

# **Pinellas County**

*315 Court Street  
Clearwater, Florida 33756*



## **Minutes - Final**

**Thursday, May 4, 2017**

**9:30 AM**

**BCC Assembly Room**

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

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

**ROLL CALL - 9:36 A.M.**

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

Members Absent: Charlie Justice and John Morroni.

Others Present: James L. Bennett, County Attorney; Mark Woodard, County Administrator; and Jenny Masinovsky, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk.

Budget summary documents pertaining to the presentations have been made a part of the record.

**1. Feather Sound Community Services District - Richard Petit, Treasurer**

Mr. Petit introduced Feather Sound Community Services District Board Vice-Chairman Maria Hubert; whereupon, he conducted a PowerPoint presentation titled *Feather Sound Municipal Services Taxing Unit, FYE 2018*, which has been made a part of the record, and presented the District's Fiscal Year 2018 budget request in the amount of \$240,000.

Mr. Petit provided a brief history of the District, noting that the seven appointed Board members are responsible for providing services such as maintaining the green spaces, recreational areas, and street lighting for the community. He discussed the current needs and expenses, including fixing the boardwalk, replacing the 40-year-old entrance sign, and obtaining rubberized mulch for the playground.

Mr. Petit related that cash reserves continue to decline; that after paying the expenses, the District is left with a negative cash flow; and that a potential increase of the homestead exemption would reduce the District's tax base by \$100 million; whereupon, he indicated that the current 0.5 mill, which is the budget source, needs to be increased to at least 0.6 and preferably 0.7 mill in order for the Board to continue maintaining the aforementioned items; that pursuant to a community survey, most of the 45 residents who responded to the question of whether or not they would support the tax increase responded positively; and that at some point the County may need to assume the responsibility for maintaining the County-owned recreational areas.

During discussion and in response to queries by the members, Mr. Petit provided historical information with regard to the millage assessment, relating that it was gradually reduced from the maximum allowable rate of one mill to a half-mill in order to expend the previously accumulated reserves, and Mr. Woodard discussed various legislative initiatives leading to limitations and the decrease of the millage rate. Mr. Petit and Ms. Hubert provided details relating to the budget request and discussed the community interest in a dog park project, noting that Feather Sound does not have enough recreational areas compared to other

areas of the county; whereupon, the members requested additional information regarding the budget request, expenses, and long-term needs, and Chairman Long emphasized the importance of recognizing the residents' concerns relating to having sufficient space for a dog park.

Mr. Woodard indicated that staff will continue to work with Mr. Petit and Ms. Hubert pursuant to the Board's direction and will return with a revised proposal prior to the presentation of the proposed budget in July; whereupon, Commissioner Seel and the other members recognized and thanked Mr. Petit and Ms. Hubert for their long-standing service to the Feather Sound community.

**2. Forward Pinellas - Pinellas Planning Council - Rodney Chatman, Planning Division Manager**

Mr. Chatman referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Forward Pinellas Budget Information Session FY 2017/2018*, which has been made a part of the record, and provided background information regarding the agency, indicating that Forward Pinellas was created as a result of the merger of the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in 2016; and that it continues to seek efficiencies and cost-saving measures, align transportation priorities with land use redevelopment objectives, and fine-tune financial and regulatory incentives to help create quality communities; whereupon, he reported that audits of the MPO and the PPC performed after the merger have thus far been clean.

Mr. Chatman related that staff and the Forward Pinellas Board engaged in a Strategic Planning Session, developing a set of SPOTlight (Strategic Planning and Operations Topics) Emphasis Areas for a two-year period; and that the agency continues to strengthen partnerships with local governments and transportation agencies; whereupon, he presented information regarding the following items:

1. SPOTlight Emphasis Areas: U.S. Highway 19 vision plan, Gateway/Mid-County Area master plan, Beach Community Access Enhancement
2. Complete Streets Grant Program
3. Knowledge Exchange Series for providing planning assistance to local governments
4. Socio-Economic Data Development for the Long Range Transportation Plan and other initiatives
5. RESTORE Act Grant
6. Special Area Planning Grant Program

Referring to a pie chart divided into Personal Services, Operating Expenses, and Reserves, and a graph reflecting the budget history since 2014, Mr. Chatman provided an overview of the budget request, explaining the separate funding sources for the MPO (state and federal funding) and the PPC (property tax); whereupon, he noted that the agency will be analyzing the impact that an additional homestead exemption could have on the current level of service.

During discussion and in response to queries by Chairman Long, Mr. Chatman indicated that staff consists of 18 full-time employees; and that some employees are funded from both revenue sources, which may complicate regionalization of the MPOs; whereupon, Chairman Long requested that the matter be discussed in greater detail during the upcoming Collaborative Lab workshop, and Commissioners Seel and Gerard indicated their support for regionalization.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Chatman indicated that the maximum millage rate is 0.1666 mills, pursuant to the Special Act; that he is uncertain as to whether that number has always been the same; and that the decrease in the assessed millage from Fiscal Year 2016 to Fiscal Year 2017 was voluntary; whereupon, Commissioner Welch pointed out for the record that two local government organizations, Forward Pinellas and Feather Sound, have voluntarily reduced their taxes.

**3. Pinellas Public Library Cooperative - Cheryl Morales, Executive Director**

Ms. Morales introduced Pinellas Public Library Cooperative (PPLC) Board of Directors President Karen Roth, who thanked the members for their support of the PPLC and expressed appreciation for all the library services offered to the public today in addition to books, including various workshops, open meeting rooms, the lending of tools and sewing machines, and the provision of seeds.

Referring to a PowerPoint Presentation titled *PPLC, BCC Budget Presentation for FY 2018*, which has been made a part of the record, Ms. Morales presented the budget request in the amount of \$5,250,680. She recognized the members of the Cooperative's Board of Directors in the audience and provided an overview of the organization, noting that the Cooperative has 14 member libraries and 24 public library outlets; and that its mission is to connect the individual municipal libraries with each other and with other community organizations, collaborating on various projects; whereupon, she responded to queries by the members and discussed the following:

- Member services, including resources for businesses, various databases, and language learning tools
- Circulation trends totaling 5,674,291 in Fiscal Year 2016
- Connecting with patrons via website and mobile application
- Partnership programs (Tampa Bay Ukulele Society, Reading with Tampa Bay Rays, St. Petersburg Museum of Fine Arts family passes, State of Florida Career Online High School, Juvenile Welfare Board Campaign for Graded Level Reading)
- Countywide services for visually/hearing impaired individuals

Ms. Morales indicated that PPLC libraries have unique databases, whose usage has been phenomenal with over eight million records retrieved last year. She related that the libraries have expanded their nontraditional services and developed innovative programs due to a fluctuating number of registered borrowers; and that the number of users of programs for the visually/hearing impaired has increased dramatically since the expansion of outreach services.

In response to queries by the members, Ms. Morales indicated that Indian Rocks Beach and Indian Shores libraries are not members of the Cooperative for financial reasons; whereupon, she provided information regarding late fee assessments, and discussion ensued.

**4. East Lake Library Services District - Lois Eannel, Library Director**

Ms. Eannel thanked the Board for supporting the library, noting that funding from the millage rate, the British Petroleum (BP) settlement, and the Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) allowed for great strides to be taken last year toward expanding the library building, parking facilities, and programs for patrons; whereupon, she provided an update relating to the following projects and statistics:

- A joint-use agreement between the library and Pinellas County School Board to create a shared parking lot with Cypress Woods Elementary School is close to getting signed; project funded by \$350,000 allocation of the BP Settlement funds
- Enclosed children's garden, funded by \$15,000 of MSTU dollars, will be completed next week
- Approximately 1,000 programs and 12,000 attendees, including a tremendous increase in teen involvement with participation in over 70 programs
- 100,000-vehicle traffic count
- Over 9,000 volunteer hours equating to \$198,000

Ms. Eannel reported that with the \$1 million grant received from the State, the library is entering the construction phase of the 2,500-foot expansion project which will provide a new community room, a dedicated teen area, a separate children's room, and much-needed additional work space for staff and volunteers. She indicated that a decision by the State with regard to the \$500,000 library construction grant request to renovate the existing building and add enhancements to improve space functionality will be rendered next week; whereupon, she thanked Real Estate Management and Office of Management and Budget staff for their assistance with the project.

In response to queries by the members, Ms. Eannel confirmed that the library request for the Penny for Pinellas will be \$5.1 million, which would fund an additional 11,000-square-foot expansion to meet the minimum standards set for Florida public libraries; that a building expansion would not necessitate staffing increases; and that there is approximately \$200,000 in the library reserves. She provided a petition in support of the request with 240 signatures, which has been made a part of the record; whereupon, she discussed the following matters with the members:

- Operation and maintenance costs and funding; Commissioner Welch requested a five- or ten-year projection of costs
- Changing the millage cap
- Building expansions

- Staff cross-training/children's services focus
- Role of the library for the East Lake Community/importance of meeting rooms
- Satellite County offices as part of the partnership between the County and the library

Later in the meeting, Commissioner Eggers offered to forward Assistant County Attorney Amanda Coffey's opinion on the matter of changing millage caps in the independent districts to the members.

**5. East Lake Recreation Services District - Mark Sanders, Director of Operations**

Mr. Sanders thanked the Board for providing the District with the 0.25 mill, relating that it helped lower the sports participation fees for children and families, which was one of the main goals for the millage; whereupon, he provided a maintenance project update as follows:

- Football field lighting replacement (lighting project phase one) completed
- Turf care plan implemented
- East Lake Meadows parking lot upgraded
- Motorized entrance gate provided (funded by MSTU)

Mr. Sanders related that lighting replacement will be ongoing for the next several years; and that the proposals for phase two, LED lighting for a senior baseball field, will be submitted to the Palm Harbor Community Services Association (PHCSA) Board next week, and if approved, East Lake will have the first recreational facility with an LED-lit ball field. He discussed several infrastructure and capital needs, including a permanent office building, restroom facilities at the East Lake Meadows complex, parking lot repairs and expansion at the main complex, and the possibility of adding tennis and basketball courts.

Mr. Sanders expressed appreciation to Parks and Conservation Resources Director Paul Cozzie for the East Lake Meadows parking lot upgrade, which addressed concerns relating to safety, drainage, and mud; whereupon, he asked the Board to support the 0.25 millage rate for Fiscal Year 2018.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Sanders confirmed that the District's property tax revenue is \$654,030, as indicated on the document titled *East Lake Recreation Services District Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request*, which has been made a part of the record. He related that approximately two thirds of the budget is utilized for operations, and the remainder for renewal and replacement; and that he has already submitted the District's Penny for Pinellas funding request to the County.

In response to queries by the members, Office of Management and Budget Director Bill Berger explained the aforementioned budget document, noting that additional information relating to operations and capital improvement expenses can be incorporated into the budget presentations of the independent districts going forward, and Mr. Woodard indicated that further details will be provided at a later time.

6. Palm Harbor Community Services District - Gene Coppola, Library Director and Erica Lynford, Recreation Director

Ms. Lynford expressed appreciation to Mr. Woodard and his staff for their efforts in assisting the association with several projects throughout the year and the Board for providing financial support through MSTU and BP Settlement dollars. She discussed how the funding will be used, including numerous ongoing and new programs and bookings for events offered for children, adults, and seniors; whereupon, she highlighted the year's accomplishments.

Noting the value of partners, Ms. Lynford discussed the partnerships formed with AARP, Tampa Bay United Rowdies Soccer Club, Girl Scouts, Eckerd College, Greater Palm Harbor Area Chamber of Commerce, and the YMCA of the Suncoast Greater Palm Harbor Branch.

Ms. Lynford related that the impending seven-percent budget loss next year should not impact the programs because the summer day camp and other specialty camps provide substantial proceeds and sponsor various free services; and that she is confident that the association will continue to operate at the same level, noting that not one senior program has been cut in 14 years. Responding to query by Commissioner Seel, Ms. Lynford indicated that the association self-funds approximately \$600,000 of its budget with proceeds from the programs, facilities rentals, user fees, and donations, and Commissioner Seel pointed out that it is an impressive amount; whereupon, Commissioner Eggers commended Ms. Lynford and her staff for making connections, building community partnerships, and working together, and Chairman Long thanked her for her hard work, collaborative approach, and service to the community.

Mr. Coppola thanked the Board for providing MSTU funding to the District for the second year in a row. He discussed the evolution of libraries from a passive book checkout to an active gathering place and the big movement of "maker spaces" providing a safe, neutral, and supportive creative environment, relating that among other programs, Palm Harbor Library offers children's art maker space and a sewing machine initiative, both privately funded; that new initiatives include a mobile kitchen unit for cooking classes and programs for the holidays; and that there are plans to incorporate more study and meeting rooms and to utilize MSTU funding to create an area for Macintosh computer users.

Mr. Coppola related that during the first half of the current fiscal year, 81,000 people have walked through the library doors; that volunteers have contributed numerous hours, saving the library \$549,000; that facility upgrades, including security features such as cameras and an anti-shooter door are underway; and that the library will be celebrating its 40-year anniversary on April 1, 2018, an achievement that Mr. Coppola attributed to community volunteer efforts; whereupon, he requested that the half-mill tax be continued for Fiscal Year 2018.

In response to queries by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Coppola confirmed that the library currently receives the half-mill income and indicated that he would provide the organizational chart. Office of Management and Budget Analyst Katherine Burbridge provided clarification regarding the budget request amounts for the library and the Community Service Association; whereupon, Commissioner Welch commended Ms. Lynford and Mr. Coppola for their service and professionalism.

**Meeting Recessed: 11:53 A.M.**

**Meeting Reconvened: 12:34 P.M.**

**7. Penny for Pinellas - Proposed Projects and Categories for Penny IV**

Director of Marketing and Communications Barbra Hernandez referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Penny for Pinellas, May 4, 2017, Building a Better Pinellas*, which has been made a part of the record, and provided a brief history of the Penny, relating that it funds long-term capital investments, including roads and bridges, stormwater systems, public safety equipment, and parks and the environment.

Ms. Hernandez noted that visitors contribute a third of the Penny revenue, providing cost savings for the residents; that it is not collected on groceries or medicine; and that it allows the County to make meaningful local investments without having to rely on property taxes and leverage other sources of funding.

Ms. Hernandez related that community needs for the funding were identified through a process that included open house meetings, engagement with community organizations, BCC input and strategic plan goals, an online survey, a new informational website, and citizen input regarding their concerns provided throughout 30 years; whereupon, she discussed the various ways in which information regarding the Penny was disseminated.

Ms. Hernandez indicated that the top three categories resulting from the online survey were water quality and flood/sewer spill prevention, improvements to roads and bridges, and parks and the environment, while the results of the open house meetings showed public support for improved roads, bridges, trails, water quality, and parks and environment preservation, noting that affordable housing and expansion of the East Lake Library were strongly favored by some of the participating groups.

Penny IV Projection (2020-2030)

Mr. Woodard referred to the PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the following points regarding the Penny IV projected revenue and distribution:

- Estimated total revenue is \$2 billion.
- Approximately \$225 million (11.3%) would be used for countywide investments in capital projects to further economic development and housing opportunities (8.3%) and jail and court facilities (3%).

- Remaining \$1.8 billion would be split between the County (51.8%) and municipalities (48.2%) per statutory formula.

He indicated that staff proposes to reduce the current Penny's \$225 million dollar investment in jail and court facilities to \$60 million, which is the approximate cost of adequate support of the facilities, and to base the countywide investment amount on a percentage (11.3%) in order to account for fluctuations in the economy that may occur over the ten-year period.

#### Guiding Principles and Strategies for Penny IV Investments

Mr. Woodard discussed guiding principles and strategies considered with regard to the proposed investments and noted that resources are finite in comparison to the needs; that the investment master plan includes specific projects, as well as categories, to allow flexibility for possible changes in priorities; and that staff proposes to adapt a portfolio approach where capital projects accomplishing multiple public needs are given priority.

In response to queries by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Woodard provided clarification regarding the Penny distribution plan, explaining that the proposal to have a fixed percentage versus fixed dollar amount for the countywide investments would provide flexibility and prevent an unintended negative impact on remaining distributions; and that depending on the actual collected Penny revenue, both the County and the cities will benefit or lose.

#### Improved Roads, Bridges, and Trails

Kenneth Jacobs, Public Works, Transportation Division, referred to the PowerPoint presentation and discussed the prioritized list of projects proposed to improve the roads, bridges, and trails, noting that it was started about four years ago while developing the Long Range Transportation Plan update.

Mr. Jacobs indicated that prioritization was based on input from a broad base of stakeholders, including Public Works, Economic Development, Planning, Forward Pinellas, Community Development, and municipalities, in order to approach a roadway holistically by addressing all areas of concern, such as sidewalks, drainage, intersections, interconnections, and readdressing its function, rather than merely improving road capacity as in the past; and that a major portion of the projects will involve resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure; whereupon, Mr. Woodard pointed out that the project selection process entailed a great deal of technical expertise and a public-centric dimension.

During discussion and in response to queries by the members, Messrs. Jacobs and Woodard provided clarification regarding the projects, including their schedule, eligibility, and allocation sources. Mr. Woodard indicated that today staff is seeking policy guidance with regard to projects and their categories, cautioning the Board against setting a public expectation by attempting to balance the dollars with projects at this point in time.

Mr. Woodard noted the importance of maintaining flexibility, reiterating that the needs are greater than the resources, and Mr. Jacobs pointed out that funds should be balanced among the various programs; whereupon, discussion continued regarding raising the roadway standards, striving to do more projects and keeping the public informed of the direction that the County is taking, defining priorities, and addressing the outstanding projects from past Penny lists.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Welch and Chairman Long, Mr. Woodard indicated that outstanding Penny projects were analyzed with regard to current priorities and placed on either a short or long Penny IV list, unless they were no longer viable, largely for lack of community support. At the request of Mr. Woodard, Mr. Jacobs provided examples of adjusting Penny III projects as a result of community feedback or lack of funds, where the goal of moving traffic through corridors more efficiently was achieved through intersection improvements instead of high-dollar road widening projects.

Mr. Woodard noted that in preparation for the Penny IV public education and information campaign, project categories were renamed to provide the public with a better understanding of County objectives.

#### Water Quality, Flood, and Sewer Spill Prevention

James Bernard, Public Works, Stormwater and Vegetation Division, referred to the PowerPoint presentation, relating that a wish list of 93 stormwater projects out of 180 total identified to be addressed in the upcoming Penny was prioritized based on the County watershed management plans and feedback from the residents and staff; whereupon, he discussed the issues, goals for improvement, partners, and projects pertaining to the following project categories and subcategories:

- Stormwater/Sanitary Sewer System Projects to Reduce Sanitary Sewer Overflows
- Regional Stormwater Systems
- Water Quality
- Flood Prevention
- Erosion Control

In response to queries by Commissioner Eggers regarding investigation of the wastewater system triggered by the force main problem in Palm Harbor, Director of Utilities Randi Kim provided an update, indicating that an investigation of pipelines to the north and south of the incident, in addition to the pipeline in question, was conducted, utilizing very effective latest technologies; and that an investigation of additional lines identified as susceptible to corrosion will be initiated shortly.

Ms. Kim agreed with Commissioner Eggers that the cost of a spill is much higher than preventive measures, noting that citizen health concerns would be a factor besides the increased cost of an emergency response; whereupon, at the request of Mr. Woodard, she provided an update concerning the Wastewater/Stormwater Task Force, indicating that

staff plans to update the Steering Committee on the progress made with regard to implementation of the Initial Action Plan.

Commissioner Seel requested that during further discussions of the above projects, the Board be provided with maps of the creeks; whereupon, in response to her query, Mr. Bernard discussed the sidewalk improvement project on Indian Rocks Road and the associated drainage improvement plans, and Mr. Jacobs noted that the project is included in the current Penny and is slated for construction next year.

#### Safe, Secure Community

Assistant County Administrator John Bennett referred to the PowerPoint Presentation and discussed the major concepts pertaining to safety and security of the community and the importance of increasing evacuation shelter space, keeping the emergency communication radio system robust and operable, and the needs associated with aging public safety vehicles, equipment, and facilities.

Mr. Bennett indicated that the Redington District does not have a set fire station and provided information regarding an opportunity for a project combining a fire station and a lift station, an EMS law enforcement outpost, a public works facility, and a voting center in one building, noting the efficiency that it would offer to the public; whereupon, he spoke about the Animal Services Department, indicating that the facility needs to be updated and service capabilities expanded.

During discussion and in response to query by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Woodard explained the ways in which the County provides funding assistance to dependent and independent fire districts, indicating that there is an opportunity for the County to pay for capital improvement needs of the dependent districts with the Penny IV proceeds; and that Penny funds have been used that way in the past. Commissioner Seel cautioned against providing additional funding to dependent fire districts unless doing so would serve a countywide purpose, noting that both independent and dependent districts are encouraged to keep reserves for unanticipated financial needs. Mr. Woodard indicated that utilizing the Penny would build additional capacity in the General Fund and other property tax funds, which is an opportunity that may not be available in Fiscal Year 2020; and that funds would be allocated thoughtfully and strategically.

Chairman Long provided historical information with regard to a land purchase intended for a fire station near Bay Pines veterans' hospital, inquiring about the plans to accommodate the area, and Mr. Bennett indicated that a data-driven focus group is working to ensure that an appropriate level of service is met in that area and throughout the County.

#### Preserving Parks and Our Environment

Parks and Conservation Resources Director Paul Cozzie referred to the PowerPoint presentation and indicated that major focus areas in the next Penny will involve dealing with aging infrastructure, as the majority of county parks range from 50 to 70 years of age;

whereupon, he discussed the need to renovate or replace park structures and utility infrastructure, pave park roads and lots, and replace sidewalks, and presented information regarding the current status and plans associated with signature projects, including the Wall Springs Park expansion, environmental land acquisition, Taylor Homestead, Ft. De Soto Visitor Center, and Heritage Village.

During discussion, Commissioner Gerard opined that the current Heritage Village location is unfitting for a museum and urged the Board to consider utilizing the former Gulf Coast Museum of Art to house it. She indicated that she has received a request from the Botanical Gardens for Heritage Village space in response to the Request for Proposal (RFP) issued by the County and advocated offering the space to a tenant associated with the County. Mr. Woodard indicated that the only proposal in response to the RFP was received from Creative Pinellas and is being reviewed by staff; whereupon, he discussed the possibilities of either repurposing the Gulf Coast Museum of Art or building a new structure to house Heritage Village, and Commissioner Seel remarked that Heritage Village is an asset that should be used to its greatest potential and discussed previous plans to utilize the space for lifelong inspirational/experiential learning.

Mr. Woodard mentioned the canoe/kayak launch included in the Wall Springs Park expansion project and discussed a capital investment opportunity to carry out a pre-recession plan for a blue ways trail encircling the peninsula and connecting various County parks with coastal city parks. He indicated that the project would serve a growing recreational need in the community and enhance the visitor experience; and that while there would be a capital impact, the ongoing operating and maintenance costs would be minimal to none.

#### Community Vitality

Real Estate Management Director Andrew Pupke referred to the PowerPoint presentation and discussed the projects intended for community centers, libraries, recreational facilities, and government customer service facilities. Responding to queries by the members, he provided information regarding the North County Customer Service Center project and technology infrastructure improvements for various facilities, indicating that the latter will include upgrading cabling and Wi-Fi capabilities and adding fiber optics; and that Business Technology Services management is directly involved in the matter.

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Pupke and Assistant County Administrator Jake Stowers provided an update regarding plans for an outside recreational field for the Highpoint community, indicating that the City of Largo has requested that it be allowed to annex the property, and discussion ensued regarding the length of time involved in planning the project, partnership with the School Board, and prioritizing the project. Mr. Woodard pointed out that the Penny III allocation for community centers, as well as the willingness of the community partners to offer activities there, was hindered by the Great Recession, and Mr. Stowers indicated that the space being considered for the Lealman Community Recreational Center could include a library.

Noting that the County has a vested interest in ensuring proper preservation of its assets, Mr. Woodard indicated that the proposed Penny IV allocations for the unincorporated area partners include shifting responsibilities for the ongoing maintenance and preservation of County-owned structures to the County, allowing partners to free up funds for programming.

Mr. Woodard discussed options relating to an allocation for County Customer Service Centers, such as building a joint use facility with the City of Clearwater or renovating the 315 Court Street building, and Commissioner Eggers encouraged staff to continue exploring projects where resources of the County and its partners are combined.

Planning Director Renea Vincent referred to the PowerPoint presentation and discussed signature community projects, recognizing the Lealman CRA/Innovation District - Complete Streets 54th Avenue Project as a critical project and a catalyst investment and relating that a \$50,000 concept planning grant was obtained through Forward Pinellas for its commencement.

Ms. Vincent discussed three focus areas of the countywide housing investments: land assembly for affordable housing, mixed-use projects that include workforce housing, and partnerships developing transitional housing for displaced residents, and responded to queries by the members.

Commissioner Welch noted that the affordability of housing is decreasing with continuing record-breaking home prices in the Tampa Bay region; and that research relating to affordable housing needs has not been done since 2006. He inquired about having a workshop on the subject, especially in light of the proposal for a large investment in the next Penny, and the members agreed; whereupon, discussion ensued concerning the need for various types of affordable housing, including single family, multi-family, and family housing for the homeless, as well as possibilities of exploring innovative ways of solving the problem. Mr. Woodard opined that the need for affordable housing exists; and that having a place holder for a flexible amount of money to make necessary capital investments to address the problem is key.

Economic Development Director Mike Meidel referred to the PowerPoint presentation and discussed the need for approved and improved employment sites, noting that it has been well identified over the years; and that companies are currently forced to look for quality spaces outside of the county.

Mr. Woodard noted the importance of having jobs and wages that would provide individuals with opportunities to obtain better housing. He explained that the Penny IV proposal to combine Economic Development Capital Projects and Housing into one fund is based on the recognition that those areas are linked together; and that such a combination would offer flexibility to achieve the County policy objectives under Florida law. Mr. Meidel indicated that the economic development clause in the ballot language will allow for an opportunity to add mixed-use projects in order to address housing, transportation, workforce, and job needs across the county through partnerships with the cities and the MSTUs, and discussion ensued.

In response to queries by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Meidel provided an update regarding development of the Airco Golf Course site for employment. He discussed efforts to address various Federal Aviation Administration restrictions and indicated that the site is being actively promoted for jobs and is currently being considered by a major client; and that it contains 799,000 square feet of industrial space and 299,000 square feet of office space; whereupon, he indicated that he will provide information relating to site improvement cost studies.

Commissioner Gerard discussed the importance of ensuring that affordable housing needs are addressed through the fund, and Commissioner Welch stressed that he supports both the housing and economic development components equally, indicating that the projected fund total amount of \$165 million should be split in half.

Mr. Woodard referred to the PowerPoint presentation with regard to the Next Steps and Timeline and thanked the Board for its feedback, noting that staff will make the necessary adjustments.

Thereupon, Commissioners Gerard and Eggers provided information regarding a recent Mayors' Council meeting discussion pertaining to the medical marijuana ordinance.

**ADJOURNMENT - 3:04 P.M.**