

The Board of County Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida, met in special session on the above date for the purpose of conducting a preliminary budget hearing on the 2004/2005 budget. The Chairman called the meeting to order, Commissioner Fowler gave the invocation, and Commissioner Batchelor led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commissioners:	Josh Wooten, Chairman; Vicki Phillips, First Vice-Chairman; Roger Batchelor, Second Vice-Chairman; Gary Bartell and Jim Fowler
Administrator:	Richard Wm. Wesch
Management and Budget Director:	Cathy Taylor
Deputy Clerk:	Glenda Brown

Mr. Wesch stated that this tentative budget included departments and offices under the Board and that constitutional officers' budgets would be presented in July. He advised that the zero to six percent employee "pay for performance" plan had been maintained in this budget. He reported that due to the medical inflation rate and the higher than average plan utilization, preliminary numbers indicated that healthcare premiums would increase by 30 percent, and dependant healthcare coverage would increase by approximately \$90. He added that negotiations were continuing with Blue Cross Blue Shield to try to reduce those figures before the final budget hearing. He said that a review of other insurance carriers, a self-funded plan, or combining with other agencies had not resulted in lower numbers. He advised that the major problem was the lack of insurance providers in the County, and that Blue Cross Blue Shield had the largest network with over 400 doctors in the region compared to United Insurance Company's (United) 100 doctors. He added that staff would continue to evaluate the situation, and hope that United would increase their doctor program and be more competitive with Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Commissioner Phillips mentioned that Blue Cross Blue Shield was slow to pay, and Mr. Wesch stated that he would discuss that issue with them. He stated that Inverness Surgical Associates had dropped from the Blue Cross Blue Shield network because of the reimbursement rates. Mrs. Taylor advised that Blue Cross Blue Shield paid \$1.15 in claims for every dollar the County paid in last year.

Commissioner Phillips commented that the County subsidized the health care coverage last year, but could not continue to do so at this rate increase. Mr. Wesch stated that no subsidy was built into this year's budget. He responded to her question regarding the Sheriff's health coverage by stating that the Sheriff's Office was a self-funded plan, administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield with a high claims history and a family coverage premium of \$1,000 a month. Mrs. Taylor added that the new County dependant coverage rate would be \$386 per month.

[Clerk's Note: After reviewing a draft copy of the minutes, Mrs. Taylor advised that she had stated an incorrect amount for dependant coverage. The accurate amount for dependant coverage would be \$309 per month and the employee coverage would be \$386 per month.]

Chairman Wooten mentioned that last year the County subsidized dependant coverage only, but that there was also an increase in the deductible and co-payment. Mr. Wesch advised that staff had conveyed to Blue Cross Blue Shield and to Arthur J. Gallagher, the County's insurance broker, that the 30 percent rate increase was unacceptable and the County would not forfeit benefits as a means to reduce that factor.

Discussion continued regarding continuation of negotiations, obtaining bids from United and other insurance companies, whether other insurance companies would offer the option of reimbursement to employees when using non-provider doctors, insurance companies delaying payments, and so forth.

Directive to staff: Obtain quotes from insurance companies that would provide healthcare insurance coverage for this area (9:17 A.M.)

Mr. Wesch proceeded to review the following proposed 2004-2005 budget:

DIVISION	2003-2004 BUDGET	RECOMMENDED 2004-2005	PERCENTAGE INCREASE/DECREASE
Community Service Admin	124,820	133,934	7.30%
Extension Center	357,406	368,187	3.02%
Canning Center	38,470	38,443	-0.07%
Nitrate Workgroup	20,338	11,441	-43.75%
Libraries	2,332,256	2,618,948	12.29%
Schweizer Trust	3,000	2,000	-33.33%
Library Trust	10,000	10,000	0.00%
Parks	786,934	852,146	8.29%
Parks Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)	646,998	177,000	-72.64%
Parks Special Programs	103,386	176,384	70.61%
Chassahowitzka Campground	248,016	250,325	0.93%
Community Support Services	300,384	311,502	3.70%
Veterans Service	96,835	134,978	39.39%
Social Services	70,373	73,337	4.21%
State/County Welfare	455,083	455,083	0.00%
State/County Welfare	684,740	684,740	0.00%
West Side Community Center	68,097	64,614	-5.12%
Senior Center	67,029	71,907	7.28%
East Side Senior Center	68,601	81,136	18.27%
North Paul Drive	20,691	25,202	21.80%
Development Services	194,392	186,402	-4.11%
Community Development	1,273,837	1,533,791	20.41%
Housing Services	144,151	154,449	7.14%
Building Inspection	2,241,167	2,333,578	4.12%
Public Safety	541,891	646,267	19.26%

Animal Control	805,121	880,688	9.39%
Beverly Hills Fire Dept	405,084	136,348	-66.34%
Fire Training Center	204,747	328,090	60.24%
Fire Rescue	2,062,911	4,764,058	130.94%
Fire Capital Improvement	532,925	543,650	2.01%
Reserves and Transfers	601,617	581,197	-3.39%
Code Enforcement	575,952	578,112	0.38%
<hr/>			
Public Works Admin	472,210	515,757	9.22%
CIP - ADA	126,950	75,000	-40.92%
Aviation	83,046	80,321	-3.28%
Aviation CIP	291,750	205,716	-29.49%
Water Quality - Operating	208,888	191,930	-8.12%
Water Quality	727,500	70,000	-90.38%
Road Maintenance	6,420,699	6,701,017	4.37%
Road Maintenance CIP	713,057	550,000	-22.87%
Aquatic Weed Control	1,928,511	2,707,886	40.41%
Lake Improvements	41,512	42,960	3.49%
Boating Improvements	75,543	81,300	7.62%
Maintenance Operations	4,355,838	4,775,355	9.63%
Fleet Maintenance	813,567	790,708	-2.81%
Citrus Springs Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU)	476,960	213,340	-55.27%
Beverly Hills MSBU	62,537	56,032	-10.40%
Water & Wastewater	4,090,554	3,881,757	-5.10%
Wastewater Expansion	-	175,000	-
Renewal & Replacement	456,700	143,700	-68.54%
WRWSA Renewal & Replace	97,416	105,446	8.24%
Engineering	1,289,696	1,485,600	15.19%
5 Year Road Program	26,127,981	5,992,000	-77.07%
Landfill	4,320,070	3,242,525	-24.94%
Long Term Care	507,412	1,247,990	145.95%
Litter Program	169,262	147,844	-12.65%
Recycling	668,326	645,783	-3.37%
Hazardous Waste	109,825	181,065	64.87%
<hr/>			
Board of County Commissioners	366,058	376,071	2.74%
Administrative Services	8,550,051	7,282,400	-14.83%
Capital Improvement Program	2,200,209	2,011,432	-8.58%
County Administrator	553,730	686,457	23.97%
County Attorney	364,794	416,696	14.23%
Human Resources	255,463	340,172	33.16%
Management & Budget	377,088	354,447	-6.00%
Systems Management	890,341	1,295,828	45.54%
GIS	-	594,415	-
Utility Regulatory	275,000	184,382	-32.95%

CRIM Justice Facility	406,900	372,200	-8.53%
Criminal Justice Facility	661,400	637,400	-3.63%
Lecanto Office Building	573,900	560,900	-2.27%
1999-2000 Projects	321,900	308,000	-4.32%
2001 Projects	385,000	375,000	-2.60%
Kensington Estates			
Kensington Estates	2,100	2,250	7.14%
Cedar Lake Estates	1,410	1,460	3.55%
Carpenter's Country	1,535	1,610	4.89%
Lovlace Lodges	3,633	3,633	0.00%
Crystal Oaks 7 & 8	5,910	6,060	2.54%
Southern Woods 2 & 3	4,400	4,500	2.27%
Southern Woods	3,080	3,180	3.25%
Hampton Hills	6,430	6,630	3.11%
Castle Lake Park SLD	4,429	4,429	0.00%
Connell Heights SLD	940	940	0.00%
Dixie Shores SLD	1,370	1,520	10.95%
Emerald Oaks	1,030	1,030	0.00%
Apache Shores	2,510	2,830	12.75%
Crystal Oaks SLD	12,260	12,260	0.00%
Cypress Village SLD	193,060	198,060	2.59%
Foxwood SLD	1,980	2,090	5.56%
Riverhaven Village SLD	19,100	19,820	3.77%
Crystal Paradise SLD	7,750	8,200	5.81%
Crystal Glen SLD	6,880	7,050	2.47%
Cinnamon Ridge SLD	8,310	8,310	0.00%
Water Oaks SLD	2,460	2,460	0.00%
Flying Dutchman SLD	2,930	2,980	1.71%
Oak Forest SLD	2,090	2,090	0.00%
Spring Gardens SLD	2,150	2,250	4.65%
Law Enforcement Impact Fees			
Law Enforcement Impact Fees	197,000	575,238	192.00%
Fire Impact Fees			
Fire Impact Fees	269,885	318,385	17.97%
EMS Impact Fees			
EMS Impact Fees	52,615	52,815	0.38%
Libraries Impact Fees			
Libraries Impact Fees	140,500	38,500	-72.60%
Public Buildings			
Public Buildings	280,000	475,000	69.64%
Community Park 1 Imp Fees			
Community Park 1 Imp Fees		13,000	-
Park District 3 Imp Fees			
Park District 3 Imp Fees	199,356	23,000	-88.46%
Park Impact Fees Dist 1			
Park Impact Fees Dist 1	77,000	107,100	39.09%
Park Impact Fees Dist 2			
Park Impact Fees Dist 2	132,609	545,200	311.13%
Park Impact Fees Dist 3			
Park Impact Fees Dist 3	187,675	293,410	56.34%
Park Impact Fees Dist 4			
Park Impact Fees Dist 4	237,442	110,650	-53.40%
Road Impact Fees Dist A			
Road Impact Fees Dist A	755,000	510,000	-32.45%
Road Impact Fees Dist B			
Road Impact Fees Dist B	470,000	233,500	-50.32%
Road Impact Fees Dist C			
Road Impact Fees Dist C	1,323,000	110,000	-91.69%
Road Impact Fees Dist D			
Road Impact Fees Dist D	862,135	525,000	-39.10%

The Commissioners had comments, questions, and concerns relating to the following budgets. Mr. Wesch, Mrs. Taylor, Mr. Battista, Public Safety Director Charles Poliseo, Development Services Director Gary Maidhof, and Information Systems Director Darryl Clouse discussed the issues and provided answers.



Community Services Administration

- The \$2,000 line item for safety and rate signs was for the placement of two markers for historical buildings.



Extension Center

- Staff's target hiring date for an agriculture agent was July 1; however, since the position was jointly funded by the state, the date of employment would depend upon their budget.



Chassahowitzka RV Campground

- According to the lease agreement with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), the County was technically responsible for the maintenance of the buildings at the campground; however, staff had asked the SWFWMD to fund half of the \$10,000 building maintenance improvements. Since the lease could be broken, and the SWFWMD did not want the maintenance responsibility, staff thought they would consider the request.
- The initial request for building improvements was reduced from \$66,000 to \$10,000 because it was determined that the buildings could be repaired rather than replaced.
- It was more productive to subcontract the management of the Chassahowitzka RV Campground.
- Revenues supported the campground, and capital purchases were delayed until the end of the year to make sure the revenues covered expenses.



State/County Welfare Budget

- The state required the County to fund \$1 million for the Medicaid Program and nursing home care for County residents.



East Side Senior Center

- ADA improvements would be made to the restrooms.



Community Development

- The two staff positions that were approved by the Board outside of the budget cycle had been filled.
- Permitting was back on a ten-day cycle and ahead of schedule at this time.
- New positions requested in this budget were for a supervisor and a senior planner.



Building Division

- Interviews were now occurring for inspectors; however, another inspector had left to join the private sector and two positions were still open.
- Discussions had been held with the Human Resources Department about revamping the incentive package for inspectors including the encouragement of certification in additional trades and reviewing pay grades.
- Other counties were experiencing the same problems of recruiting Inspectors.
- The use of technology and competency of dedicated employees had assisted in the building permit turn around time.
- It was more cost effective to have inspectors on staff rather than hiring contract building inspectors.
- Staff would attempt to develop a new building inspection package as part of the regular budget process in July.

The Commissioners praised Mr. Maidhof and his staff for their dedication in reducing the amount of time to issue permits and for the excellent customer service

(9:44 A.M.)



Public Safety Department

- The request for an additional fire prevention inspector was needed to insure that inspections occurred at least every 12 months.
- It was difficult to target a specific number of inspections per day due to the complexity of various buildings.



Animal Control

- An additional animal control officer was requested in addition to the four positions approved in last year's budget.
- This was the most stressful job in the County, due to the 50 percent euthanasia of approximately 15,000 animals handled each year.
- A spay and neuter program was subsidized through local veterinarians, and the County had instituted a microchip program.
- The Animal Control website received more "hits" than all other County websites combined.
- Citizen education and pet owner responsibility was a growing problem.
- The County would continue exploring programs utilized by other counties and municipalities in dealing with this difficult issue.

(9:52 A.M.)



Beverly Hills Fire Department

- Improvements for an additional bay, sleeping quarters, and restroom upgrades to the fire station had been postponed.
- Although there had been no problems of vandalism or theft, the issue of the brush truck that was currently parked outside the fire station would be addressed in the future.

- The \$14,000 line item for insurance was because insurance premiums were being transferred from the General Fund and the Road and Bridge Fund to the self-funded programs.



Fire Training Center

- Although revenues were increasing, it was not known if this facility would ever be a self-supporting enterprise.
- The \$50,000 addition to regular salaries was due to an increase in instructors' hours.
- The facility was a benefit to the volunteer firefighters.
- The facility would also benefit paid firefighters, and a financial contribution could be made to this budget from the future firefighters funding mechanism.

Directive to staff: Prepare a report in advance of the July budget hearing regarding the utilization of the Fire Training Center by other agencies, as requested by Commissioner Phillips

The Chairman recessed the meeting and reconvened at 10:12 A.M.



Fire Rescue

- This budget outlined the Fire Services Master Plan Phase I by adding 42 paid firefighters, which would require an increase of up to one mill in the Fire Services Taxing District.
- The study being conducted by an outside counsel (Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson, P.A.) regarding alternative funding sources would not be completed before next year's budget because it involved a review of the Sheriff's Office, Public Safety, and the Emergency Medical Service.
- If the Board delayed the request for all 42 paid firefighters until the outside counsel's study was completed, those employees hired last year would still be beneficial because they would help reduce the span of control and manage 235 volunteers and 22 existing fire stations.
- It was difficult to recruit volunteer firefighters; however, the volunteer coordinator had recently recruited 15 to 20 volunteers.
- Phase in approximately half of the requested 42 paid firefighter positions, and place those firefighters at the two busiest fire stations, one on the east side and one on the west side of the County.
- The outside counsel would recommend either an MSBU or a MSTU (Municipal Service Taxing Unit) funding source for Public Safety.
- Paid firefighters response time was faster than that of volunteers because volunteers had to leave their jobs and travel to the fire station.
- Volunteer firefighters were required to have 160 hours of Firefighter 1 Training and training demands were increasing.
- Career firefighters' training requirements were 400 hours.

- \$500,000 to \$600,000 in the CIP could be delayed one year until a funding mechanism was in place for Public Safety, which would make the budget somewhat revenue neutral.
- Waiting for the outside counsel's completed study for alternative funding sources would give citizens an opportunity to express their opinions.
- The Board had previously agreed that if an MSBU were established for Public Safety, the ad valorem millage rate would be lowered accordingly in order to be revenue neutral.
- The Fire Services Master Plan goals set in 2003 should be reevaluated for accomplishment and priority.
- The study by the outside counsel was intended to guide staff in eventually creating an MSBU or MSTU.
- Staff's ultimate goal was to integrate the Beverly Hills and the Crystal River Fire Departments into the County's Fire Services Master Plan.

Directives to staff: (1) Prepare a report on the current response times and number of volunteer firefighters as requested by Commissioner Phillips; (2) review the CIP for available revenue for the fire stations as requested by Commissioner Fowler; (3) contact Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson, P.A., for a progress report and time frame for the completion on the study regarding alternative funding sources for the Public Safety Department as requested by Commissioner Phillips; and (4) present a new implementation plan to accomplish the tasks discussed and meet the Board's goals. (10:36 A.M.)



Code Enforcement

- There were no new positions for this budget year; however, the budget did reflect the potential recommended changes.
- The funding for the code enforcement officer at the landfill would derive from the Landfill Budget.



Aviation CIP

- The closed vehicle fuel depot at the Crystal River Airport could be made into a parking area for vehicles.



Road Maintenance

- Commissioner Fowler suggested that the County cease maintaining the 261 miles of limerock roads, stop wasting taxpayers' dollars each year, and pave the roads.
- Discussion was held regarding the costs, different options for accomplishing the paving of the limerock roads, the people not objecting to paying an assessment to pave the roads, and so forth.

Directive to staff: Provide alternatives to the Board for paving 261 miles of limerock roads

Mrs. Taylor explained to Chairman Wooten that the annual contribution to the Lakes Enhancement Fund was budgeted and would be presented at the July hearing.



County Administrator

- A new communications resource director would assist the Board, citizens, and the media with research and information, and increase the level of service.
- The risk manager assistant would file paperwork, investigate accidents, and report to the contract risk manager.
- The risk manager assistant position was included in the Risk Management Contract.

(11:06 A.M.)

The Chairman recessed the meeting and reconvened at 11:26 A.M.



County Attorney

Mr. Battista explained to Commissioner Fowler that the position for an additional assistant county attorney that was budgeted last year was partially due to the Article V legislation regarding the prosecution of County ordinance misdemeanor cases; however, that was no longer the situation. He advised that it had been 20 years since the first assistant county attorney was hired, and he felt there was a need for this additional position. He detailed some of the changes in County government, including the addition and creation of the various departments and programs. He also stated that more interaction with staff would be required due to the new code enforcement process, the new animal control ordinance, and continuing litigations. He informed the Board that he spent 49 hours per month, and that Assistant County Attorney Michelle Slingerland spent 73 hours per month just handling appointments and attending meetings. He further stated that an additional person would also free him up to provide incidental advice concerning human resource matters, which was currently provided by the Fowler White Law Firm at about \$45,000 a year.

Discussion ensued regarding the following: the current workload and overtime hours; the additional position was previously approved due to Article V legislation; an additional attorney would reduce the need for hiring outside counsel on many issues, would work with the Public Safety Department and the Code Enforcement Board regarding enforcement issues, and would allow the Mr. Battista to develop and maintain expertise in employment laws for dealing with human resource issues and Ms. Slingerland to work with the Development Services Department; delaying the hiring process until the next budget hearing; providing information to the Board to justify the position; outside attorney fees and other contractual services, and so on.

Directive to County Attorney: Prepare a memorandum to the Board outlining the job description of the additional assistant county attorney, and the vision for the County Attorney's Office for all three positions.

(11:56 A.M.)



Human Resources

- The request for an additional receptionist was due to the workload; however, due to the Board's discussion today on reducing the number of paid firefighters, the request for the two new positions would be postponed for review until the July budget hearings.
- The line item for professional services at \$10,616 was for specialized employee training.



Office of Management and Budget

- A new budget technician position was requested due to the increase in grants administered by the office.
- Although grant documents were forwarded to the Clerk's Finance Department for accounting, this office maintained data files and reviewed all purchase orders, grant applications, and reimbursements for Aviation and Water Quality grants, and capital projects for Public Works.



Systems Management

- \$11,000 for other contractual services, \$11,298 for maintenance-buildings, and \$116,460 for equipment maintenance were related to the computer operated telephone system, which was transferred from the Maintenance Operations Division.



Geographic Information

- This budget was based upon work that was to be performed by another organization; however, the County was recently notified that they would not be able to perform the work; therefore, the budget hearing in July would reflect a substantial reduction.

Mr. Wesch thanked the Board for their comments and direction, and expressed appreciation to Mrs. Taylor and her staff, the senior staff, and those involved in preparing this budget.

Chairman Wooten commented that he thought there was a consensus of the Board to employ as many firefighters as possible without implementing a millage increase. Commissioner Fowler reiterated his suggestion to postpone the CIP for 12 months in order to fund and operate the two fire stations. Commissioner Phillips asked that all the recommendations and requests be presented to the Board for review before the July budget hearings. Chairman Wooten then thanked staff for the excellent job on preparing the budgets.

There being no other business to come before the Board, the Chairman adjourned the meeting. (12:11 P.M.)

ATTEST: _____, Clerk _____, Chairman