

MAY 28, 2009

The Board of County Commissioners, Manatee County, Florida, met in JOINT SESSION with the Council of Governments at the Manatee Central Library, 1301 Barcarrota Boulevard West, Bradenton, Florida, at 3:35 p.m.

Present were Commissioners:

Gwendolyn Y. Brown, Chairman (entered during the meeting)
Carol Whitmore, First Vice-Chairman
Lawrence E. Bustle, Jr., Third Vice-Chairman
John R. Chappie
Ron Getman
Joe McClash

Absent was Commissioner:

Donna Hayes, Second Vice-Chairman (previous appointment)

Also present were:

Ed Hunzeker, County Administrator
Tedd Williams, Jr., County Attorney
Robin Liberty, Deputy Clerk,
representing R. B. Shore, Clerk of Circuit Court

There was no agenda for this meeting. A sign-in sheet was used.

[BC20090528DOC001](#)

SUNSHINE STATE SURVEY REPORT

Tom Nolan, The Nolan Group, gave a slide presentation on the Third Annual Sunshine State Survey. The survey has become a critical source of citizen opinions on key issues facing Florida, soon to become the nation's third largest state. The series of annual questions provides academics and leaders in the public and private sectors with trend-line data, while questions on newly-emerging issues give leaders a baseline look as to where a cross-section of the residents stand.

The Survey was conducted in November 2008 with more than 1,200 Florida adults interviewed, including 955 registered voters. Approximately 85 questions were asked with the following key issues of focus: economy; ratings for local, state, and federal government performance; quality of life; business and government; civic engagement from our citizens; leadership; K-12 and higher education; and taxes. When compared with the past two surveys, the 2007 survey indicated taxes and government spending were the priority; and in 2006, it was K-12 education. The most important issues facing Floridians in 2008 were the economy and jobs.

Further results indicate Floridians are now more supportive of offering incentives for businesses to expand or re-locate to Florida. Twenty-two percent of Floridians said they were seriously considering moving out of state. Reasons given were: the lack of jobs or economic opportunities (31 percent); cost of living (29 percent); high taxes (8 percent); and high property insurance rates (6 percent). The question remains as to what government (on all levels) is doing to help keep existing jobs and to bring new jobs into the state.

(Enter Dr. Brown, presiding)

Mr. Bustle questioned the rationale of negative survey results and noted the positive percentage of people who would remain in, or move to Florida.

Marianne Barnebey, City of Bradenton Councilwoman, questioned if illegal residents and full-time residents were included in those surveyed.

Ms. Whitmore stated there is an inaccurate perception that the County's social services are down due to illegal aliens.

(Depart Mr. McClash)

Patrick Roff, City of Bradenton Councilman, questioned how to inform the public that Florida is one of the ten lowest taxation states in the country, and spoke of citizens' trust in levels of government.

Discussion: Most people think elected officials are out of touch with real estate taxes; perception of East County versus West County; infrastructure is new in East County, while West County needs repair/update; East County residents are paying for new infrastructure/improvements.

Tim McGonegal, School Superintendent, stated Florida's tax system is punitive to Florida newcomers and businesses because of the Save Our Homes initiative.

Mr. Getman commented that Florida has to provide for growth problems, whereas other states do not have those concerns. Florida does not have an income tax, but does have an annual property assessment process, whereas other states do not.

Dr. Brown commented on the postings in the Administrative Center, displaying the breakdown of use and distribution of impact fees benefiting Manatee County.

Discussion: Study statistics may not be true, but they indicate public perception; many northern school systems are under the purview of city governments; public extrapolating statistical information from printed government material; erasing negative public perception; etc.

Robert Siekmann, Town of Longboat Key Commissioner, stated there is great negative opinion regarding politicians and government. He questioned if Mr. Nolan had comparable information from other states.

Gene Gallo, City of Bradenton Councilman, commented on the misperception of infrastructure in east County versus west County.

(Depart Mr. Chappie)

Discussion: Though citizens do not like the tax crisis, most think they are getting a level of service and value for their tax dollar; public opinion that cities are facing dilemmas because taxes are shifting while infrastructure is aging; Impact Fees are misunderstood; the number of Community Development Districts (CDDs) in Manatee County; CDDs in east County address infrastructure needs; no CDDs in west County; special taxing districts; etc.

Mr. Nolan advised the complete Sunshine State Survey can be viewed on line at www.LeadershipFlorida.org. [BC20090518DOC002](#)

COMMENTS

Mr. Roff expressed concern regarding Senate Bill 216, addressed at a recent Florida League of Cities meeting. The Bill is being seen as a muzzle to prevent local government from having a voice, and to prevent government from keeping citizens informed.

Ms. Whitmore advised that several topics are slated for discussion at the June 1 County Commission worksession including: an update on Ware's Creek; a report on the Port Dolphin Energy Gas Line Project; beach renourishment; and the Manatee Beach Pier. She encouraged island officials to attend.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Adj: 4:31 p.m.
/rll

Minutes Approved: June 23, 2009