

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

**JULY 25, 2011**

### **SPECIAL MEETING**

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners met this date in a Special Meeting with the following members present: Chairman Warren J. Yeager, Jr., Vice Chairman Bill Williams, and Commissioners Carmen L. McLemore, Ward McDaniel, and Tan Smiley.

Others present were: Clerk Rebecca L. Norris, Deputy Clerk Kari Summers, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Assistant Administrator Michael Hammond, Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Emergency Management Director Marshall Nelson, E911 Coordinator Ben Guthrie, G.I.S. Coordinator Scott Warner, Grant Writer Towan Kopinsky, Mosquito Control Director Mark Cothran, Planner David Richardson, Public Works Director Joe Danford, Sheriff's Office Captain Ricky Tolbert, Sheriff's Office Major Bobby Plair, Tax Collector Shirley Jenkins, and T.D.C. Director Tim Kerigan.

Chairman Yeager called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., E.T.

#### **COUNTY-OWNED PROPERTY**

Chairman Yeager reported that G.I.S. Coordinator Scott Warner would be giving a Power Point Presentation of County owned property. Chief Administrator Butler reported that G.I.S. Coordinator Warner did a lot of work in identifying and putting together a list of County owned property; stating that approximately 79 color-coded properties are listed on the handout. Mr. Butler discussed the properties outlined in white, stating that these are properties that the Board could possibly do something with. Mr. Butler further discussed the 15 vacant F.E.M.A. lots, how they were obtained, and what the Board's options were to possibly place these back on the tax roll; explaining that any proceeds from the sale or lease of these lots would have to be remitted to F.E.M.A. Chairman Yeager stated that many of these properties are parks and boat ramps but asked the Board members to review the list for properties that might be sold or leased, putting them back on the tax rolls, and to consider doing an R.F.Q. for a firm to manage and/or lease these properties. G.I.S. Coordinator Warner then proceeded with his power point presentation outlining and identifying the different color-coded properties owned by the County (copy of power point presentation on file in the Clerk's Office). Upon request by Chief Administrator Butler, G.I.S. Coordinator Warner gave a brief demonstration of the G.I.S. website capabilities. Chairman Yeager recommended advertising for an RFQ for someone that can review the ones that the Board wants reviewed and either make a recommendation to staff to either lease or sale the properties, stating that many of these lots need to be placed back on the tax roll. For the public's information, Commissioner McDaniel pointed out that the properties in white are the ones the County could sale and retain the money. Commissioner Williams commended Mr. Warner and other staff for all their hard work in compiling this data and developing the G.I.S. website.

Agreeing with Chairman Yeager's recommendation, Commissioner Williams moved to work with Chief Administrator Butler and County Attorney Novak to advertise for RFQ's to have the properties professionally assessed and make recommendations back to the Board for the highest and best use. Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

### **2011-2012 PROPOSED BUDGET**

Chief Administrator Butler reported on the millage history and the County funding difference by year since FY 2006-2007, stating that there has been a lot of work done on preparing this budget, having been given direction by the Chairman to come to this meeting with a balanced budget and to balance it to the current millage rate. Chief Administrator Butler stated that the Board would need to cut approximately \$100,000.00 from Budget Proposal #1 to get to the current year millage. Mr. Butler discussed proposed cuts to the budget for the Board's consideration as follows: (1) BOCC (Professional Services-majority of Lobbying Services) \$50,000.00, (2) Sheriff (Retirement savings) \$30,000.00. Mr. Butler stated that this was not just cutting \$30,000.00, but providing additional personnel for Courthouse security, and helping buy some additional vehicles. Chairman Yeager stated that we should have the security taken care of by October 1, 2011. (3) Supervisor of Elections (reduce the number of voting precincts) \$4,000.00. Chairman Yeager discussed the increase in the number of early voting and talked about future equipment purchase requirements. Commissioner Williams discussed the major issues of cutting precincts, stating that there were a lot of upset residents. Commissioner McLemore agreed. Assistant Administrator Hammond stated that the equipment may cost more than \$100,000.00 to replace, at \$15,000.00 per precinct. Rich Brenner appeared before the Board stating that the State just passed a new law on early voting, and they have cut back the number of days for the early voting. Chairman Yeager reported that when they cut the number of days the State extended the hours. Commissioner Williams brought to the Board's attention the push from the Federal government for ADA compliance on Storm Shelters, stating that an estimate is needed and requested Planner Richardson to look into this. Chief Administrator Butler continued with the proposed decreases/increases as follows: (4) decrease Parks and Recreation (City of Wewahitchka/T.L. James Park) \$13,671.00, (5) decrease Library \$16,509.00, (6) increase BOCC (County-Wide voting litigation) \$500,000.00, (7) increase Parks & Recreation (fireworks) \$10,000.00, (8) increase Parks & Recreation (repairs) \$22,000.00, (9) Parks & Recreations (moving expenditures to T.D.C. – weekend park clean-up) \$20,000.00, (10) Human Resource/Risk Management (decrease allocation-employees to pay half of costs – gym) \$3,000.00, (11) increase Honeyville Community Center (strip & wax) \$2,200.00, (12) decrease County portion of Medical Examiner \$4,932.00, (13) increase Parks & Recreation (incorrect amount put in) \$100.00, (14) decrease Grants (retirement) \$4,219.00, (15) decrease Grants (insurance) \$768.00, (16) decrease Human Resource/Risk Management (retirement) \$80.00, (17) decrease Information Technology (insurance) \$114.00, (18) decrease Information Technology (workers compensation) \$161.00, (19) increase Building Department (fax machine) \$500.00, (20) decrease Building Department (workers compensation) \$1,873.00, (21) increase Planning (salary) \$1,663.00, (22) decrease Planning (retirement) \$3,080.00, (23) decrease Planning

(insurance) \$217.00, (24) decrease Planning (workers compensation) \$47.00, (25) Deputy Administrator Lanier stated that the total budget allocation for the Extension Service would not change, they would only be adjusting line items and would have that worked out by the next meeting, increase Extension Agent (salary) \$7,360.00, (26) increase Extension Agent (F.I.C.A.) \$1,853.00, (27) increase Extension Agent (Medicare) \$432.00, (28) decrease Extension Agent (retirement) \$1,729.00, (29) increase Extension Agent (insurance) \$206.00, (30) decrease Extension Agent (workers compensation) \$369.00, and (31) increase Public Works (freight) \$2,400.00. Chief Administrator Butler reported that if everything listed on Proposal #1 is approved the net increase will be \$399,945.00. Clerk Norris reported on a list of items that need to be cleaned up. She reported that Deputy Administrator Lanier asked for the Wewahitchka Search & Rescue to be increased because they were in the same category as the Outside Agencies that Chairman Yeager had instructed the Clerk to reduce by 15%, stating that they are putting that amount back in the budget. Deputy Administrator Lanier explained that the Chairman gave instruction that on all Outside Agencies that had not previously submitted a budget request to use the same budget from last year, less 15%, stating that Search & Rescue submitted their request following the distribution of Proposal #1. Clerk Norris reported and summarized the changes on the list, stating that there are a couple more items that are not included in this list that will help reduce the Ad Valorem (increase in Communication Services Tax, Amendment #1 offset, and adjustments to the Port St. Joe D.R.A.). Chairman Yeager recommended accepting all items proposed by the Clerk. Commissioner Williams motioned to accept all items (complete list on file in the Clerk's Office) recommended by the Clerk. Commissioner McLemore seconded for discussion. Chief Administrator Butler reported that Proposal #1 removes 100% of the safety program, stating that the County receives a 5% Insurance reduction by having the safety programs, so they are going to keep the safety programs in the shops. Clerk Norris reported that with accepting everything that the Clerk suggested for budget changes, the Board would be within \$10,128.00 of their goal to get down to the current Fiscal Year millage rate. The motion then passed unanimously. Upon inquiry by Clerk Norris concerning the offer from the Sheriff for a reduction of \$30,000.00, Commissioner Williams motioned to approve the reduction in the Sheriff's budget by \$30,000.00. Commissioner McLemore seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Commissioner McLemore reported that they need to discuss the \$500,000.00 for the County-Wide voting. Chairman Yeager reported that they need to see the summary report before they make any decisions. Discussion followed. Commissioner Williams recommended waiting until the next budget meeting before making any decisions on Mr. Butler's recommendations to allow for further review. The Board had no objections. Chief Administrator Butler discussed the proposed \$50,000.00 decrease in the Professional Services, stating that the Board received the denial on the Gustav Appeal, which would now allow the County other options.

Sandy Christie of St. Joseph Bay Humane Society appeared before the Board and gave an update on the Humane Society, stating that in 2007 the County designated the Humane Society as its animal shelter for Gulf County, and in doing so; they made an agreement with the Humane Society to house their animals for \$49.00 per day, which included dogs and cats, and at the time the agreement was made the Humane Society

intake was approximately 42 intakes per day. She reported for 2010 that the average intake was 64 animals per day, so the Humane Society has seen an abrupt increase in the number of intakes for stray and homeless animals being brought to the shelter; however the amount of money that the Board allocated to the Humane Society was \$34,100.00 which was a capped figure based on the \$49.00 per animal per day, and an additional \$9.00 per day for all bite cases that would require quarantine. She stated that the Humane Society population is expanding tremendously, stating that the spay/neuter program has been successful, and the Humane Society has been doing more with less money since 2008. Ms. Christie reported that they have not seen an increase in funds since 2007, and have been continuing to treat and care for an increased number of animals every year, stating that compared to last year the increase for this year has been 23%. Ms. Christie thanked the Commissioners for giving their work crews, stating that without the work crews there is no way to accomplish the work at the Humane Society on a daily basis; however the utility cost continues to rise. She reported that the Humane Society took out a loan with U.S. D.A. based on the fact that they were going to be the animal shelter for Gulf County, stating that that loan payment is \$21,000.00 per year just to have a facility. Ms. Christie suggested that the Board not consider the Humane Society as an outside agency, stating that they feel that they are in a partnership with the County, and they need to County support to continue to care for the animals. Commissioner McLemore stated that when the County does not have an animal control officer on the weekends the Humane Society covers as the officers.

Chairman Yeager called a Special Budget Meeting for Monday, August 1, 2011 at 5:00 p.m., E.T., and requested before the public hearings start to place the proposed budget on the County website for the public. Deputy Administrator Lanier reported that the proposal is already on the website.

Rich Brenner appeared before the Board and inquired about the property owned by the State throughout the County and if they pay a fee in lieu of taxes. Chairman Yeager reported that all the County receives is approximately \$4,500.00 per year for taxes. Mr. Brenner inquired about the State requiring employees to pay 3.5% of their retirement. Chairman Yeager reported that the State now requires each employee to pay 3% of their retirement and this is reflected in the budget. Rich Brenner stated that he supports two organizations which is the Humane Society and the Library, and suggested for the County to pick-up the \$21,000.00 U.S.D.A. loan that the Humane Society pays on a yearly basis. Mr. Brenner recommended for the County to schedule a training class on the G.I.S. system to educate the public.

There being no further business, and upon motion by Commissioner Williams, the meeting did then adjourn at 6:25 p.m., E.T.

**WARREN J. YEAGER, JR.**  
**CHAIRMAN**

**ATTEST:**  
**REBECCA L. NORRIS**  
**CLERK**