

**MANATEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
JULY 30, 2019**

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

Present were:

Stephen R. Jonsson, Chairman
Betsy Benac, First Vice-Chairman
Misty Servia, Second Vice-Chairman
Carol Whitmore, Third Vice-Chairman
Vanessa Baugh
Reggie Bellamy
Priscilla Whisenant Trace

Also present were:

Cheri Coryea, County Administrator
Jan Brewer, Financial Management Director
Vicki Tessmer, Board Records Supervisor, Clerk of the Circuit Court
Amy N. Beck, Clerk I, Clerk of the Circuit Court



Chairman Jonsson called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Jonsson led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Invocation which was delivered by Commissioner Baugh.

AGENDA

BC20190730DOC001

1. **INTRODUCTION-BUDGET RECONCILIATION AND APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE**
 Cheri Coryea, County Administrator, updated the Board regarding the recent budget adjustment based upon the Property Appraiser's Office submission of the tentative millage rate.
BC20190730DOC002
2. **BUDGET UPDATE**
 Jan Brewer, Financial Management Director, utilized a slide presentation to review the tentative millage rate submitted to the County on July 1st. The tentative millage rate resulted in an increased of \$3,181,883 million to the FY 2020 budget. She reviewed the taxable percentage rates for property values and the changes to the stabilization reserves in the budget.
BC20190730DOC003
3. **DISCUSSION OF FLAGGED ITEMS**
 Jan Brewer, Financial Management Director, provided a brief summary and recommendations for the flagged items in the general, transportation, parks, transit, and the stormwater funds. She recommended establishing the FY 2020 tentative budget, two public hearings will be held on September 9th, and September 17th, 2019 to adopt the millage rate and budget.

 Discussion ensued on the description of a lightning loader for the Property Management Department, options of using Tourist Development Tax (TDT) or Southwest Tax Increment Financing (SWTIF) reserves to fund landscaping and signage, the purpose of the additional

staff request for an environmental technician, the County's general fund stabilization was \$50 million in 2012, review possible tax adjustments for future County emergencies, price comparison of shell road replacement/maintenance or paving County rural roads, and if the general fund stabilization amount is still \$50 million for this FY.

 Thomas Yarger, Construction Services Division Manager, explained that a lightening loader is a piece of equipment placed onto large trucks with a hydraulic arm and metal claw that move large pieces of debris.

 Ms. Brewer stated that Parks and Natural Resources requested an additional environmental technician for marine resources to focus on future red tide events. The general fund stabilization is \$18 million, but the combined stabilization amount for all funds equals \$50 million.

Motion

 A motion was made by Commissioner Benac and seconded by Commissioner Baugh for staff to bring back a report of what a road paving schedule for rural roads would look like.

 Discussion continued regarding shell roads are not maintenance or replaced annually, shell roads are efficient in country surroundings, and horse owners prefer shell roads over pavement.

 Cheri Coryea, County Administrator, stated staff would need 30 days to compile a report on the types of roads, maintenance materials, and what the short/long term plan is. A request has been placed to every department to produce a five year projects plan which will help identify extra funding sources for paving roads.

 Discussion ensued on the County's past program for paving roads in lieu of continual maintenance for shell, being fiscally responsible, intention is not adding a new Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) project but only paving existing roads, and replacing shell roads with pavement could save financial resources in the long term.

 There being no public comment, Chairman Jonsson closed public comment.

The motion carried 7-0.

 Discussion continued regarding the department fund amounts have certain spending requirements due to tax stipulations, the County's budget stabilization began in 2012 because of the recession, using the budget stabilization and reserves to fund emergencies, and the Clerk invests funds based on the County's policy to generate interest for revenue.

Ms. Brewer stated she will research the County's fund investments and return of revenue trends since 2012 and present the data to the Board. The Clerk places the funds in conservative investments and not market-type investments. Over time, the investments returned better interest rate which translates to larger funds being added to the budget.

 Discussion ensued on investment rates, the County's treasury bonds and the returns on maturity, home values have consistently increased, residents will pay more taxes in 2020, County being in healthy financial shape, providing possible tax breaks for citizens by lowering the millage rate, cuts in the revenue stream can affect future budget requests,

indigent care needs continuous funding, what data was used to forecast the disaster fund, if the 2018 red tide event was financed from the disaster fund, residents hold the expectation that the County will have the resources to respond to their needs, and if the \$6.5 million disaster fund is adequate to cover emergencies during the hurricane season.

 Ms. Coryea clarified the disaster fund projection was based on previous hurricane seasons.

Ms. Brewer stated the disaster fund is to ensure short term funding so the County can respond immediately to emergencies. Since Hurricane Irma in 2017, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been performing audits prior to issuing reimbursements which can take up to 18 months.

 Discussion continued regarding the percentage fluctuation over the past years, population growth since 2012 equals an increase to the tax base, if tax breaks could happen in the next year, healthcare program funding is upfront and will not require budget amendments throughout the year, longevity of the Low Income Pool (LIP) funds, citizens questioning which nonprofits receive County funding and services they provide, Save Our Homes is capped at 1.9 percent, and Lakewood Ranch and Parrish developments have subsidized the County.

Ms. Coryea stated that the upfront funding for the healthcare program allows the County to pay medical providers in October, as opposed to March or April. The LIP funding is not scheduled to change until FY 2023. The budget presented contained the millage rates based on the Property Appraisers Office percentage increase estimates, trending rates, growth, building, and completing CIP projects.

 Discussion ensued on effects of growth causing an increase in County provided services, new home owners qualify for the homestead exemption after a year of residing in the County, citizens affordability, possibilities of decreasing taxes, part time residents only living in the County during the winter season, total County expenditures for the 2018 red tide event, how long the millage rate has been effective, conducting a millage rate comparison with other same-sized coastal counties, proactive stance in planning for development, water quality issues, County parks are lacking amenities, affordable housing needing investments, and the challenges of raising millage rates after they are decreased.

 Ms. Brewer stated the County's millage rate has not changed for several years, but other surrounding counties have adjusted their millage rates to offset the cost of damages incurred by emergencies.

 Discussion ensued on the County's reserve policy adopted in 2010 requiring a 20 percent balance in the general fund.

 Ms. Brewer stated that the general fund includes funding for CIP projects.

 Discussion continued regarding the Sarasota County millage rate is less, but they have implemented several fees, the County is discussing adding fees which could cancel cutting taxes for citizens, ensure County stability before making changes, the County is healthy, but the economy can still go into a recession, millage rate dropped after 2006, storm water is paid out of utilities fees not taxes, property values and millage rate were high in 2006, water

quality is important, County may not be ready to make a tax cut this year, water quality and sea level rising need funding solutions, Mote Marine received \$18 million for research, blue green algae contributors, nitrogen being released into bodies of water, some Commissioners are visiting Washington D.C. for a water quality briefing, and the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico. BC20190730DOC004

4. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

 Mike Meehan commented on the Clerk’s Office published May interim report and the healthcare plan he submitted to the Board. He recommended cutting the millage rate by 15 percent which could be recovered by the County in 2 years.

 Ken Piper questioned if the millage rate has truly stayed the same over the past several years. He cited the County wide operating millage rate from 2008 and provided examples of the millage rate being increased over time.

There being no further public comment, Chairman Jonsson closed public comment.

 Jan Brewer, Financial Management Director, clarified that Mr. Piper’s examples are referring to the roll back millage rate. The \$634 million is not unrestricted cash reserve, but a balance fund, and the collected revenue is for specific departments or projects.

 Discussion ensued on the Clerk’s May interim report is a small snapshot for one particular day, the reserve balance is growing, a saving accounts could hinder the County’s ability to move forward, the balance fund has already been designated for expenses, millage rate has stayed the same, but property value has increased, and the goal of having revenues larger than expenses is to prepare for unexpected costs. BC20190730DOC005

5. **ADOPTION OF TRIM RATES**

 A motion was made by Commissioner Trace and seconded by Commissioner Baugh to authorize the County Administrator to take all action necessary to certify millage rates approved herewith to the Property Appraiser.

There being no public comment, Chairman Jonsson closed public comment.

The motion carried 7-0.

BC20190730DOC006

COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS

Commissioner Benac

- Commented that she will not be attending the Washington D.C. meeting for the water quality briefing
- Updated the Board she has been appointed to the Florida Association of Counties Board and is attending a meeting in Bay County

 Commissioner Baugh

- Thanked the Board for the discussion regarding the County’s millage rate
- Expressed concerns that citizens are continuing to experience a tax increase

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chairman Jonsson adjourned the meeting at 10:47 am.

Minutes Approved: _____