

PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 26, 2008

SPECIAL MEETING

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

Others present were: County Attorney Timothy McFarland, Clerk Becky Norris, Clerk Executive Administrator Towan Kopinsky, Clerk Finance Officer Carla Hand, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Grant Writer Loretta Costin, Maintenance Superintendent Steve Mork, Mosquito Control Director Mark Cothran, Planner David Richardson, Public Works Director Gerald Shearer, Solid Waste Director Joe Danford, T.D.C. Director Paula Pickett, Union Steward Doug Kelly, Sheriff Joe Nugent and Tax Collector Shirley Jenkins.

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

BUDGET

DEPARTMENTAL CONSOLIDATION

Chairman Traylor discussed the budget issues facing Gulf County for 2008-09, and requested that Chief Administrator Butler give the Board a report. Chief Administrator Butler discussed the possible consolidation of the Public Works, Road, Solid Waste, Maintenance and Mosquito Control Departments. He stated that the Budget/Alternative Revenue Committee will meet tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. with all of the Department Heads to discuss how to make consolidation work. Commissioner Peters stated he believes this is the correct direction to take and, upon his inquiry, Chief Administrator Butler reported that the proposals for the M.S.B.U. Feasibility Study have not yet been received. Upon inquiry, Chief Administrator Butler stated that consolidation will take a lot of preparation, this is not something that could be changed today (cross-training to cover for each other, etc.). Commissioner Williams discussed consolidation, stating that he would like for the committee to show the (1) Management Structure, (2) F.T.E. Count, and (3) Services Analysis. Chief Administrator Butler stated that the plan is to do the same amount of work at less costs, otherwise it will not be feasible to consolidate. Commissioner Williams stated that the same amount of work cannot be done with less people. Commissioner Peters stated that during the lay-offs at Arizona Chemical, each person had to perform extra duties because the same amount of work had to be done. Chairman Traylor stated that he will not agree to lay off anyone else, and stated that consolidation will improve the workflow in all of the departments. After discussion regarding the proposed costs of the new facility, Commissioner McLemore stated that this is in the planning stage - the Committee has not even presented their report/recommendation. Commissioner Williams stated that consolidation makes sense if you are trying to cut resources, and Chief Administrator Butler stated that the resources are being cut whether or not the Board consolidates. After further discussion that the funds for consolidation would come through

a half-cent sales tax (not ad valorem taxes) and upon inquiry by Chairman Traylor, Chief Administrator Butler stated that it will take approximately 4-6 weeks for the Committee to prepare this report.

PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

Upon inquiry by Commissioner McLemore, Chief Administrator Butler reported that Property Appraiser Colbert reported that he cannot itemize the changes he has made, but he completed another 30-40 assessment changes last week. He also reported that G.I.S. Director Warner has presented a list of +/- 100 additional houses he has found, and will also submit a separate list that includes swimming pools, sheds, etc.

CONSOLIDATION

Upon inquiry by Union Steward Doug Kelly regarding what will determine which employees will keep their jobs if the County consolidates, Chairman Traylor stated that the Department Heads are meeting with the Budget/Alternative Revenue Committee tomorrow, and the Board cannot answer that question until the report is prepared.

TAX ROLL CERTIFICATION / MILLAGE RATE

Sheriff Nugent inquired when the Board might know what the proposed budget looks like for next year. Chairman Traylor stated that the Board will not know until the certification is received from the Property Appraiser. Commissioner Williams discussed mandates/budget cuts from the State and the passing of Amendment One (he estimates that the total could be well over \$1 million). Upon inquiry, Chief Administrator Butler stated that (1) by majority vote of the Board, they can adopt the current rolled-back rate, or (2) by super majority vote of the Board they can adopt 110% of the current rolled-back rate, or (3) by unanimous vote of the Board they can adopt a millage rate of up to 10. Members of the Board further discussed that they cannot continue to operate effectively if they cut more jobs, and Commissioner Williams discussed that the State is also facing severe budget cuts (of which many could be passed down to the County).

There being no further business and upon motion by Commissioner McLemore, the special meeting did then adjourn at 5:28 p.m., E.T.

ATTEST:

**BILLY E. TRAYLOR
CHAIRMAN**

**REBECCA L. NORRIS
CLERK**