASES IN TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS	\$47,545.00
SHERIFF SRO FUNDING FROM SCHOOL BOARD & ABC SCHOOL	\$135,645.00
<b>TOTAL SUMMARIZED DECREASES/OFFSETS</b>	<b>\$202,251.00</b>
<b>TOTAL SUMMARIZED INCREASES LESS DECREASES/OFFSETS</b>	<b>\$333,032.00</b>

In 2018, Homesteaded Properties with just values exceeding taxable values, saw an increase in assessed value of 2.10% based on CPI. A homeowner with a house valued at \$150,000 with a \$50,000 homestead exemption would have paid \$631 in county taxes in 2017. At the proposed 2018 rate and the CPI adjustment to value, that homeowner would pay \$647 in county taxes. A homeowner with a house valued at \$100,000 with a \$50,000 homestead exemption with the CPI increase in value, would have paid \$315 in county taxes in 2017 while paying \$327 in 2018.

Mrs. Griffith mentioned the \$14,901 was the variance in the 3% cost of living increase that was removed and added to the Reserve for Contingency line item so the Board could further reduce the millage rate to 6.2679 which will be 1.88% over the rolled back rate. Chairman Parrish asked for public comments. Mr. Alan Feifer, Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, complimented Mrs. Phillips and Mrs. Griffith on the fine work they did on the budget. He referenced new revenue sources and increased property values and said this budget represents the 4<sup>th</sup> tax increase in 4 years. He stated the cumulative effect is almost a 14% combined increase in the same period of time. He asked the Board to direct staff to create options for going to the rolled back rate. He discussed the budget and the additional revenue sources the Board has in addition to ad valorem taxes. Mr. Feifer suggested the Board ask staff to provide options for the next budget adoption hearing. He asked the Board to do what they have to do to go back to the rolled back rate. Mr. Bert Boldt, a resident of Alligator Point, stated the Board should look at opportunities to reduce the vendor contract costs and save more. Mr. Robert Ramont, a property owner in Franklin County, spoke in favor of Mr. Feifer and the work he has done. He said people are being hurt with the tax increase when the revenue sources keep coming in. Ms. Brenda Karlin, a property owner on St. George Island, stated they want to keep their taxpayer dollars and have a hard time justifying an increase when she looks at the services being

provided. She spoke against the cost of living increase and health insurance increases for county workers. She pointed out there are options other than traditional insurance. She offered her support for the Concerned Citizens of Franklin County. She asked the Board and county employees to look at ways to reduce their expenses in the county to make the tax dollars work better. She asked the Board to go back to the rolled back rate of 2017.

**Commissioner Lockley made a motion to tentatively approve the budget with the removal of the \$14,901.** Mrs. Griffith said it will take the millage rate down to 6.2679 which is 1.88% over the rolled back rate instead of 2.01%. Chairman Parrish said everyone wants to reduce the reserves but next year they would need to increase taxes to replace the reserves. Mrs. Griffith answered yes, she explained if they reduce reserves then they would have to keep it at that level or they would have to increase ad valorem proceeds to get it back where it is. Chairman Parrish said that is not good and discussed what the Reserve for Contingency should be. He explained during a storm the county must have money to operate on until they get the FEMA reimbursements. He said if the Reserve for Contingency is not spent then it rolls over and they do not have to increase taxes to replenish this money. He referenced Alligator Point Road and said the county has been trying for 3 years to get the money from the federal government to fix the road. He said his opinion is to leave the Reserve for Contingency where it is and if they do not use it then they do not have to increase ad valorem taxes to replace the reserve. Chairman Parrish discussed the current millage rate. Mrs. Griffith reported the current millage rate is 6.3065 and going into the budget workshop it was 6.3460. She stated leaving the budget workshop the millage rate was 6.2762 and now with the change the millage rate will be 6.2679. Chairman Parrish reported the Board tried to cut what they could but there were some justifiable increases to give citizens the services they want and deserve. He said the Board did pretty well and he is not in favor of cutting reserves. Commissioner Sanders stated this budget is good news compared to what some of them have been in the past. She reported years ago the Board went to the rolled back rate every year and then it caught up with the county and they did not know if they would have to cut employees or not and they were lucky they did not have to. She stated going to the rolled back rate is a good thing but eventually it will catch up. Commissioner Sanders thanked the Sheriff's Office for sitting down with them and working through all the costs. She stated doing the large items through capital outlay is a good thing. She reported the county employees deserve the 3% cost of living increase and that is why she presented it. Commissioner Sanders stated that was not the recommendation of the Finance staff but numbers they presented. She explained the Finance staff does not make recommendations, they only present the numbers. She thanked the Finance staff for their work and said they know their job. **Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion.**

Commissioner Jones said the reason the Board talked about a cost of living increase is they know they cannot do it every year but in the past the Board has done a \$1,000 across the board raise and there are issues with compression of wages. He said the only way to address it is by going with percentage based increases. He pointed out the county workers are the people providing the services. Commissioner Jones said it may appear extravagant but they may not be able to address it again for a while. Commissioner Massey agreed and said he is a city worker and some people could not live on the city or county salaries. Commissioner Sanders stated she likes the percentage because it addresses the people who have been here the

longest. She discussed when the county years ago adjusted the pay for entry level employees and reported now entry level employees' start at \$25,000 but it took some employees almost 20 years to get to that level. She said it is better now and it should be because these are the people who get out during storms and try and keep people safe. Commissioner Sanders reported instead of being criticized for getting 3% people should be applauding them for looking out for their employees. She stated it is time and they are in a situation to provide this increase. Commissioner Sanders reported the county employees deserve the 3% and that is the reason she suggested it. She stated she has a lot of admiration for the county workers because they are on the front lines for them every day. Commissioner Sanders said she has always tried to look out for the county employees and the taxpayers too. She explained when they talked about budgets in 2005-06 the land boom was here and they did not know which way to go so they looked at it three different ways, essential services, non-essential services and quality of life services. She said the Board has done a good job and she is ready to move forward. Commissioner Lockley stated people can look at the budget each year but need to know what they are talking about when they suggest cutting items. Commissioner Sanders expressed her appreciation to the Finance Office and said they should keep doing what they are doing. She reported Clerk Johnson is a good Clerk and known all around the State of Florida. She said the Board knows every aspect of the county and every need and every department and if you do not know that they do not know what it takes to run a county. She said the Finance Staff has done a fine job. Chairman Parrish agreed. **Motion carried; 5-0.** Mrs. Griffith read the Resolution adopting the tentative millage levy. **On motion by Commissioner Lockley, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to adopt the Resolution adopting the tentative millage levy, as follows:**

**RESOLUTION  
FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING TENTATIVE MILLAGE LEVY**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS OF FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA,  
ADOPTING THE TENTATIVE MILLAGE LEVY FOR FRANKLIN  
COUNTY FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018 - 2019**

**WHEREAS**, the BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS of Franklin County, Florida, on September 4th, 2018, adopted Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Tentative Millage Rate following a public hearing as required by Florida Statute 200.065; and

**WHEREAS**, the gross taxable value for operating purposes not exempt from taxation within Franklin County has been certified by the County Property Appraiser to the BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS as \$1,890,192,206.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS of Franklin County, Florida that:

The Fiscal Year 2018-2019 tentatively adopted operating millage rate for Franklin County is **6.2679** mills which is greater than the rolled-back rate of **6.1524** mills by **1.88 %**.

**DULY ADOPTED** at a public hearing this 4<sup>th</sup> day of September 2018.  
Time adopted 5:56 p.m. PM

s/Joseph Parrish  
JOSEPH PARRISH, CHAIRMAN  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:

s/Marcia M. Johnson  
MARCIA M. JOHNSON, CLERK OF COURTS

Mrs. Griffith read the second Resolution adopting the tentative budget. **On motion by Commissioner Massey, seconded by Commissioner Lockley, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to adopt the Resolution adopting the budget, as follows:**

**RESOLUTION  
FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING TENTATIVE BUDGET**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners of Franklin County, Florida has determined the amount of funds required for a Tentative Budget for the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners has given due notice as required by law, and has held a public hearing as required by Florida Statute 200.065, and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners of Franklin County, Florida, has set forth the appropriations and revenue estimate for the **Tentative Budget** for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 in the amount of \$50,838,272.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Franklin County, Florida, that:

1. The Fiscal Year 2018-2019 **Tentative Budget** be adopted.
2. That copies of this Resolution containing the **Tentative Budget** be spread upon the records of Franklin County, Florida.

This Resolution **duly adopted** at a public hearing this 4th day of September 2018.  
Time adopted 5:58 PM

s/Joseph Parrish  
JOSEPH PARRISH, CHAIRMAN  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:

s/Marcia M. Johnson  
MARCIA M. JOHNSON, CLERK OF COURTS

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:01 a.m.

Joseph A. Parrish - Chairman

Attest:

Marcia M. Johnson - Clerk of Courts