

Pinellas County

12520 Ulmerton Road
Largo, FL 33774



Minutes - Final

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

9:30 A.M.

Budget Information Session

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 - 9:37 A.M.

Members Present: Dave Eggers, Chair; Charlie Justice, Vice-Chair; René Flowers; Pat Gerard; Janet C. Long; Kathleen Peters, and Karen Williams Seel

Others Present: Barry A. Burton, County Administrator; Jewel White, County Attorney; and Jenny Masinovsky, Senior Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

Upon recommendation by Attorney White regarding virtual participation, a motion was made by Commissioner Gerard, seconded by Commissioner Flowers, that Commissioner Seel be allowed to participate in the meeting virtually. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Chair Eggers, René Flowers, Pat Gerard, and Janet Long

Absent: 2 - Vice-Chair Justice and Commissioner Peters

Mr. Burton provided an overview of the upcoming budget sessions, indicating that budget requests will be presented by the departments of the County and Constitutional Officers; and that they will be evaluated by staff based on the Board's Strategic Plan and available funding sources, culminating in a budget recommendation to the Board on July 13.

Pinellas County Property Appraiser Mike Twitty discussed the history of property values in the county over the last several years, taxable value estimates, tax roll certification timelines, new construction, and residential market growth resulting from an influx of out-of-state buyers; whereupon, he responded to queries by the members, and Mr. Burton provided comments.

1. Introduction and Budget Overview

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Countywide Budget Division Director Cecilia McCorkell, with input by Mr. Burton, provided an overview of the budget process, noting that new software was implemented and utilized for the budget development this year; and that certain inflationary increases have been assumed within the proposed budgets of the Constitutional Officers, but not in the budgets of the County departments or the independent agencies.

Budget summary documents pertaining to each presentation and copies of all PowerPoint presentations provided to the Clerk's Office have been made a part of the record.

2. Parks and Conservation Resources

OMB Budget and Financial Management Analyst Charlie Jenkins referred to a document containing Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Budget Information Session - Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) Analysis, discussed the Department's purpose, staffing, funding

sources, revenues, expenditures, COVID-19 impacts, and decision packages; whereupon, he, Mr. Burton, OMB Director Bill Berger, and PCR Director Paul Cozzie responded to queries by the members regarding the revenues, the proposed parking meter upgrade to 4G networks, and related matters.

Mr. Cozzie noted that while this time last year the Department staff was primarily involved with various COVID-19-related activities, they are looking forward to resuming their mission of serving the public in the parks, protecting natural resources, and providing education and assistance to visitors and residents. He indicated that implementation of the Cityworks software in the fall will benefit the Department by supplying performance measurement data analysis; and that a recently conducted service-level study provides insight into Department needs for sustaining top tier parks and environmental lands programs for residents and visitors.

Jonathan Ingram, Raftelis/The Novak Consulting Group, referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Pinellas County Parks and Conservation Resources Service Level & Staffing Study* and discussed the firm's background, study overview, and key findings and recommendations regarding the Department, highlighting the following:

- Since 2007, 47% of the Department staff was reduced, while over 16,000 acres of environmental lands were added to its maintenance responsibility. Park attendance has increased by 11% since 2018.
- The quality of County parks is linked to community perceptions of quality of life.
- As a result of the study, 31 additional full-time employee positions across the Department are recommended in order to achieve the best practices service levels and proper coverage of leave time, at the estimated cost of over \$2 million.
- The proposed implementation plan includes a phased approach to additional staffing.

Discussion ensued regarding the needs and concerns associated with additional staffing, scope of the study, the role of volunteers in park maintenance, and other matters, and Messrs. Ingram, Burton, and Cozzie responded to queries by the members. OMB Project Coordinator Shane Kunze indicated that his research supports the study conclusions as to the Department's inability to meet the best practices level of service with the current staffing numbers; and that Pinellas PCR staffing levels are below other similar counties in Tampa Bay and Florida.

3. Utilities Department

Referring to various documents, OMB Budget and Financial Management Analysts Veronica Ettel and Erica Mitchell, with input by Mr. Kunze, discussed the Department's

Veronica Ettel and Erica Mitchell, with input by Mr. Kunze, discussed the Department's purpose, staffing, total budget summary and FY 2022 request, Water Program and Sewer Program budgets, Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, various initiatives, efficiencies, and potential threats.

Meeting Recessed: 12:12 P.M.

Meeting Reconvened: 12:49 P.M.

Utilities Director Megan Ross discussed the progress toward achieving the Department's priorities, including support of the infrastructure to ensure water quality protection and delivery of reliable wastewater and reclaimed water services, customer satisfaction, and employee leadership and development.

In response to comments and queries by the members, Ms. Ross, with input by Ms. Ettel, provided information regarding water and sewer rate increases and public outreach on the matter, the Water Program, the Advanced Metering Infrastructure Program, wastewater infrastructure funding, extending useful life of assets, Regional Resource Recovery Facility, and related matters. Mr. Burton noted that the budget request and the rates are driven by the infrastructure demands; that there is no proposed increase in staffing; and that grant funding opportunities would be explored to minimize future rate increases.

4. Public Works

OMB Budget and Financial Management Analyst Abigail Lloyd, Ms. McCorkell, and Mr. Kunze referred to a document containing FY 2022 Budget Summary Analysis and discussed the Department's purpose, staffing, budget summary, potential threats, and decision packages, as well as the responsibilities, budgets, projects, and performance measures pertaining to each of its Divisions.

Responding to queries by the members, Public Works Director Kelli Hammer Levy, with input by Mr. Burton and the OMB staff, provided information relating to Cityworks software implementation, development of a regional stormwater facility in Palm Harbor, construction of trail overpasses, development of a risk-assessment tool for contamination detection, and lack of needed easements for beach nourishment.

Ms. Lloyd referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Transportation Trust Fund: Additional 5-Cent Local Option Fuel Tax* and provided an overview of the fund, indicating that the fund forecast shows an annual \$10 million gap between expenditures and revenues; that if the current levels of service are maintained and no new initiatives are introduced, the fund balance is expected to be exhausted in FY 2022, with a deficit of \$3.3 million projected to grow through FY 2027 and onward; whereupon, she and Ms. Levy, with input by Mr. Burton, discussed the following:

- Examples of current service levels
- The need for additional funding

- Transportation Trust Fund history
- Options to address funding gap
- Additional factors
- Recommendation: expand the local option fuel tax by five cents per gallon, obtain other funding, and renew ninth-cent fuel tax in FY 2027
- Sidewalk maintenance opportunities
- Pavement management and Americans with Disabilities Act improvements
- Revised forecast - recommendation
- Next steps

During discussion and responding to queries and concerns by the members, staff provided information regarding the recommendation to expand the local fuel tax and the revised forecast, Penny IV as an alternative funding source for projects funded by the Transportation Trust Fund, fuel tax indexing and allowable uses, impact of the proposed fifth-cent tax on taxpayers, charging for electrical vehicles, and related matters.

5. Solid Waste

Ms. McCorkell introduced the item; whereupon, OMB Budget and Financial Management Analyst Linda Larkins, Finance and Accounting Analyst Jennifer Castagner, and Mr. Kunze referred to a document containing FY 2022 Solid Waste Budget Analysis and discussed the Department's purpose, COVID-19 performance impacts, budget summary by program, various studies and projects, opportunities for efficiencies, and potential threats.

Chair Eggers left the meeting and Vice-Chair Justice assumed the gavel at 3:05 P.M.

Solid Waste Department Director Paul Sacco provided further details regarding priority projects and efforts within the Department's Recycling and Site Operational Programs, including standardization of municipal recycling contracts, feasibility review for a publicly-owned regional Materials Recovery Facility, Enterprise Asset Management Program utilization, Enhanced Metals Recovery, and incineration of electronics. He discussed the impact of the increased trash levels on the life of the landfill, capacity of the Waste-to-Energy facility, the goal of zero waste to landfill by 2050, and plans to resume recycling education efforts.

Responding to queries by Commissioners Seel and Justice, Ms. Larkins and Mr. Sacco provided information regarding the Department's CIP budget, tipping fee rate increases, and the incineration of electronics.

Mr. Burton made an announcement about a COVID-19 vaccination event for the hospitality employees taking place on May 20, hosted by Clearwater Beach hotels and organized by the Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater and the Florida Department of Health.

ADJOURNMENT - 3:21 P.M.