



**Walton County Board of County
Commissioners
Meeting Minutes - Final
Board of County Commissioners**

76 N. 6th Street
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433
www.co.walton.fl.us

Monday, September 9, 2013

5:01 PM

South Walton Annex Board Room

Budget Hearing

COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE

Present: 5 - Chairman Kenneth Pridgen, Vice-Chairman Sara Comander, Commissioner Bill Chapman, Commissioner Bill Imfeld and Commissioner Cindy Meadows

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mark Davis, County Attorney; Mr. Larry Jones, County Administrator; Mr. Gerry Demers, Assistant County Administrator; and Ms. Wanda Quimby, Finance Director, were also present.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

1. **13-0435** **Chairman Pridgen to read statement verbatim regarding proposed millage rate.**

The purpose of this meeting is to set a tentative millage rate and a tentative budget.

The proposed Walton County Board of County Commissioners county-wide millage rate is 4.1060 mills, and 0.4912 mills for the North Walton Mosquito Control District.

In aggregate, this is an 18.40% increase over the Rolled Back Rate.

The Rolled Back Rate is the rate that would essentially generate the same ad valorem tax revenues as last year.

The county-wide 4.1060 mills (which are applied to the General, County Transportation, and Fine and Forfeiture) is an increase over the fiscal year 2012-2013 rate, which was 3.5563 mills.

The 0.4912 millage rate for the North Walton Mosquito Control District is the same as fiscal year 2012-2013 rate, which was 0.4912 mills.

2. **13-0437** **Comments from Administration**

A motion was made by Commissioner Comander, seconded by Commissioner Chapman, to open the public hearing. The motion carried by the following vote: Pridgen Aye, Comander Aye, Chapman Aye, Imfeld Aye, Meadows Aye.

Mr. Gerry Demers, Assistant County Administrator, discussed the major changes

since the last budget workshop: \$1,767,400 - Solid Waste, \$136,000 - Mobile Health Department Operations, \$26,123 - Saturday Library Operations, and \$21,000 - Freeport Fire Operations. The total budget for 2013 was \$97,067,253, the total budget for 2014 is \$111,536,521. He explained that the difference from 2013 to 2014 is approximately \$14.4 million due to the Hwy 331 Bridge, TDC, Building Department, Sheriff's Office, Condo Garbage, an increase in retirement rates, and increases in Medicaid. Ad Valorem taxes are not affected by the Bridge, TDC, Building Department, or Condo Garbage.

Mr. Demers discussed the impact of several millage rate options provided, ranging from the current 3.5563 rate to the proposed 4.106 rate.

Commissioner Chapman questioned if the General Fund Reserves have an effect on their credit rating and the ability to bond and borrow money. Mr. Demers confirmed. Commissioner Comander stated that in the event that funds were needed, they could take those from TDC Reserves and replace those with FEMA money. Mr. Demers explained that in the past they have borrowed the funds from other reserves and paid it back with FEMA funds.

3. 13-0438 Chairman Pridgen asked for public comment and discussion

Chairman Pridgen asked for public comment.

Several audience members spoke in opposition of the proposed millage rate increase and felt that the budget should be decreased, as well as the need to eliminate School Resource Officer (SRO) funding by the Sheriff's Office since the School Board is a separate taxing authority.

Sheriff Mike Adkinson and Superintendent of Schools Carlene Anderson explained why the budget was increased to include funding for the School Resource Officers and their efforts to lower that cost as much as possible. Sheriff Adkinson explained that the majority of their requested budget increase covers the statutory mandated retirement changes and to help fund the SRO's. He stated that they do need to identify a source of funding in the future for the SRO's. Superintendent Anderson explained that their proposed millage has increased to the maximum amount allowed by law and they are trying every way possible to cut their costs and help fund the SRO's. She stated that the SRO's are not School Board employees.

Commissioner Meadows stated that she would like to know how much would be cut from each area of the budget in order to meet the lower millage rates. Chairman Pridgen recommended trimming the budget as much as possible across the board. Commissioner Comander suggested reducing major road paving projects for a year and to lower travel expenses.

Commissioner Chapman questioned the General Fund reserves and the ability to borrow from other reserves until receiving FEMA funds. Ms. Wanda Quimby, Finance Director, explained that money borrowed in the past from TDC was for oil spill operations that occurred on the beaches. Commissioner Imfeld explained that TDC funds are limited to the beach areas. Ms. Quimby stated that if there are not sufficient General Fund reserves in the event of an emergency, then a loan would be needed or repairs would have to wait until FEMA funds are received.

4. 13-0439 Request to approve a Resolution 2013-62 to set the tentative millage rates for countywide plus North Walton Mosquito Control District for FY 2013-2014

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Comander, seconded by Commissioner Meadows, to adopt Resolution 2013-62 for a tentative millage rate of 3.5563 for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Commissioner Imfeld urged the Board to consider the state mandated increases to the budget and the need to have a slightly higher millage rate to accommodate those increases.

Commissioner Meadows urged staff to trim the budget to accommodate the current millage rate and prevent using fund reserves. Mr. Jones stated that staff is committed to look for every efficiency they can find in the budget.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the inability to increase the millage rate after a tentative rate has been approved.

The motion carried by the following vote: Pridgen Aye, Comander Aye, Chapman Nay, Imfeld Nay, Meadows Aye.

A motion was made by Commissioner Imfeld, seconded by Commissioner Meadows, to approve a tentative millage rate of 0.4912 for the North Walton Mosquito Control District. The motion carried by the following vote: Pridgen Aye, Comander Aye, Chapman Aye, Imfeld Aye, Meadows Aye.

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Comander, seconded by Commissioner Meadows, to adopt Resolution 2013-62 for a tentative millage rate of 3.5563 for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Chairman Pridgen, Vice-Chairman Comander and Commissioner Meadows

Nay: 2 - Commissioner Chapman and Commissioner Imfeld

5. 13-0440

Request to approve a Resolution 2013-63 to set Budget for FY 2013-2014

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Comander, seconded by Commissioner Meadows, to adopt Resolution 2013-63 for the tentative FY 2013-2014 budget of \$111,536,521 for the county government, of which \$560,369 is for the North Walton Mosquito Control District. The motion carried by the following vote: Pridgen Aye, Comander Aye, Chapman Aye, Imfeld Aye, Meadows Aye.

A motion was made by Commissioner Comander, seconded by Commissioner Chapman, to close the public hearing. The motion carried by the following vote: Pridgen Aye, Comander Aye, Chapman Aye, Imfeld Aye, Meadows Aye.

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Comander, seconded by Commissioner Meadows, to adopt Resolution 2013-63 for the tentative FY 2013-2014 budget of \$111,536,521 for the county government, of which \$560,369 is for the North Walton Mosquito Control District. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Chairman Pridgen, Vice-Chairman Comander, Commissioner Chapman, Commissioner Imfeld and Commissioner Meadows

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

APPROVED


Kenneth Pridden, Chairman

ATTEST


Alex Alford, Clerk of Court
and County Comptroller