

Pinellas County

*12520 Ulmerton Road
Largo, FL 33774*



Minutes - Final

Thursday, June 17, 2021

9:30 A.M.

Budget Information Session/Agenda Briefing

Pinellas County Cooperative Extension

Board of County Commissioners - **Budget Information Session**

*Dave Eggers, Chair
Charlie Justice, Vice-Chair
Rene Flowers
Pat Gerard
Janet C. Long
Kathleen Peters
Karen Williams Seel*

ROLL CALL - 9:33 A.M.

Present 7 - Chair Dave Eggers, Vice-Chair Charlie Justice, Commissioner Rene Flowers, Commissioner Pat Gerard, Commissioner Janet C. Long, Commissioner Kathleen Peters, and Commissioner Karen Williams Seel

Others Present: Barry A. Burton, County Administrator; Jewel White, County Attorney; and Sitara Coyle, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

1. Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

Pinellas County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Ken Burke presented the department's budget and related that the County is undergoing updates on its Enterprise resource planning system as part of a three-year plan; whereupon, Mr. Burton commended Mr. Burke and his office for their collaborative efforts throughout the past year.

2. District Six Medical Examiner

Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Jon R. Thogmartin responded to queries by Commissioner Flowers and reported that the department's budget increased by 8% this year; that most people who died due to COVID-19 had co-morbidities; and that there is a serious opioid crisis in the county, as fatalities have increased by 29% in the past two years.

3. Florida Department of Health, Pinellas County

Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County Director Dr. Ulyee Choe presented the department's budget and elaborated on COVID-19 data and vaccination efforts, public health services, and procedures to handle the pandemic as the volume of cases changes. Responding to queries by the members, Dr. Choe discussed the impact of having a nurse at each school and the difficulty in recruiting nurses due to an industry shortage.

4. Human Services

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Financial Management Analyst Don Mello, with input from OMB Project Coordinator Belinda Amundson, referred to a document containing Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022) Budget Summary Analysis and discussed the Department's budget summary, staffing, and potential threats, as well as an overview of the budget that details revenues, expenditures, efficiencies, and COVID-19 performance impacts and responses.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Long, Director of Human Services Karen Yatchum related that the closing of St. Pete Free Clinic homeless shelters was likely not previously known by the community; that the loss of those shelters amounts to eight large family units; and that multiple funders are collaborating with the Homeless

Leadership Alliance of Pinellas to strategically align funding.

Ms. Yatchum went on to discuss improving accessibility to services, utilizing data across multiple systems to drive community response, seeking new grant opportunities to increase access points to services and minimize deaths in the community, and the outstanding work of her staff throughout the pandemic.

Deviating from the agenda, Chair Eggers indicated that item No. 5 will be addressed later in the meeting.

6. Safety & Emergency Services

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Analyst Jason Miller, with input from OMB Project Coordinator Belinda Amundson, referred to a document containing Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022) Safety & Emergency Services Budget Analysis and provided information on the department's performance summary and staffing, as well as an overview of their budget that specifies revenues, expenditures, and decision packages.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Justice, Mr. Burton discussed the proposed decision packages in the department's budget, and Safety & Emergency Services Director Jim Fogarty stated that firework sales permits are generally issued by local fire departments; and that there are no anticipated changes to the sheriff's enforcement of rules regarding the usage of fireworks.

Mr. Fogarty proceeded to discuss the department's success and challenges in recent years, the top reasons for turnover in the workforce, procedures to minimize delays due to staffing issues in hospitals, and the significance of the growth management decision package in the budget.

In response to queries by the members, Financial Services and Ambulance Billing Division Director Jodie Sechler, with input from Mr. Fogarty, related that the SunStar FirstCare Membership Plan is a great benefit to citizens who frequently require an ambulance; that work is being done to advertise the service; and that an analysis is underway to determine what is causing staffing issues at SunStar.

Responding to additional queries by the members, Mr. Fogarty indicated that fire departments have experienced less turnover than hospitals and ambulance services; that the public emergency medical transportation program enables the department to receive federal reimbursement dollars that the County matches; and that legislation regarding bi-directional amplifiers has not changed significantly, however, it did delay the implementation and redefined the types of buildings that require an amplifier.

Following a query by Commissioner Flowers, Ms. Sechler explained that the Department, as an EMS provider, agreed to not bill uninsured patients with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis as part of the terms and conditions to receive CARES Act funds; that \$2.6 million in CARES dollars was received to go towards loss revenue; and that there is a portal where claims can be submitted for the Department to be reimbursed at the Medicare rate for patients without insurance.

Deviating from the agenda, Chair Eggers indicated that item No. 7 will be addressed later in the meeting.

8. Animal Services

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Financial Management Analyst Charlie Jenkins referred to a document containing Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022) Animal Services Budget Analysis and discussed the Department's purpose, services, and staffing, as well as an overview of their budget that details revenues, expenditures, decision packages, and potential threats.

Animal Services Director Doug Brightwell appeared and indicated that the Department recovered from the pandemic decrease in licensing and have now reached a record number of animal licenses at almost 206,000; that a new organizational structure was introduced in January to increase efficiencies and improve programs; and that the Community Outreach team, Animal Health Division, Outcome Team, and Pinellas Cats Alive! Pilot Program were created as part of the structural changes within the department.

In response to queries by the members, Mr. Brightwell, with input from Mr. Burton, related that the community cat sterilization decision package would enable the Department to sterilize, vaccinate, and ear tip an additional 1,400 cats per year; that Animal Services does not have any control over the importation of animals to be sold in pet stores, however, the animals are required to have health certificates upon arrival to the county and are thereupon examined; and that each of the five pet shops in the county are inspected and must have a permit to be allowed to operate.

5. Pinellas County Office of Human Rights

Office of Human Rights Director Jeffery Lorick provided information regarding his Department's budget summary and discussed the responsibilities of his office, as well as operational changes during the pandemic.

7. Pinellas County Emergency Management

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Management & Budget Manager Fredricka Collins referred to a document containing Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022) Emergency Management Budget Analysis and summarized the Department's purpose, operational priorities, staffing, revenues, expenditures, and budget summary.

In response to a query by Chair Eggers, Emergency Management Director Catherine Perkins related that due to a Florida statute passed following Hurricane Irma, every evacuation facility must have an emergency power plan; that some facilities have a backup generator to accommodate individuals with special needs; and that given there are individuals who cannot get vaccinated yet, evacuation facilities are prepared to

practice social distancing and other COVID-19 related precautions.

Ms. Perkins discussed the creation of a command room in the Emergency Operations Center, the growth of the department's logistical group, the products of decision packages in recent years, and highlights of the work her staff has done in the past year in regards to the pandemic as well as during severe weather incidents.

Meeting recessed at 11:54 A.M.

Meeting reconvened at 12:35 P.M.

9. Agenda Briefing

Referring to the proposed agenda of the June 22 BCC meeting, Mr. Burton and his staff, along with Attorney White, provided information on the agenda items and responded to queries by the members.

Chair Eggers noted that Jim Nixon from the City of St. Petersburg approached him regarding lighting the Skyway Bridge for Pride Month, and Attorney White would draft a resolution of no objection for the Board to vote on at the June 22 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT - 1:00 P.M.