

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET WORKSHOP
COURTHOUSE ANNEX – COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
JULY 26, 2019
10:00 AM
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Noah Lockley – Chairman, William Massey-Vice-Chairman, Joseph Parrish, Ricky Jones, Bert B. Boldt, II

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

Chairman Lockley called the workshop to Order.

Tourist Development Council

Mr. John Solomon, TDC Director, appeared before the Board. Commissioner Parrish asked if the TDC Board has already been through the budget and approved the budget. Mr. Solomon answered yes. Commissioner Parrish tentatively approved the TDC budget.

Guardian ad Litem

Ms. Deborah Moore, Guardian ad Litem, presented their Annual Report to the Board. She explained their biggest challenge is serving more children in 6 counties. She said they serve 100% of the children appointed to them but it is a struggle with the staff they have. She explained the attorneys and case managers are assigned to the children when there is abuse and neglect but the third member of the team is the volunteer advocate. Ms. Moore stated they made great strides in recruiting advocates in the area but because of the number of children they need to recruit 10 more advocates. She stated they are currently serving 46 children. Ms. Moore reported last year they were serving 25 children and that number was high. She explained they have a wonderful team that is here every month fighting for these children. Ms. Moore offered to answer any questions. Commissioner Parrish asked about the recruitment last year. Ms. Moore responded it was very successful. Commissioner Parrish suggested Ms. Moore contact Mr. Moron to provide a meeting place when she can do recruitment. He said the county will help in any way that they can. Ms. Moore stated this means a lot of and they have a significant support system with the faith based community here. She reported they are providing visitation assessment/evaluation counseling services at one of the churches and she is grateful for the support. She said their best recruitment is word of mouth. Chairman Lockley asked if they are successful with the outcomes. Ms. Moore

explained they have up to a year once the children are in the system and they see great improvement when the children have food, attention to their needs in school, and have clothes that fit and are weather appropriate. She commented that counseling and therapy take time. She stated most of the children are from newborn to 5 years of age. She said they can provide car seats, diapers and pack and plays but need advocates who reside here. Chairman Lockley stated if they can save some of them then it is a blessing. Ms. Moore reported it is important to have enough advocates because each one is only assigned to one child. Commissioner Jones asked if there are 46 children. Ms. Moore stated there are at least 46 children and they are opening new cases every week. Commissioner Jones reported there were 29 when she wrote the letter request in May. Ms. Moore agreed but said it is positive that they are being identified. Chairman Lockley said the county will do their best to help. Ms. Moore stated having a location to train the advocates has been helpful. Commissioner Parrish tentatively approved the Guardian ad Litem budget.

Dog Island Conservation District

Mr. Chris Teaf, Treasurer of the Dog Island Conservation District, provided a history and overview of the district. He explained they have a state mandated audit and administration costs. He explained last year with the work of Mrs. Heather Riley, Supervisor of Elections, and Mr. Michael Shuler, County Attorney, they were able to gain a 1 mil increase on the tax base which will help offset some of the 65% decrease in taxable revenues. He explained with Hurricane Michael Dog Island has lost 15% of the tax revenue with houses that are damaged, destroyed or not there at all. He said their annual budget request was stagnate at a \$5,880 tipping fee credit and \$9,800 in unrestricted funds and they appreciate the support. He stated this year they asked for a slight increase to \$6,000 in the tipping fee and \$11,000 in unrestricted funds to try and make up for some of the shortfall. Mr. Teaf reported they appreciate the county's contribution. He offered to answer any questions. Chairman Lockley asked how they are doing after the storm. Mr. Teaf said Dog Island is a mess but with volunteer labor they have gather all the materials to the roadways. He reported they signed an agreement yesterday with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to assist them with getting rid of the debris. Mr. Teaf said he may come back and talk with the Board about tipping fees. He said a number of people in Franklin County have helped and they appreciate the help. Commissioner Boldt said they honor the fact that they had some important administrative time at the Emergency Management State Offices trying to retroactively recapture the clearance of all the debris. He reported he hopes they are taking notes as they prepare for the next storm and that they have all their strategies in place to help get the debris cleared in advance of the problem. Mr. Teaf reported Commissioner Boldt was instrumental in helping them gather this funding from DOT and they appreciate it and will make plans so they can reproduce the solution. Commissioner Boldt tentatively approved the Dog Island Conservation District budget.

Apalachee Center

Mr. Dean Hilton, Apalachee Center, thanked the Board for their continued support. He explained this funding request is to support the Center that provides detox and crisis stabilization services provided at their hospital in Tallahassee. Chairman Lockley asked if they have a local office. Mr. Hilton answered yes but they struggle to find staff to continue to support the office. He reported they have staff that comes down several days a week and they are continuing to provide services. He said they are looking for staff to provide more services. Commissioner Parrish inquired if they are asking for the same funding as last year. Mrs. Griffith replied yes. Commissioner Parrish tentatively approved the Apalachee Center budget. Mr. Moron said the Sheriff wants to open a rehabilitative center and asked if there is anything they can do to help or if they provide anything like this somewhere else in the state that they can model. Mr. Hilton stated he cannot answer that question but will mention this to Mr. Jay Reeves, Executive Director, and ask him to call the Sheriff. Mr. Moron asked Mr. Hilton to have Mr. Reeves call him first. Mr. Hilton agreed to get Mr. Moron's contact information and have Mr. Reeves contact him. Commissioner Boldt reported the Sheriff is concerned about drugs and he advocates any linking they can do as partners in this area. Mr. Hilton agreed it must be a community effort.

Franklin's Promise

Mrs. Tamara Allen, Franklin's Promise Coalition Board of Directors, said they are here about the food pantry program. She stated they continue to serve and are grateful for the funding. She reported the money provided strictly goes to purchase food. She offered to answer any questions. Commissioner Massey tentatively approved the budget for Franklin's Promise.

Carrabelle Food Pantry

Mr. Tom Humble, Carrabelle Food Pantry, said they have 26 volunteers and distribute food on a weekly basis. He explained in 2018 they spent over \$22,000 purchasing food. He said the county provided \$4,883 which was important in their mission. He reported they are not asking for an increase but the county is an important piece of the \$22,000. Mr. Hummel said they were open the day after Hurricane Michael distributing food because that was their normal distribution day. He stated now they are set up to go any day following a hurricane and their target is the time between the end of the storm and when help arrives from the outside. He reported they stock on Wednesdays and distribute on Thursdays and invited the Board to come by and have a tour. Commissioner Massey tentatively approved the budget for the Carrabelle Food Pantry.

Franklin County Humane Society

Ms. Karen Martin and Mr. Bud Hayes appeared before the Board. He said they are requesting the same budget but with the storms and the Limerock fire they had an increase in expenses. He stated their expenses were \$80,000 more last year but they are asking for the same money.

Mr. Hayes stated they appreciate the county's support. Commissioner Massey tentatively approved the Franklin County Humane Society budget.

Refuge House

Mrs. Griffith said their request of \$4,466 is the same as last year. Commissioner Jones tentatively approved the Refuge House budget.

Gulf County ARC Transportation Disadvantaged

Ms. Carlenna Standland and Ms. Charlotte Faircloth appeared before the Board. Ms. Standland requested their funding and thanked the Board for their assistance. She said the county has been a major player with helping them in the past. Commissioner Massey asked if their request was the same. Mrs. Griffith reported last year the amount was \$10,077 and this year the amount is \$10,079. Commissioner Massey tentatively approved the Gulf County ARC Transportation Disadvantaged budget.

Area Agency on Aging

Mrs. Griffith said she talked with them and expected them to be here. She reported their request last year was \$51,581 and it is the same this year. Chairman Lockley inquired what they do in the county. Mrs. Griffith read a description of their services. Mr. Moron explained right now they have two locations one in Carrabelle and one in the Armory but they are closing the one at the Armory as they can only afford to run one location. He reported they will work the whole county from the Carrabelle location. He said the SHIP Office will need the extra office space in the Armory for another program and they will talk about it this afternoon. Commissioner Parrish tentatively approved the Area Agency on Aging budget.

Mrs. Griffith reminded everyone the tentatively millage rate that will go out on the TRIM notices will be 5.9494 and the first public hearing will be set for September 3, 2019 at 5:15 p.m. She stated this incorporates the changes that were made yesterday. Commissioner Parrish asked what the projection was when they started. Mrs. Griffith responded 5.9644. Commissioner Parrish asked how much is in the Reserve for Contingency account. Mrs. Griffith said the Reserve for Contingencies is still budgeted at \$1 million.

Chairman Lockley pointed out before the budget they asked all the departments to come in at the same budget as they were before and the Library came in with a huge difference. He explained the county has supervisors and department heads that are starting at less than this amount after 20 years or more. Chairman Lockley said he understands these people went to college but the other people moved up through the chain of command and day by day they are in the rain, cold and storms and this is setting a bad precedent for them to come in for with an increase when the Board asked them to keep the budgets at the current level. He reported that applied to all the departments and they cannot exclude one department. Chairman Lockley

said this is unfair to him and to the department heads and he is not voting for it. He reported he wants to treat everyone the same. He said they cut the annual raise back to 2% and then the Library is going to get this amount and he does not think it is right and he is not voting for it. Commissioner Boldt stated he respects the legacy of the county employees but he agrees it should be supported and honored. He explained there are categories of employees for which there are valued added benefits to the county and part of that is loyalty they see year end and out. He said there is another category of value added where someone relative to the specific duties they have must have certain credentials in order to carry the county further forward in that certain area isolated from the legacy of the county employees. Commissioner Boldt stated one of these would be a librarian. He reported they must have strong educational credentials. He reported he does not want this position to be a stepping stone for the librarian to get their degree and then leave. He said they carry their own weight unique to their experience and need and only in that spirit that he would advocate for higher, attractive salaries for that particular area. He explained they have different labels for different job responsibilities unique for that individual.

Commissioner Boldt questioned the amount of the millage rate. Mrs. Griffith responded the millage rate is 5.9494 which is less than 1% over the rolled back rate. She explained the amount over the rollback rate would be \$92,282.00.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the workshop was adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Noah Lockley - Chairman

Attest:

Marcia M. Johnson - Clerk of Courts