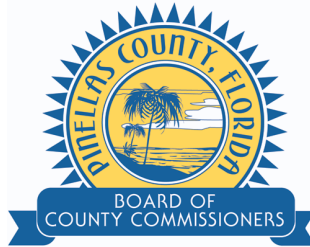


Pinellas County

*315 Court Street, 5th Floor Assembly Room
Clearwater, Florida 33756*



Minutes - Final

Thursday, May 12, 2016

9:30 AM

BCC Assembly Room

Board of County Commissioners **Budget Information Session**

*Charlie Justice, Chairman
Janet C. Long, Vice-Chairman
Dave Eggers
Pat Gerard
John Morroni
Karen Williams Seel
Kenneth T. Welch*

ROLL CALL - 9:34 A.M.

Members Present: Charlie Justice, Chairman; Janet C. Long, Vice-Chairman; Dave Eggers; Pat Gerard; and Karen Williams Seel.

Members Absent: John Morroni and Kenneth T. Welch.

Others Present: James L. Bennett, County Attorney; Mark S. Woodard, County Administrator; and Christopher Bartlett, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk.

Budget summary documents pertaining to each presentation have been filed and made a part of the record.

County Administrator Woodard provided a brief overview of the meeting agenda, noting that this is the second in a series of three budget information sessions.

1. Article V

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Article V and Court Support*, Senior Financial Management and Budget Analyst Donald Mello provided an overview of the Article V provisions and how they relate to the annual budget, noting that Article V of the Florida State Constitution identifies the County's responsibilities to include funding of court technologies, facilities, security, and other local options; that court fees designated as revenue help offset those costs; that the cost of the obligations outweigh the revenue received; and that in Fiscal Year 2016, \$32 million from the General Fund was spent to offset the difference.

Mr. Mello stated that the costs for supporting the court system are budgeted across several agencies in the General Fund and fall into the following categories:

- Required County functions
- Local options with defined revenue streams
- Court innovations and other local options
- Other court related programs

Referring to the presentation, Mr. Mello provided a detailed breakdown of Fiscal Year 2016 costs and revenue under each of the four categories, noting that only about \$1.9 million of the \$32 million total is subject to unrestricted discretionary decisions by the Board.

In response to queries by the members, Mr. Mello indicated that court related programs,

court innovations and other local options are the main categories with the most discretion; whereupon, Mr. Woodard related that court fines and fees provide revenue to support the programs; and that when program costs exceed revenue, the gap is filled by the General Fund.

Responding to query by Commissioner Gerard, Mr. Mello stated that some court programs receive grant funding; and that the County provides matching funds to the federal funds received in a number of cases.

2. Judiciary

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Judiciary: Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Request*, Sixth Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Anthony Rondolino provided an overview of County-funded court staffing and programs. He related that the total Fiscal Year 2017 budget of \$4,001,180 reflects a reduction in County Support in the amount of \$84,240, or 2.1%; and in response to query by Commissioner Long, that a considerable portion of the decrease is related to a reduction in Risk Management.

Chief Judge Rondolino indicated that the budget for most programs remains close to Fiscal Year 2016 levels; that projected revenues offset a portion of the program costs; and that the remaining costs are paid by the County.

Mr. Woodard discussed the County's self-insured risk fund and indicated that premiums fluctuate year to year based upon actual worker's compensation and liability claims; whereupon, Chief Judge Rondolino discussed the Article V statutory requirement.

In response to query by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Woodard noted that court revenue is in direct correlation with population size; and that revenue has remained stable in recent years.

3. Public Defender

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, Public Defender Bob Dillinger provided background and statistical information pertaining to County-funded programs operated through the Public Defender's Office, and presented the Fiscal Year 2017 budget request in the amount of \$1,226,350, which reflects a \$199,400 increase over the previous year.

He noted that since 2004, the Jail Diversion program has diverted 5,630 mentally ill people from the Pinellas County Jail with a 90% success rate; and that the requested increase of \$23,250 would return the program to its original funding level, noting that the

program suffered cutbacks in 2008.

Mr. Dillinger indicated that for the past nine years, two case manager positions within the diversion program were funded by the managing entity of the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) program; that the funding has been discontinued at least temporarily, if not permanently; and that in the interim, he has one active case manager, and will acquire a second case manager through the state budget. He stated that he is now seeking to fill two SOAR positions, which the managing entity, the Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, will fund at \$100,000 of the related costs, and discussion ensued.

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Dillinger indicated that adding a new diversion program would not change the requested budget; that his office is becoming paperless and is working to digitize all paper records; and that a pilot program for the homeless and those with chronic behavioral health issues will hopefully reduce costs and could be scaled and replicated to address other issues if successful.

4. State Attorney

State Attorney Bernie McCabe presented the State Attorney's Office Fiscal Year 2017 budget request in the amount of \$264,510 for Article V technology related expenses. He indicated that the State Attorney's Office pays \$51,500 in annual rent to the County for the Child Welfare Legal Services offices; that all County ordinance violations are prosecuted free of charge; and that the State Attorney's Office worked with the County to co-locate its Consumer Protection staff with State Attorney personnel; whereupon, Mr. Woodard related that the partnership has improved customer service by having both staffs in one shared location, and thanked State Attorney McCabe for the partnership.

In response to queries by Commissioner Long, State Attorney McCabe related that the Sheriff may have a plan to include the new diversion program with the probation department; and that the program would require an independent person to evaluate each case for inclusion in the program; whereupon, he discussed the possible impact that a pro-marijuana ballot petition might have on the program.

5. Tax Collector

Tax Collector Diane Nelson introduced her staff and displayed a document titled *Tax Collector FY17 Budget Request - BCC Funds*, and noted that this will be her final budget presentation before her retirement early next year. She indicated that her office is required to submit its budget to the Florida Department of Revenue for approval; that the actual expenditures shown are as of March 31, 2016; and that the final budget will be

submitted to the Department of Revenue the first week of August; whereupon, she provided an overview of the budget request.

Ms. Nelson announced that her office will receive the 2016 Governor's Sterling Sustainable Excellence Award as a follow-up to receiving the Governor's Sterling Award in 2013; whereupon, she thanked the Board and County Administrator for supporting the establishment of a new facility and driving range in North County which will improve customer service; and indicated that the processing center currently located in the Young-Rainey STAR Center will be relocated to the new offices, hopefully by the end of September.

Responding to queries by the members, Ms. Nelson indicated that some existing positions will remain vacant and not be filled; and that her office may have ten to fifteen vacancies at any given time; whereupon, the members congratulated and thanked Ms. Nelson for her many accomplishments as Pinellas County Tax Collector.

6. Supervisor of Elections

Supervisor of Elections Deborah Clark displayed a document titled *Supervisor of Elections FY17 Budget Request by Program*, and indicated that the proposed budget in the amount of \$6,613,410 is 2.4 percent above target; and that the overage is due to increased costs associated with the November Presidential General Election; whereupon, she discussed the Election's associated costs and issues.

In response to queries by the members, Ms. Clark stated that grant monies for the election will be used for specific purposes; that expectations are for a large turnout of voters; and that a majority of votes could be cast as mail ballots. She indicated that many voters value the 'I Voted' stickers they receive when casting their vote; and that a voter can check the status of their vote online once it has been cast; whereupon, she provided an overview of the *Vote in Honor of a Vet* program targeting area high schools, and discussion ensued.

Ms. Clark referred to the cooperative spirit that exists within County Government, and noted that a partnership with the Pinellas County Tax Collector has been successful in providing more ballot drop-off locations and better customer service to citizens.

7. Property Appraiser

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, Property Appraiser Pam Dubov provided an update on various items pertaining to the Property Appraiser's Office and indicated that the proposed budget is under target largely due to the transition of several employees to

retirement. She noted that the temporary executive assistant position will be converted to a permanent full-time position to better accommodate the newly elected Property Appraiser in November; and that the appropriation for the position will move from the operating category to personnel and would not affect the bottom line; whereupon, she discussed other costs associated with her upcoming departure and the retirement of long-term employees.

Ms. Dubov related that an ongoing audit of homestead exceptions has resulted in her office filing 236 lien cases and upholding 61 additional exceptions; and that 509 cases are still to be reviewed.

Ms. Dubov stated that the tax roll is increasing; and that she is projecting an increase for the General Fund and the Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) of 6.5 percent and 5.5 percent respectively; whereupon, the members thanked her for her leadership and years of service, and discussion ensued regarding her future successor and the issue of flood insurance.

Meeting Recessed: 11:04 A.M.

Meeting Reconvened: 11:13 A.M.

8. Forward Pinellas (Pinellas Planning Council)

Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) Executive Director Whit Blanton conducted a PowerPoint presentation, provided an overview of the PPC budget and millage rates, and responded to queries by the members, indicating that:

- The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and PPC will rebrand the organizations as *Forward Pinellas* and will begin operating as such at their next meeting.
- The administrative integration of both organizations has resulted in accumulated cost savings of over \$1 million.
- The MPO/PPC has adopted a new Countywide Plan as its guide to all Pinellas County local governments, and is working towards using the MPO transportation planning process to establish its Capital Improvements Program.
- The MPO and PPC have separately completed clean audits, matching last year's results.

- Forward Pinellas will move in a strategic new direction to elevate a countywide focus on multijurisdictional issues and will work closely with the County Planning Department to clarify expectations with regard to economic development, land use, and transportation within the north-south corridor.

Mr. Blanton discussed various projects of emphasis and strategic partnerships, and recommended that the millage rate be reduced from .0160 to .0150; whereupon, he stated that the new rate is sustainable for a number of years by leveraging the activities of the County, local governments, state, and local partnerships.

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Blanton indicated that working regionally makes sense; that the Tampa Bay region needs to convey a clear message of unity; and that certain issues will require a regional perspective to address them properly, and discussion ensued.

In response to query by Commissioner Long, Mr. Blanton stated that having forward-aligned plans in place will help the County embrace opportunities for transportation projects more quickly; that the evolving population is expecting more on-demand types of services; and that Pinellas County has many walkable neighborhoods and other destinations that require support in the form of housing and transportation options.

Adjournment - 11:42 A.M.