

## **PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA**

**APRIL 21, 2009**

### **WORKSHOP**

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners met this date in a workshop with the following members present: Vice Chairman Carmen L. McLemore and Commissioners Billy E. Traylor, and Warren Yeager. <Chairman Nathan Peters, Jr. and Commissioner Bill Williams were absent.>

Others present were: County Attorney Timothy McFarland, Clerk Rebecca L. Norris, Clerk Finance Officer Carla Hand, Deputy Clerk Leanna Roberts, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Building Official Lee Collinworth, Emergency Management Director Marshall Nelson, Emergency Management Secretary Stephanie Richardson, Grant Writer Towan Kopinsky, Human Resource Director Denise Manual, Mosquito Control Director Mark Cothran, Planner David Richardson, Public Works Director Gerald Shearer, Road Department Superintendent Bobby Knee, Assistant Road Department Superintendent Chris Wood, Tax Collector Shirley Jenkins, Veterans' Service Officer James Kennedy, and Sheriff Joe Nugent.

Acting Chairman McLemore called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., E.S.T.

### **BUDGET**

Chief Administrator Butler appeared before the Board to discuss the first fiscal year 2009-10 budget presentation from the Budget Review Committee. He reported that this presentation is based on a projected 25% reduction in property values. He reported that for 2008-09, the County property value is approximately \$2.576 billion and the County will collect approximately \$12,611,407.00 from Ad Valorem Tax at a millage rate of 4.8949. Chief Administrator Butler reported that with a proposed 25% reduction, the property value will reduce approximately \$1.9 billion, and stated that with the same millage rate, the County will collect \$9.458 million in Ad Valorem Taxes. He also stated that in order to maintain the current funding, the new millage rate will need to increase to 6.5265. Chief Administrator Butler discussed State mandated items that the County is required to fund, totaling approximately \$9.399 million. He stated that with a 25% reduction in property values, the County will only generate enough money to fund the mandates if the millage rate stays the same (4.8949). Chief Administrator Butler reported that the Budget Review Committee recommends that the Board delay the funding of the Sports Complex (\$300,000.00), stop improvements and maintain the jail in its current condition (\$300,000.00), do not hire a second Animal Control Officer (\$50,000.00), drop property/casualty insurances (\$25,000.00), move the office of the Regional Conflict Counsel from the Courthouse (\$3,187.00), then the Clerk of Court can use this area as a storage facility (\$4,200.00), a savings of approximately \$682,387.00. He also discussed other recommendations for the Board to consider that include: the Health Department paying for their insurance and maintenance, tipping fees for the landfill, cutting the Mosquito Control Budget, increase beach driving permits, Fire Districts paying for building

and vehicle insurance, and install programmable thermostats County-wide (cost savings are unknown at this time). Chief Administrator Butler discussed non-recurring costs that include: Communications (\$150,000.00), Munis System (\$50,000.00), Community Building in Wewahitchka (\$8,500.00), Courthouse renovations (\$35,000.00), Maintenance and Supervisor of Elections roofs (\$50,000.00), maintenance equipment (\$60,000.00), Wewahitchka Courthouse roof (\$90,000.00), Public Works Building (\$25,000.00), and a beach rake (\$60,000.00), totaling approximately \$528,500.00 in savings. He discussed the projected 25% reduction, stating that after the non-recurring costs and committee recommendations have been deducted, an additional \$1.941 million will need to be cut from the budget to stay at the 2008-09 Millage Rate. Chief Administrator Butler discussed State Revenue Sharing proceeds and their use. He discussed possible solutions that would gain revenue including: initiate tipping fees (\$500,000.00), consolidation (\$500,000.00), consider cutting the D.R.A. (\$250,000.00), and initiate ½ cent sales tax (\$300,000.00). Chief Administrator Butler reported that this could gain \$1,550,000.00 in revenue to be used to offset the possible decrease in the property values. He discussed possible homestead and non-homestead examples of property tax and property values based on the proposed 25% reduction. Commissioner Yeager discussed his concerns regarding property value and homestead properties. After discussion by members of the Board, Chief Administrator Butler discussed his concerns regarding the Gas Tax Bond revenues. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Yeager, Chief Administrator Butler discussed the proposed savings in consolidating Public Works and the Road Department by moving these offices to one location (White City area) and shutting the power off to the old buildings. Acting Chairman McLemore stated that he is opposed to raising the millage rate. Chief Administrator discussed his concerns regarding the deadline to implement the ½ cent sales tax. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Yeager, County Attorney McFarland stated that the ½ cent sales tax option is an ordinance process, stating that it would require a simple majority vote of the Board. Acting Chairman McLemore stated that he is opposed to the ½ cent sales tax option. Commissioner Yeager stated that the Board will need to review other revenue options (tipping fees, user fees, ½ cent sales tax, & etc.). Acting Chairman McLemore stated that he is in support of the recommendation to consolidate. Commissioner Traylor discussed his concerns regarding consolidation and non-mandated funding. He recommended that the Board hold a meeting to present this presentation to the residents of Wewahitchka. Acting Chairman McLemore requested that the Budget Review Committee present to the Board the proposed savings (dollar figure) of the additional recommendations that were previously discussed. After discussion, Chief Administrator Butler recommended to end Mr. Denny Durben's Contract and hire someone to oversee the functions of the jail (Detention Facility) and to assist the Administrator's Office with County government issues. Upon discussion by Commissioner Yeager, Chief Administrator Butler stated that he will present this recommendation to the Board at their next regular meeting. Commissioner Yeager stated that he is in support of not hiring a second Animal Control Officer, reviewing the tipping fees option, and reviewing the ½ cent sales tax option. Chief Administrator Butler discussed the One Cent Fuel Tax, stating that there is five cents left which would generate revenue. After discussion by members of the Board, Rich Brenner, of St. Joe Beach, appeared before the Board to discuss his concerns regarding cutting services within the County and recommended that the Board review an income tax option. After discussion by Commissioner Traylor, Health

Department Administrator Doug Kent appeared before the Board to discuss his concerns regarding the budget cuts and millage rate, stating that he had to lay-off 10 employees last year because of budget cuts.

There being no further discussion, and upon motion by Commissioner Traylor, second by Commissioner Yeager, and unanimous 3-0 vote, the Board did then adjourn at 7:10 p.m., E.S.T.

**CARMAN L. MCLEMORE  
ACTING CHAIRMAN**

**ATTEST:**

**REBECCA L. NORRIS  
CLERK**