

Tuesday, August 12, 2021 – 10:00 A.M.
John R. "Jack" Durrance Auditorium
County Administration Building
12 Southeast First Street
Gainesville, Florida

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners met for the Special Meeting.

PRESENT: Chair Ken Cornell; Vice Chair Marihelen Wheeler, Commissioner Mary Alford, Commissioner Charles S. Chestnut IV, and Commissioner Anna Prizzia

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Michele Lieberman, County Attorney Sylvia Torres, and Deputy Clerk Steve Donahey

Approval of Agenda

Chair Cornell requested to add the adoption of an Emergency Resolution to the Consent Agenda for today for approval.

Commissioner Prizzia moved adoption of the Agenda as amended. The motion carried 5-0.

Items for Discussion

1. FY22 Budget Development Meeting - Environmental Protection Climate Change, Facilities, Growth Management, Public Works, Solid Waste, Resiliency and Sustainability, and Capital Improvement Plan 21-0683
Fiscal Consideration: Accept or modify the proposed budget for Environmental Protection Climate Change, Facilities, Growth Management, Public Works, Solid Waste, Resiliency and Sustainability.
Recommended Action: Provide direction to the staff for any adjustment to the County Manager's budget or proposed millage rates.

Assistant County Manager Tommy Crosby presented the millage chart and the list of upcoming budget meetings.

Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Prizzia, and Chair Cornell presented comments.

Environmental Protection

EPD Director Steve Hofstetter presented Environmental Protection Department budget.

Mr. Hofstetter presented the following enhancements:

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- \$50,000 climate change initiatives
- \$500,000 for a vulnerability assessment
- Transition funding from Wild Spaces to management
- \$73,337 Environmental Specialist FTE

Chair Cornell, Commissioner Alford, and Commissioner Wheeler presented comments.

Wild Spaces Public Places

Land Conservation Manager Charlie Houser presented the above item.

Mr. Houser presented the following enhancement:

- \$1,000,000 for land management/capital improvements

Commissioner Alford requested that the High Springs to Newberry rail trail be considered for Wild Spaces funding.

Land Management Budget

Park Services Specialist Andi Christman presented the projects that the \$1,000,000 requested for land management and capital projects:

- \$73,337 Environmental Specialist FTE
- Senior Planner to replace Mr. Houser in retirement
- Senior Staff Assistant FY 2023
- Field Support Building

Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Prizzia, County Manager Lieberman, and Chair Cornell presented comments.

Facilities

Assistant County Manager Crosby stated that there was a request for an additional FTE for the new Tax Collector building coming on line. The request was not funded this fiscal year but the extra supplies needed were funded.

RTS Bus Routes

Assistant County Manager Crosby stated that there were three requests for bus funding. The Board previously instructed fund the RTS Fare Free SRS Youth which is funded this year. The RTS Route 13 extension and the RTS Elementary Route were not funded in the budget.

Growth Management

Growth Management Director Missy Daniels presented the Growth Management budget request. Mrs. Daniels stated that other than some funding for digitizing records the Growth Management budget is a continuation budget.

Public Works

Ramon Gavarrete, Public Works Director presented the following budget enhancements:

- 1 FTE for Project Coordinator for Critical Facilities

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Mr. Gavarrete advised the Board of the following projects:

The Board restored the \$1,000,000 in funding from the General Fund for transportation projects. There are still concerns regarding the declining revenue generated from the Gas Tax.

The Veterans' Park splash pad is budgeted as a \$75,000 expense for the next 4 years.

The waste collection center for the west side is fully funded but a suitable location has not been determined.

The first new Fire Station to be constructed will be Station 80. There will be some overlap with the new station in the City of Alachua just west of Interstate 75.

There are solar projects scheduled for this year on the Civil Courthouse and the Health Department Building.

County Manager Lieberman advised the Board that a study for the new Animal Services Facility is underway. There were delays due to COVID. That is why there is no funding in this year's budget but will be in future budgets.

Mr. Gavarrete stated that on September 14, 2021 the updated CIP list for road projects will be presented to the Board.

Mr. Gavarrete stated that a traffic signal is warranted at 122nd and 24th avenue. The funding will be provided over three years and will hopefully start in the fiscal year 2023-2024. There have been many citizens' complaints about the intersection.

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Commissioner Prizzia and Commissioner Alford presented comments.

City of Newberry Request

City of Newberry Manager Mike New presented a request to resolve the safety concerns regarding the two sharp curves on County Road 337. The City would like the County to provide a funding program for rural road projects and a project list so that residents in the rural area can see when projects will take place.

Mr. New stated that if the County chooses an option that removes the curves from County Road 337 the City of Newberry would be willing to accept the remaining roads without improvement.

Chair Cornell request that the City of Newberry provide the details of the level of funding for road projects the City provides from their general fund.

Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Alford, and Commissioner Prizzia presented comments.

2. Residential Rental Unit Permit and Inspection Program

Fiscal Consideration: For unincorporated County only, begin with 4 FTE Codes Officers and 1 licensing clerk/staff assistant. First year budget \$454,000, 2nd year \$345,000. This does not include the cost of energy ratings if handled by outsourcing. Could be done by trained Codes Officers. This is part of the FY22 budget development process - Budget proposal PSC-CE3.21-0758

Recommended Action: Provide direction to staff on whether to move ahead with an ordinance to implement the Residential Rental Unit Permit and Inspection program.

Growth Management Director Missy Daniels presented the above.

By consensus, the Board stated that they wish for this item to be budgeted for in this year's budget.

Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Prizzia, Commissioner Wheeler, and Chair Cornell presented comments.

Mrs. Daniels requested that two FTE be hired as soon as possible. Those positions would be a Staff Assistant and a Code Enforcement Officer with experience in this matter to help get the program started. She stated that staff would need about 6 months from the date of adoption on the Ordinance to get the program going.

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By consensus, the Board stated they would like this matter budgeted for this budget year for about a half a year. The commission also stated that they feel incentives for maintaining affordable housing stock should have funding available from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The Board directed staff to try and have the program running by March 31, 2022 but would allow flexibility if needed.

Public Comment

Chair Cornell recognized Mark van Soestbergen who presented comments to the Board.

Closing Comments

County Attorney Torres stated that today the Chair signed an Emergency Action this morning and requested that Board ratify the action by motion.

Commissioner Alford moved ratification of the Emergency Action issued by the Chair. The motion carried 5-0.

Commission Comment

Polling for Wild Space

Commissioner Wheeler requested an update on the status of the polling to be conducted for the Wild Spaces Public Places Sales Tax Initiative.

County Manager Lieberman stated that the contract is being issued currently and polling will begin shortly.

School Board Funding for Masking

Char Cornell requested that the County Commission authorize staff to research if it is legal for the Board to provide funding to replace any funding pulled from the School Board funds by the State of Florida.

Commissioner Alford moved to refer to staff to research the appropriateness and legality of funding sources if it becomes necessary to fund the School Board if the Federal Government cannot provide the direct funding. The American Rescue Plan or CARES Act funding or other appropriate sources should be considered. The funding should be provided so that the County is reimbursed if other sources become available. The motion carried 5-0.

Legislative Representation

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Chair Cornell stated that the County lobbyists are working on the School Board funding issues on behalf of the County. Mr. Cornell stated that in a related matter the County is trying to obtain COVID statistics from the Veterans' Hospital but have been met with resistance. He requested the Board authorize a Chair letter to the V.A. Hospital requesting the information.

Commissioner Prizzia moved to authorize the Chair letter to the V.A. Hospital requesting they provide the COVID statistics requested. The motion carried 5-0.

Communications Coordinator Mark Sexton stated that the County has found a CDC hotline that provides answers regarding COVID and the information is available on the County dashboard.

Commissioner Alford requested that staff confirm rumors that V.A. beds are being made available to non-veterans during the pandemic.

Commissioner Prizzia requested that the County provide a link to the School Board COVID dashboard on the County website.

There being no further business before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 1:05 P.M.

Consent Agenda

ADDED ITEM:

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA; FINDING THAT THE LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATION IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IS AN EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCE JUSTIFYING THE REMOTE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS; PROVIDING FOR THE SUSPENSION OF REQUIREMENT THAT WILD SPACES PUBLIC PLACES LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE SURTAX OCCUR AFTER 5PM; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; PROVIDING FOR EXPIRATION OF THE RESOLUTION UPON THE EXPIRATION OF THE LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the Board adopt the request resolution.