

**MANATEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, HONORABLE PATRICIA M. GLASS CHAMBERS
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
June 12, 2023**

Meeting video link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCULgjuGhS-qV966RU2Z7AtA>

Present were:

Kevin Van Ostenbridge, Chairman
Mike Rahn, First Vice-Chairman
Amanda Ballard, Second Vice-Chairman
Jason Bearden, Third Vice-Chairman
Vanessa Baugh
George Kruse
James A. Satcher, III

Also present were:

Lee Washington, Acting County Administrator
William Clague, County Attorney
Sheila McLean, Chief Financial Officer, Financial Management
Vicki Tessmer, Board Records Supervisor, Clerk of the Circuit Court

Chairman Van Ostenbridge called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

INVOCATION

 The Invocation was led by Reverend Sam Rainer, West Bradenton Baptist Church.


PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sheriff Rick Wells.

AGENDA

BC20230612DOC001


1. FY24 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

 Sheila McLean, Chief Financial Officer, used a slide presentation to review the budgets for Constitutional Officers.


BC20230612DOC002

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

Supervisor of Elections

 Mike Bennett, Supervisor of Elections, reviewed his budget and noted there is an increase due to the Presidential primary, postage, and paper costs.


 Commissioner Kruse proposed a five percent salary increase.

 Mr. Bennett stated in the past, the four percent was standard, but they can change their budget to support a five percent increase.

Ms. McLean stated the five percent would be brought forward.

Sheriff

Ms. McLean introduced the total budget proposed by the Sheriff.

 Sheriff Rick Wells stated this budget reflects what is needed to protect the County. The budget is \$199 million, which includes an increase for FRS. The discrepancies are related to starting pay, which is a little over \$55,000. Sarasota's starting pay is \$64,000 and this can

cause a loss in personnel. It is critical to increase the starting pay to compete in the market and get qualified personnel. The ten, requested deputy positions are related to growth in Manatee County, and the average rate is 2.4 deputies per 1,000 citizens. There are two academies each year, and the most that can go through the academy is 20 trainees. The Sheriff's office needs to maintain a level of service. Crime is down in Manatee County, and deputies do a great job. The County pays their staff more than the Sheriff's civilian staff who should be making a comparable rate. There are rising food costs in jail food, and there is also an increase in maintenance and fleet care. He suggested using Opioid funds for the homeless out-reach team which needs staffing.



William Clague, County Attorney, advised that the Opioid funds are not recurring, and there will be a decrease in future years.



Sheriff Wells responded there are currently 279 deputies working, and he is requesting 10 new positions this year. He noted it would be easier to retain deputies if there was a salary increase. Currently, there are deputies waiting for this information before they make a decision to leave Manatee and go to other counties. They work on retaining employees every day including providing mental health assistance. He worked closely with the County regarding the budget. It is difficult for deputies to find affordable housing, and many of his deputies had to move to Hillsborough County due to less expensive rents, and they have allowed them to bring their vehicles home with them to offer further assistance. He can provide numbers regarding how much the savings would be if crime rates reduced and inmate numbers in the jail decreased.

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Ms. McLean introduced the budget for the Clerk of the Circuit Court.



Angel Colonnese, Clerk of the Circuit Court, introduced the base budget, with a request for four additional positions, but they would be able to operate with two positions. There has been much growth in the County, and the office tops 100,000 invoices each year. There are 12 clerks in Accounts Payable, and they used to have 14. The internal control audits are necessary for the control of operations, and there are several audits that take place each year, with several components to each. There have been an unprecedented number of complaints over the past few years, but they are required to look into each complaint. Staff must also look at internal controls. They are currently at the same staffing level since 2009, and the population has increased since that time. In the last five years, the internal audit department has saved over a quarter of a million dollars. The office provides more services.



Upon question, Ms. Colonnese stated positions have decreased since the downturn of the economy. The Clerk's office has been short staffed, and they are competing with other Constitutional Officers. The starting salary is \$15 an hour, while other Constitutionals begin at \$18 or \$19 an hour. She requested a fiscal compliance officer last year, and they were able to implement a Business Analyst. There are a total of 240 to 245 employees.




Discussion ensued there are just under 100 employees not funded by the Courts, complaints rose the last few years, this year there have been 73 complaints and each must be addressed, even if they are unfounded, is there a process to go through the complaints quickly, some complaints are not related to the County, starting salary is low and this should be looked at, and the office is forward facing and needs knowledgeable staff.




Ms. Colonnese requested two positions for the auditor office and \$188,000 for two positions.

 Discussion ensued that there is large growth, it needs to be accounted for and there needs to be increases in salaries to retain employees.

 Ms. McLean stated they would still need to have the desired items flagged.

Flagged Item – Clerk of the Circuit Court

Commissioner Kruse flagged approving two positions for the Clerk's office. Commissioner Baugh seconded the request.


 Ms. McLean responded the positions were not included in the recommendation due to not having enough funding, and the general fund was running low. They know the assessed values are coming up, and they will be able to realign the budget once those numbers are received.


Flagged Item – Supervisor of Elections


Commissioner Kruse requested a five percent increase in Supervisor of Elections office, and Commissioner Rahn seconded the request.

Flagged Item – Manatee Sheriff's Office


 Commissioner Satcher requested an increase in starting salaries for the Sheriff's Office, including the ten deputy positions. Commissioner Bearden seconded the request.

 Ms. McLean stated there should be a slight increase in the assessments, as the Property Appraiser tends to be conservative. Opioid funds can be used for the Sheriff, but are limited.

 Discussion ensued that public safety is the number one priority in the County, be sure to keep funding in the General Fund, and this is for future discussion.

 Ms. McLean stated the funds that were not recommended included the deputies, and also bring up the salaries of the citizens employees.


Commissioner Satcher stated his flag was for deputies including pay range and additional positions.

 Discussion ensued that this is real money and the final decision will take place in September, Property Appraiser is conservative on projected values, decision will have to be made, there are some items that can wait until next year, and make sure to keep citizens as safe as possible.

Property Appraiser and Tax Collector

Ms. McLean announced the Property Appraiser and the Tax Collector would not be present.

Court Administration


 Kimberly Miller, Court Administration, used a slide presentation to review the 12th Judicial Circuit. There are eight funded employees and their requests were approved including Drug Court and updates to Court rooms. She discussed positions including the Guardianship Monitor, Mediation Coordinator, Court Technology staff, Office Manager, Case Manager and two lab technicians.

Chief Judge Charles Roberts, thanked the Board for funding, and noted he presides over Drug Court and Veterans Court

Discussion ensued regarding the funding has been recommended, and the importance of mediation.


BC20230612DOC003

State Attorney


 Ed Brodsky, State Attorney, thanked the Board for recommending the budget, and stressed the importance of public safety. He is short 10 to 15 positions, and they are working with the legislator to have decent salaries for his staff. The starting salary for Prosecutors is \$70,000.


Discussion ensued regarding the difference in salary between the State Attorney and Public Defender's Office, training and hiring are expensive and difficult, ensure that everyone has what they need, and historically Public Defender salaries have been lower than the State Attorney's Office, and hope the difference is to actually catch up.


Ms. McLean stated the Public Defender presented a budget pending litigation regarding an increase in attorney salaries.


 Discussion continued regarding other areas perpetuating crime, Manatee County is not a County where there are policies like cashless bail or catch and release, there are strong policies in the State Attorney office to maintain law and order, stores are locking up products to deter shoplifting, and Manatee County takes a strong, proactive stance on fighting crime.


Public Defender


 Larry Eger, Public Defender, stated the starting salary for a Public Defender is \$60,000, they are trying to work with the State Legislature regarding increasing salaries, and they are looking at an additional \$5,000 to \$10,000 per attorney. Once applicants see the cost of housing in Manatee County, they are not willing to work here. The two, Drug Court Attorney positions cover 648 cases per year. The attorneys in his office are dedicated, and they are asking for support staff for the Drug Court program. They are also requesting a technology staff position.

 Mr. Eger responded to a question that they asked for 20 percent of a person, as reflected in the requested budget. The attorneys are paid through the State, but Drug Court is a specialty court funded through the County, and he wishes to keep the salary for the Drug Court attorney the same as the other attorneys.


 Ms. McLean reviewed the numbers for Drug Court. Once the bill passes the Legislature, the budget will be reviewed and actual numbers will be provided.


 Commissioner Kruse flagged the \$92,000 for requested funding, and seconded by Commissioner Ballard, and also to include \$20,000 for technology and the attorney costs.

 Mr. Eger stated they are hoping to achieve equality with what the State Attorney's office is making.

 Discussion ensued regarding briefings to Commissioners, County funding Drug Court is independent from State funded staffing for the Public Defender and the State Attorney, working hard to implement grant funding, and the Commission funds Drug Court, Public


Defender is an essential program to provide representation if someone is accused, paying Public Defenders \$60,000 a year, request for \$97,000 is not an outrageous request, both the Public Defender and the State Attorney are essential, and accused have a right to a fair trial, Drug Court has made a difference in so many lives, and they need a decent attorney and administration to put forth the effort to take care of offenders, this request is minimal, need to be fair, and request a tour of Public Defender's office.


 Mr. Eger stated there are several divisions in his office and in Manatee County, misdemeanors account for 189 cases per attorney, and these are newer attorneys. The Drug Court attorney has 684 cases, homicide cases are 20 per attorney, and the recommendation is four cases per attorney. They only practice criminal law. The office has some newer attorneys, and some older. He has to have death qualified attorneys as well, which requires more experience. The Chief Assistant Attorneys have 10 to 15 years of experience.

 Discussion continued regarding glad to support the Public Defender.

RECESS/RECONVENE: 10:49 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. All Commissioners were present.

Guardian Ad Litem

 Tony Latourtue, Circuit Director, Guardian Ad Litem, thanked the Board for the recommended budget. The office has outgrown their space, but they are working with facilities to revamp the space they are in. She confirmed staff increases were approved in previous years, but there are staff retention issues, Child Advocate Case Managers make \$37,000, and Attorneys make between \$48,000 and \$55,000 per year. They are waiting for information from the State, as their salaries are set by the State.

 Discussion ensued that the County has the ability to provide larger salaries to the program, but there was a warning that the State may expect the County to provide more funding, in which case the State could reduce their portion of funding.

Property Appraiser

Ms. McLean stated the State dictates the budget, which is based on ad valorem taxes.

Tax Collector

Ms. McLean explained the Tax Collector budget is set by the State and related to ad valorem taxes.


Ms. McLean concluded by reviewing the program support costs.


RECESS/RECONVENE: 11:07 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. All Commissioners were present.

DECISION UNIT SUMMARY PART II

Development Services

BC20230612DOC004

 Sheila McLean, Chief Financial Officer, introduced Decision Units to be discussed today. The total Budget is \$538,000,000.

 Courtney DePol, Deputy County Administrator, used a slide presentation to address the budget for Development Services, the first request is for Temporary Services for Permitting, the recertification for CRS Verification for the flood plain program, and their goal is to get a 30 percent discount. She reviewed personnel. The second request is for a consulting service to assist with the Comprehensive Plan rewrite, and the final request is for additional software support.

Discussion ensued regarding temporary positions being a good idea, success with temporary services for entry level positions.

Information Technology

Drew Richardson, Information Technology Director, presented the desired units, including Customer Identity and Management Software related to cyber security for \$120,000, Cyber Security Response Capability Software for \$200,000, Adobe Enterprise Migration, IT Tech Lead, IT Specialist (Business Relationship Manager), OneSolution Finance Enterprise to update software, and a Cherwell Software Upgrade.



Discussion ensued regarding providing a dedicated IT person for EMS to free up a position, \$28.6 million requested this year in the budget, the total desired units are \$922,000, last year's budget was just over \$22,000,000, there are 80 employees in IT, and Microsoft licensing is probably the largest part of the budget.

Property Management

Ms. McLean stated they are preparing a comparison with last year's budget to this year.



Charlie Bishop, Deputy County Administrator, reviewed the desired units for East County Library for maintenance workers who would assist with Premier Sports, a Construction Manager, backstop replacements at \$21,000 per replacement (five-year program) and they will come back to the Board for these replacements, engineering for chiller and generator connection to the Judicial Center, and chillers on top of the Judicial Center would be back-up.



Ms. McLean stated these budgets were under scrutiny prior to presenting to the Board, and Directors held back more prior to the presentation.

Public Safety

Ms. McLean noted this year's budget is \$23,000,000, and last year, the budget included the health care programs.

Jodie Fiske, Public Safety Director, noted three Animal Welfare Officers are requested, and the amount includes vehicles. They also request a Project Manager, a Technology Specialist, Health Services Case Manager, and Emergency Management is asking for an Emergency Management Coordinator, and two positions in Code Enforcement, and each position would need a vehicle.



Ms. McLean stated impact fees can be used for equipment for Emergency Medical Services.



Ms. Fiske noted the State is incorporating requirements that are needed year-round. There are 21 Code Enforcement officers and the request is for three new officers. There are currently no captains at this time.

Public Works


Ms. McLean stated the budget is \$87,900,00 and the FY 23 budget was \$80,900,000.





Chad Butzow, Public Works Director, reviewed the desired units including the Safety Coordinator vehicle for \$53,000, and a Watershed Management Plan. The base budget of \$11,646,019 encompasses infrastructure improvements. The purpose of the Watershed Management Plan is to identify weak points in the system and where there are flooding and

water quality issues. This is just a study. He continued with desired units in Project Management with a requested vehicle for the Pavement Manager (including fuel and maintenance), a Citywork ELA Expansion for GIS and Web Capability software. Program 2503 is Traffic Management and page 267 of the Decision Unit includes roadway lighting conversions to LED, improvements for speed management and multi-modal safety and intersections, fiber optic cable damage emergency repairs, upgrading Legacy Traffic Court Systems, a fiber optic cable splicing van, GIS System Analyst I (One position), Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for outreach, \$50,000 for roadway lighting support, non-intrusive detection installation at County intersection, traffic calming and improvement, traffic structure maintenance support, next signal ahead guide signs at major County intersections, and 46 permanent speed feedback signs.


Chairman Van Ostenbridge proposed removing Desired Unit 14 (guide signs).


 Mr. Butzow continued with Infrastructure Engineering the request is for Professional Services for non-CIP projects. He reviewed Fleet Services on page 269 with 18 desired units, that are related to the shop, including a Fleet Supervisor, Fleet Transit Supervisor, Fuelmaster software upgrade, upgrade Graco fluid software management, Fleet floor painting at the landfill, new and replacement lifts at various facilities, water recycler for the car wash, and bird netting at the 66th Street West facility. Program 2507 Stormwater Management and Operations requires items to assist with stormwater maintenance, page 270.

 Discussion ensued regarding what the plan is regarding maintenance for canals and ditches, this is not traditional funding, and the projects would wait longer for maintenance if this is not funded.


 Ms. McLean clarified there is a program for canal cleaning, and this is coming from a funding source that is being stretched far. Currently stormwater is being used to fund this. The \$800,000 for road signs is coming from Transportation Trust funds.


 Commissioner Kruse and Chairman Van Ostenbridge flagged canal and ditch cleaning.


 Mr. Butzow stated the focus on stormwater was shifted with the reorganization. This is intended to have the Basin plans, and how to balance permitting, capital improvements, and maintenance, to all work together. He continued with the remaining desired units on Page 270, desired units 7-9, are related to staff needed to discharge stormwater to ponds, and desired unit 9 is to determine when the discharge should take place. He responded there could be a public benefit if some of the older ponds in the County were cleaned out.


 Discussion ensued regarding using a grant program to assist with offsetting cleaning out the ponds, ponds not holding water would have to be reviewed since they may have been designed as dry ponds.


Tom Gerstenberger, Engineering Division Manager, elaborated that they are looking into existing stormwater facilities in certain watersheds, and they are considering public/private partnerships. There are also quality improvements to be made.

 Mr. Butzow concluded they are no unfunded items in Transit.

 Ms. McLean stated 80 to 98 percent of funds allocated that were not spent, totaled approximately \$53,000,000, but that includes all funds. Capital Improvement Project funds rollover, and funds that were not spent are re-evaluated.

 Discussion ensued regarding funding that was not used and having a list of those funds, is there a policy in place regarding purchasing the base model vehicle rather than a higher priced model, user must justify why they need a certain vehicle, and then the request gets a secondary review, vehicles are not purchased until they are approved, how many vehicles in FY23/24 budget compared to FY19/20, fleet number of vehicles includes all types of vehicles and trailers and other equipment, and are there vehicles being driven by management.


 Ms. McLean stated she will provide vehicle information and she will compile a list of the costliest expenses.

 Discussion ensued regarding looking at many things on the budget to cut in order to fund desired units.

Ms. McLean stated Human Resources and the CIP will be discussed tomorrow, and on Wednesday they will continue with Utilities and other programs.

There being no public comment, Chairman Van Ostenbridge closed public comment.

Ms. McLean stated some items from Wednesday could be discussed on Tuesday.

 Mr. Clague stated they can continue the Wednesday discussion on Tuesday.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chairman Van Ostenbridge adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

Minutes Approved: July 25, 2023