

PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 4, 2008

SPECIAL MEETING

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners met this date in special session with the following members present: Chairman Billy E. Traylor, Vice Chairman Nathan Peters, Jr. (9:03 a.m.) and Commissioners Carmen L. McLemore, Bill Williams, and Jerry W. Barnes.

Others present were: County Attorney Timothy McFarland, Clerk Executive Administrator Towan Kopinsky, Clerk Finance Officer Carla Hand, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Building Official Lee Collinsworth, Building Inspector George Knight, Emergency Management Director Marshall Nelson, Emergency Management/911 Coordinator Ben Guthrie, G.I.S. Director Scott Warner, Grant Writer Loretta Costin, Gulf County E.M.S. Director Shane McGuffin, Human Resources Director Denise Manuel, Mosquito Control Director Mark Cothran, Planner David Richardson, Road Department Superintendent Bobby Knee and Solid Waste Director Joe Danford.

Chairman Traylor called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m., E.T.

BUDGET

OVERSTREET WATER SYSTEM C.D.B.G.

Chairman Traylor discussed the progress regarding the Overstreet Water System C.D.B.G. <Commissioner Peters entered the meeting>, stating that Chief Administrator Butler and Grant Writer Costin met with D.C.A. and the County has been given a 6- month extension on the grant. Commissioner McLemore motioned to submit a letter to the City of Port St. Joe stating that the County needs to know within 48 hours that the City can do their part within 6 months. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion for discussion. After discussion by Chief Administrator Butler regarding the bid process (has already been started), the motion passed unanimously.

2008-09 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Chief Administrator Butler discussed that the Property Tax Amendment passed, and stated that the County can expect up to a \$1.8 million reduction in property assessments. He reviewed the 2007-08 cuts that were required to reach 91% of the rolled-back rate, and discussed revenue options and State mandates. Chief Administrator Butler discussed consolidation of the County Departments to save money and create more efficiency in an area north of the Intercoastal waterway. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Peters regarding consolidation start-up costs, Chief Administrator Butler discussed implementation of a one-half cent surtax for infrastructure and operational costs, which could have a sunset of 5-10 years. Chairman Traylor stated that this is something that the Board needs to seriously

consider. Commissioner Williams discussed he agrees with a centralized location, but they need to look at operational strategies first and the Union needs to be included in the discussions. Commissioner McLemore stated that he has always supported this concept, but it should be worked out carefully. Commissioner Barnes stated he agrees with this, and stated that they need to meet with the Union regarding this matter. Members of the Board discussed trying to obtain property near the Doc Whitfield (Howard Creek) Road and C. R. 50. Upon inquiry by Road Department Superintendent Knee regarding whether the Supervisors would be allowed back into the Union workforce, Chief Administrator Butler stated that the policy would have to be changed, but the idea is to have one main Director with Supervisors/Assistants for each area (Public Works, Road Department, Mosquito Control, Maintenance). After further discussion, the Board agreed for the Committee to continue working on this matter and for Commissioner Peters and Chief Administrator Butler to meet with The St. Joe Company regarding a land swap (County's 40 acres at Fleming's Curve in exchange for property near the Howard Creek / County Road 50 area).

BUDGET / SALARIES

Chief Administrator Butler discussed a comment by Allan Bense that the Legislature never intended for any County to have to make the drastic cuts that Gulf County had to make last year. He also discussed the cost of living, stating that in 1981 half of the people in the Air Force were on food stamps. He further stated that the County employees are in their second year with no pay increase, and the Board really needs to consider giving them pay increase because the costs of living are constantly increasing.

MOSQUITO CONTROL

Upon inquiry by Chairman Traylor, Mosquito Control Director Cothran discussed the possibility of an M.S.B.U. for mosquito control services. After discussion by the Board for him to proceed with obtaining more information, County Attorney McFarland stated that Mosquito Control is already included in the M.S.B.U. process that the Board has started. He discussed that the Board needs to proceed with installing the M.S.B.U. and obtaining the professional services needed to determine the cost analysis. After discussion by Chairman Peters, Chief Administrator Butler discussed they will be advertising to receive proposals for the study. Commissioner Peters stated that he was under the impression that the M.S.B.U. would include Mosquito Control, E.M.S. and Solid Waste. Chairman Traylor stated that the study would give them the amounts they need to put into place to cover these costs.

LANDFILL / SOLID WASTE

Solid Waste Director Danford reported that he has been checking to see if he can use grants funds to pay for the Solid Waste portion of the M.S.B.U. study. He also discussed

various other methods that could be implemented to pay landfill costs (tipping fee for everyone, tire disposal, debris separation, televisions no electronics can be placed in the landfill). After discussion by members of the Board regarding continuing to pickup debris on the right-of-ways, Commissioner Peters stated that he believes if the Board adopts an M.S.B.U. and charges a tipping fee, it would be double taxation. After further discussion, Commissioner McLemore requested that Solid Waste Director include the costs associated with opening the Wetappo Transfer Station 1 day per week, and the Board agreed for him to pursue instituting an M.S.B.U. only (no residential tipping fees).

STORM DEBRIS

Emergency Management Director Nelson discussed the debris from storms, stating that F.E.M.A. typically reimburses/pays the County tipping fees for storm debris from disasters. The Board discussed that nothing should change (there will still be a commercial tipping fee, and we have never had a residential tipping fee).

M.S.B.U.

Tim Stein inquired about the Cities having the right to “opt-out” of the M.S.B.U. Members of the Board discussed that if they did this, they would have to find another landfill. Commissioner Williams stated these issues will need to be worked out during the process.

INSURANCE

Human Resources Director Manuel discussed that the Insurance Committee met, and if the health insurance had to be renewed today, it would cost the County 125% of what they are now paying based on the number of claims we have. She requested that the Board seriously consider what they want to do next year (she overviewed the H.S.A. Program, a 2-policy system, using the Health Department, and an onsite healthcare facility for employees and families which may also be able to see inmates, which would be a huge savings). After further discussion regarding employee insurance and healthcare, the Board agreed for Commissioner Williams to work with Human Resources Director Manuel on this issue.

LANDFILL

Upon inquiry by Commissioner Peters regarding whether or not the City of Wewahitchka charges their residents for debris pickup, Commissioner McLemore stated he does not believe they charge the residents, but they also dump in the landfill free of charge. The Board discussed that the M.S.B.U. would cover everyone in the County.

MOSQUITO CONTROL / INSURANCE

Chief Administrator Butler discussed it is difficult to cut a public safety department like Mosquito Control, and it is the same with insurance there are no more cuts to make. Commissioner Williams stated that he believes that there are other, better ways to provide the services to employees at a cheaper rate. Chairman Traylor stated that the insurance is not as good as it used to be, but it is still not a bad program. Commissioner Williams discussed that we need to get more for what we are actually paying.

There being no further business and upon motion by Commissioner McLemore, the meeting did then adjourn at 10:31 a.m., E.T.

BILLY E. TRAYLOR
CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

REBECCA L. NORRIS
CLERK