

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BUDGET HEARING  
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM  
SEPTEMBER 3, 2024  
5:30 PM  
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Ricky Jones-Chairman, Jessica Ward-Vice-Chairman, Cheryl Sanders, Ottilie Amison, and Anthony Croom, Jr.

Others Present: Michele Maxwell-Clerk of Court, Michael Moron-County Coordinator, Erin Griffith-Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator, and Linda Phillips-Finance Director

**Call To Order**

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Jones led the Board in prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Budget Information**

Mrs. Griffith presented the following to the Board.

**PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT THE TENTATIVE BUDGET  
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 – 2025  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3rd, 2024**

At this meeting, the Board must adopt the tentative budget and tentative millage rate to be advertised according to statutory requirements.

1. It will take 5.4546 mills to fund this budget.
2. The total of the tentative budget is \$112,342,012.
3. The tentative millage rate of 5.4546 mills is 10.77% greater than the rolled back rate of 4.9241 mills.
4. The tentative millage is 10.77% above the rolled back rate due to a slight increase in the FRS retirement contribution rates as set by the Florida Legislature, an increase of 8.39% in the cost of health insurance, increases in constitutional officers budgets and department budgets due to inflationary cost increases in fuel, supplies, utilities and capital needs, one additional employee in the tax collector's office, one additional employee for the solid waste department, one additional employee in the parks and recreation department, \$72,000 for lobbyist services, \$20,000 for economic development services, increases in ad valorem transfers to other operating funds and capital outlay, and the funding of the fifth year implementation of the five year pay and classification plan as developed by Evergreen Solutions and a 4% inflationary adjustment for all employees of Franklin County.
5. The date set for the FINAL BUDGET HEARING to adopt the final millage rate and budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025 is TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17th, 2024, AT 5:15 PM, at the Franklin County Courthouse Annex, County Commission Meeting Room, 34 Forbes Street, Apalachicola, FL.

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. Franklin County has an increase in taxable value of 13.91%. At this increase in value, one mill will generate \$3,462,400 in 2024. In the current budget, the millage rate of 5.4707 generated \$16,628,246. **In the upcoming budget, the preliminary millage rate of 5.4546 would generate 18,885,873.** 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 considers the effect of the amount transferred to the tax increment district and omits the added value of new construction from the calculation). The rolled-back rate is 4.9241 and would generate \$17,049,204 in ad valorem proceeds –

the preliminary millage 5.4546 with \$18,885,873 in property tax proceeds is currently 10.77% over the rolled-back rate or \$1,836,669 over in ad valorem proceeds. The total difference between budgeted property tax revenues from one year to the next excluding the effects of the tax increment districts and the value of new construction is \$2,257,627.

The preliminary budget totals \$112,342,012. The change in total budget can be attributed in part to the some of the special funds: the balance in the Health Care Trust Fund will grow by almost \$1.6 million, Weems Memorial Hospital Fund is more than the prior year by \$1.8 million, the Tourist Development Fund grew by almost \$2.4 million due to the additional 1% levy, the LOGT Road Paving Fund grew by almost \$4 million due to additional grant funded projects, the Boating Improvement fund grew by over \$1 million due to additional grant funded projects, and the general fund has more than \$1 million in additional grant funded projects in the upcoming year.

In 2024, Homesteaded Properties with just values exceeding taxable values, saw an increase in assessed value of 3% based on the Save Our Homes Cap Increase (which is the lesser of CPI or 3%). A homeowner with a house valued at \$150,000 with a \$50,000 homestead exemption would have paid \$547 in county taxes in 2023. At the proposed 2024 rate and the 3% adjustment to value, that homeowner would pay \$570 in county taxes. Items that increased the operational budget (\$3,656,164) less those with decreases (\$1,139,858) result in a net increase that is approximately the difference in budgeted ad valorem proceeds. The summarized increases and decreases that make up this difference from the 23/24 budget to the 24/25 budget are summarized in the table below.

REVENUE LOSSES / INCREASES TO THE BUDGET	AMOUNT
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT BUDGET INCREASE (Reduced from \$951,999)	\$526,489
SHERIFF'S REPAIR REQUEST REPLACE SECURITY WINDOWS JAIL (Added)	207,460
PROPERTY APPRAISER BUDGET INCREASE (Reduced from \$102,621)	\$80,326
TAX COLLECTOR BUDGET INCREASE	\$100,187
CLERK OF COURTS BUDGET INCREASE	\$6,552
ROAD DEPARTMENT BUDGET INCREASE (Increased from \$148,670)	\$188,670
SOLID WASTE BUDGET INCREASE	\$150,088
PARKS & RECREATION BUDGET INCREASE	\$233,883
ANIMAL CONTROL BUDGET INCREASE (Reduced from \$48,149)	\$0.00
LIBRARY BUDGET INCREASE	\$37,995
COURTHOUSE MAINTENANCE BUDGET INCREASE	\$54,849
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES BUDGET INCREASE	\$43,240
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BUDGET INCREASE (Reduced from \$51,896)	\$44,896
MOSQUITO CONTROL BUDGET INCREASE	\$41,701
EXTENSION OFFICE BUDGET INCREASE	\$4,186
NEW: NGO LATE ADDITION- KEEP FRANKLIN COUNTY BEAUTIFUL	\$15,000
NEW: NGO LATE ADDITION- EARLY LEARNING COALITION – PENDING	\$2,807
NEW: NGO LATE ADDITION- CAMP MOVING EDUCATION – PENDING	48,000
AUDITOR FEE	\$4,000
CARRABELLE CRA – INCREASE IN TRANSFER OUT	\$38,442
HEALTH INSURANCE (8.39% INCREASE & INS FOR NEW POSITIONS)	\$176,701
LOBBYIST CONTRACT SERVICES	\$72,000
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT	\$20,000
YEAR 5 PAY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	\$429,089

4% INFLATIONARY ADJUSTMENT PAY PLAN ALL CLASSIFICATIONS	\$479,199
FRS RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION RATE INCREASE	\$17,023
INCREASE IN TRANSFER TO LIBRARY FUND	\$62,552
INCREASE IN TRANSFER TO ROAD & BRIDGE FUND	\$44,441
INCREASE IN TRANSFER TO MOSQUITO CONTROL FUND	\$5,573
INCREASE IN TRANSFER TO CAPITAL OUTLAY FUND (TO FUND BUILDING REPAIRS)	\$185,414
DECREASE IN TRANSFER FROM TIPPING FEE FUND TO GENERAL FUND	\$145,744
<b>TOTAL COST INCREASES TO THE BUDGET</b>	<b>\$3,466,507</b>
OFFSETS / REDUCTIONS TO THE BUDGET	AMOUNT
INCREASE IN STATE SHARED REVENUES & AD VALOREM OFFSET	\$1,019,459
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS DECREASE (NON-ELECTION YEAR)	\$23,904
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS RENT SAVINGS JANUARY – SEPTEMBER	\$22,500
PLANNING AND ZONING BUDGET DECREASE	\$37,995
INCREASE IN TDC TRANSFER FOR BEACH CLEANUP EFFORTS	\$36,000
<b>TOTAL OFFSETS / REDUCTIONS TO THE BUDGET</b>	<b>\$1,139,858</b>
<b>TOTAL SUMMARIZED REVENUES LOSSES / INCREASES NET OFFSETS / REDUCTIONS TO THE BUDGET</b>	<b>\$2,326,649</b>
IMPACT TO BUDGETED AD VALOREM PROCEEDS (BUDGETED AT 95%)	<b>\$2,215,856</b>

**Supplemental Attachments:**

**10 Year Millage Rate Comparison**

Special note on taxable value: market high of 4.112 billion in taxable value with budgeted ad valorem proceeds of \$15,808,934 and 191 budgeted positions in fiscal year 2006/2007. 16 years later: 3.462 billion in taxable value with proposed ad valorem proceeds of \$18,885,873 and 191 full-time positions.

**Summarized Total Budget by Fund**

Budgeted totals by fund and preliminary budget for 24/25. County operating funds include the General Fund, Fine & Forfeiture Fund, Library Fund, Road & Bridge Fund, and Mosquito Control Fund.

Chairman Jones noted that he is going to appear before the City of Apalachicola commission this afternoon, to request an amendment to the MOU with the two cities. So that we can switch the \$764K a year to run the ambulance operations from ad valorem to the health care tax. Chairman Jones noted that he was told that would change the millage to 5.2222, 6.05% over the rollback rate.

Commissioner Ward asked about the NGOs and if that would change the budget. Mrs. Griffith noted that with the \$48k that had been allocated for the Camp Moving Education, one thing to note, we are not sure what is going to happen with the Carrabelle Senior Center. If we were a little further along with the RFQ, I would feel better about removing it.

**Public Comments**

Chairman Jones called for public comments at this time.

Mr. Mason Beam noted that he appreciates the job the Board does. He noted the Board did a good job of challenging the Sheriff's budget noting if he needs additional money he can always come back to the Board. Mr. Beam said they are not looking to reduce anyone's salary, but the budget increased \$2million. He would

like to do a roll back where that home steads do not pay any taxes. Let us get that 3% roll back for homestead properties. Commissioner Sanders questioned as to why this was requested. Mr. Beam noted that with rising costs of goods and property insurance, the homeowners could use a break. Chairman Jones noted that you bring up a valid point. The State would have to take this on. He noted that there is not a save our homes cap on the school district. That is something that Mrs. Griffith and I have spoken about.

Mr. Covington spoke to the Board via Zoom. Commented that he has looked at an increase on market value of his property alone. The values are really killing us. I know that the millage has dropped since 2015, but the offset in volume is what is setting us through the roof. Our renters are telling us that the rates are too high down there. I know that insurance is high. It is a tough time for everybody, and I know you guys have a challenging job ahead of you. I just want to thank you for the stuff you are doing. Want us to really bear down on getting code enforcement in the next year. We really need that to help with a lot of the problems that we have. If we need to increase the salary in order to get someone who can communicate with the property owners. We need effective code enforcement in order to enforce the rules we have. Noted the issue we are having getting deputies to temporarily fill this position.

### **Budget Discussion and Adoption**

- 1. Adoption of 2024-25 Tentative Millage Rate and Budget**
- a. Board action to adopt the tentative 2024-25 millage levy resolution**

**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 2024-2025**

**WHEREAS**, the BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS of Franklin County, Florida, on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, adopted Fiscal Year 2024-2025 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 \$3,462,400,091.

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

The Fiscal Year 2024-2025 tentatively adopted operating millage rate for Franklin County is **5.4546** mills which is greater than the rolled-back rate of **4.9241** mills by **10.77%**.

**DULY ADOPTED** at a public hearing this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of September 2024. Time adopted 5:35 p.m.

**On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved adoption of the above resolution Adopting the Tentative Millage Levy.** Chairman Jones noted that we are still looking at being able to make a cut in the next couple of weeks.  
**Motion carried 5-0.**

**b. Board action to adopt the tentative 2024-25 tentative budget resolution**

**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 2024-2025 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 2024-2025 in the amount of \$112,342,012.

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

1. The Fiscal Year 2024-2025 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 3<sup>rd</sup> day of September 2024. Time adopted 5:36 p.m.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved adoption of the above resolution Adopting the Tentative Budget. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Commissioners Comments**

There were no additional comments.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

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**Ricky Jones – Chairman**

**Attest:**

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**Michele Maxwell – Clerk of Courts**

The audio is available upon request. Please e-mail [jgay@franklinclerk.com](mailto:jgay@franklinclerk.com), call 850-653-8861 to speak with the Administrative Assistant, or submit a request in writing to obtain audio of this meeting.