

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA
BUDGET WORKSHOP
May 25, 2021**

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners met for a Workshop on Tuesday, May 25, 2021, at 9:03 a.m.

Present were Chairman Rick Minor, Vice-Chairman Bill Proctor, and Commissioners Nick Maddox, Carolyn Cummings, Jimbo Jackson, Brian Welch, and Kristin Dozier. Also present were County Administrator Vincent Long, County Attorney Chasity O'Steen and Clerk to the Board Beryl H. Wood.

Facilitator: Alan Rosenzweig, Deputy County Administrator.

Commissioner Welch moved, seconded by Commissioner Cummings, to waive the 3-minute time limit. The motion carried 4-0. (Commissioners Maddox, Proctor, and Jackson out of Chambers.)

County Administrator Long presented the State of the County as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the increase of federal fiscal aid, the County was able to avoid dire outcomes from the stay-at-home orders. He noted that County revenues are still below pre-pandemic levels despite the economic recovery.

Workshop Item #1: Fiscal Year 2022 Preliminary Budget Overview

This budget discussion item seeks Board guidance on the development of the FY 2022 Preliminary Budget.

Alan Rosenzweig, Deputy County Administrator, provided an economic outlook. The first quarter of 2020 saw the United States enter a recession due to COVID. Currently, the economy is starting to rebound quickly. Employment is coming back slightly slower. Fund balance use for the general revenue account is at the lowest level in over a decade. The Federal government has replaced \$6.4 million through the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The County has followed a deliberate approach throughout the year to look for areas of cost avoidance.

Vice-Chairman Proctor asked for clarification on the living wage expenditure, inquiring if it was based on a \$13 an hour living wage.

- Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig responded that it was. He shared, based on a new living wage formula developed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the living wage for Leon County is \$13.98 per hour.

Vice-Chairman Proctor stated that a \$14 living wage shows the value of a Leon County employee.

Vice-Chairman Proctor, seconded by Commissioner Cummings, moved to bring back an item at the next regular meeting regarding raising the minimum living wage to \$14/hour. The motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Jackson asked where the \$13.98 number came from. Mr. Rosenzweig shared that MIT calculates the living wage every year.

Commissioner Dozier stated her appreciation for the onboard ambulance battery system, the Lake Lafayette Recovery Plan, and other programs created over the year. She cautioned that she would need a deeper discussion on the topic of a living wage before she can vote on it. She shared

she was glad to see the new HR policies to incentivize and encourage employees to apply for promotions.

Chairman Minor asked for clarification as to where the funding would come from if the motion carried.

- County Administrator Long stated that it would come from the General Revenue Fund.

Commissioner Welch inquired if there might be more funding available due to the current housing market.

- Mr. Rosenzweig stated that it might be possible; however, the County does not see the same trends as the rest of the state does due to the type of property available for sale now.
- Commissioner Welch stated that he would like more information later.

County Administrator Long stated that they could discuss more details during this workshop.

- Mr. Rosenzweig clarified that the increase to the living wage would not come solely from the General Revenue Fund.

Commissioner Cummings asked, given the size of the County, if increasing the living wage would not have a large impact. Mr. Rosenzweig stated that about 150 employees would be affected.

- Commissioner Jackson shared he would like to see this item brought back at the next meeting. County Administrator Long stated that the ratification item at the next meeting can have an analysis attached to it.

Chairman Minor expressed his support for the staff's recommendation of a \$13 living wage expenditure. He noted that in FY 2023, the County will raise the living wage to \$14 an hour.

Commissioner Maddox inquired what the largest expense is for the County.

- County Administrator Long responded it was personnel.
- Commissioner Maddox stated that it is also the County's biggest asset. He stated his support for raising the minimum living wage to \$14.

Commissioner Dozier questioned what the implications are for raising the living wage.

- County Administrator Long stated that by raising the living wage, there may be an issue later down the line regarding those who make more than the minimum wage.
- Commissioner Dozier stated she would be okay with raising the wage.

Vice-Chairman Proctor asked for clarification on current employment positions.

Commissioner Maddox asked if there was room to hire more staffing to help provide the current services.

- County Administrator Long responded that it was difficult to compare counties, even similarly sized counties. Looking at the needs of the County, there will be growth in the future.
- Commissioner Maddox asked if it was possible for staff to forecast the staffing needs in a similar fashion to forecasting budget needs.
- Mr. Rosenzweig stated that they currently do so.
- Commissioner Maddox would like a summary of these forecasts to be included in the budget.

Commissioner Dozier added that there will be a need for more staff in the capital planning department. She would like to see an agenda item brought back regarding the staffing needs.

Commissioner Dozier moved, seconded by Vice-Chairman Proctor, to bring back an agenda item at the next meeting to focus on the promotion initiative, staffing needs, and the comparisons to other counties. The motion carried 7-0.

Chairman Minor offered a friendly amendment to include adding the funding needed to provide menstrual products in public County bathrooms.

- Commissioner Jackson and Commissioner Dozier agreed to the friendly amendment.

Commissioner Jackson moved, seconded by Commissioner Dozier, to adopt options 1, 2, and 4-7 with the friendly amendment to approve funding to provide free menstrual products in public County bathrooms.

Vice-Chairman Proctor shared his stance that the radios were meant to be replaced in 2023 rather than in 2022. He asked why the replacement was moved forward.

- Mr. Rosenzweig stated that there was a technological need to replace the radios as parts were becoming scarce to repair them.
- Vice-Chairman Proctor believed that going forward, there should be some language included to protect the County from products that are obsolete before the end of the contract.

Chairman Minor thanked the staff for its hard work putting the agenda item together.

Option #1: Direct staff to proceed with developing the Preliminary FY 2022 Budget.

Option #2: Authorize the County Administrator to negotiate modifications to the current County/City Fire Services Interlocal Agreement under the terms outlined in this budget discussion item to be provided to the Board as a future agenda item.

~~*Option #3: Establish a minimum living wage of \$13/hour effective October 1, 2021 for all Leon County employees.*~~

Option #4: Approve revisions to the Leon County Personnel Policy Section 5.03.1 "Promotion".

Option #5: Authorize the County Administrator to negotiate a contract for the replacement of the 800 MHz radios and prepare a future agenda item for Board consideration.

Option #6: Approve Revisions to the Leon County Fiscal Policy 93-44 to align the annual line-item funding and outside agency contract approval process.

Option #7: Approve the Budget Amendment which creates a permanent Household Hazardous Waste drop off program at Public Works during the current fiscal year.

The motion carried 6-0. (Commissioner Jackson out of Chambers.)

Workshop Item #2: Proposed Expenditure Plan for the County's Allocation of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act

County Administrator Long introduced this item. He stated the budget discussion item seeks Board consideration of a proposed expenditure plan (Attachment #1) for Leon County's allocation of \$57 million in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the ARPA. The proposed expenditure plan would mitigate significant revenue impacts incurred by Leon County as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, provide one-time funds to support major wastewater

infrastructure improvements, and address remaining community recovery needs in the areas of public health, human services, and small business support.

Andy Johnson, Assistant to the County Administrator, provided a presentation on the federal COVID-19 legislation. He shared that ARPA provides \$1.9 trillion in economic relief and recovery assistance. Leon County has been allocated \$57 million. The expenditure deadline is December 31, 2024.

Mr. Rosenzweig stated that CARES was the necessary support at that time. ARPA provides billions in new federal assistance programs for individuals and businesses. The recommended plan is to meet the remaining community needs that are not being met under CARES as the County moves into a recovery phase. Revenue loss mitigation will be \$25.5 million. The recommended allocation for the \$11.28 million eliminates the need to raise any fees or property taxes.

Ken Morris, Assistant to the County Administrator, stated that the County has been approved to allocate funding for infrastructure. Three major wastewater projects have been proposed for funding: Northeast Lake Munson, Belair/Annawood, and Woodville Sewer.

Vice-Chairman Proctor noted that he was pleased to see that there was funding available for those projects.

Commissioner Dozier asked for clarification on the amount that has been received and allocated.

- Mr. Rosenzweig stated that it was \$62 million.
- Commissioner Dozier noted that the same amount was cut during the recession years in the past.

Commissioner Welch commented on the benefit from these funds to his region.

Commissioner Dozier moved, seconded by Commissioner Welch, to take a 30-minute recess. The motion carried 7-0.

Shington Lamy, Director of the Office of Human Services and Community Partnerships, stated that the County has expanded its resources and services to address homelessness. They propose a continued investment of \$1.78 million dollars to support the COVID related expenses in regard to homelessness.

- \$767,000 will be used to address food insecurity.
- \$110,000 will be spent on mental health services through 2-1-1 Big Bend.
- \$810,000 will be spent on legal representation to help prevent homelessness as evictions and foreclosures begin to be processed.
- \$1.8 million will be used on a nonprofit services grant programs to support nonprofit providers.

Commissioner Jackson noted that he is familiar with homelessness as it pertains to his district. He commended the funding that is directed to address this issue.

Commissioner Welch inquired if there was any funding that will be used specifically for women and children facing homelessness.

- Mr. Lamy stated that diversion and prevention of homelessness will be used to help this population.

Vice-Chairman Proctor asked what the target number for permanent supportive housing was.

- Mr. Lamy stated that the \$2.5 million will be spent mostly on support for serious health conditions for those experiencing chronic homelessness. He also noted they are considering a non-profit to provide help to students over the summer.

Commissioner Dozier noted that there will be more funding coming from the federal and state governments that will help address homelessness. She also raised an issue with moving forward with these programs before the joint workshop with the City on homelessness.

County Administrator Long stated that the joint meeting and the workshop will bring about discussion on this issue.

- Mr. Lamy added that the County's programs align with the Continuum of Care's standards.

Commissioner Cummings acknowledged staff for its presentations. She asked that regarding mental health issues, if the funding is included in the sheriff's budget and role in handling those cases. She shared that there has been an increase in the need for legal aid regarding evictions. She commended staff for the funding dedicated to this issue.

Chairman Minor noted that there has been an increase of 45% in food insecurity in Leon County. As the County representative for the Continuum of Care, he noted that the plan does align with its current goals.

Wanda Hunter, Assistant to the County Administrator, presented on Public Health Response Support. More than half a million dollars has been set aside to distribute the COVID 19 vaccine. \$800,000 will be spent on community health centers.

Mathieu Cavell, Assistant to the County Administrator, stated that \$331,000 will be spent on engagement and promotion for the vaccine.

Christina Paredes, Director, Office of Economic Vitality, presented on small business support. FAMU Credit Union's smart steps Micro Loan program will be given \$1.1 million to help the community. The Local Chambers of Commerce Support will be \$166,000. Entrepreneurship Support will also be given \$166,000.

Mr. Rosenzweig stated that \$3.5 million will be spent on County Continuity of Operations and ERA Program Support. \$5.7 million will be reserved for future needs. These funds do not need be spent until December 31, 2024.

Commissioner Dozier asked if it would be possible to have a report with the number of businesses helped by the program. Additionally, she asked if a part of those dollars is reserved for a specific area within the community.

- Ms. Paredes stated that there is a part of the dollars that is meant for the City's First Neighborhood Initiative Program.

Commissioner Maddox declared a conflict and shared he would abstain from voting on the non-profit portion of the motion. He stated as the Executive Director of the Boys & Girls of the Big Bend, which is a not-for-profit entity in Leon County.

Commissioner Maddox moved, seconded by Commissioner Jackson, to adopt options 1-3, with the exclusion of the non-profit portion.

Option # 1: Approve the proposed expenditure plan for the County's allocation of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act (Attachment # 1).

Option #2: Authorize the County Administrator to expend Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds as provided in the proposed expenditure plan and enter into subgrant agreements with fund recipients, subject to legal review by the County Attorney.

Option #3: Approve the associated Resolution and Budget Amendment Request (Attachment #2).

The motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Dozier moved, seconded by Commissioner Welch, to adopt the non-profit portion of the Option. The motion carried 6-0. (Commissioner Maddox in abstention.)

Vice-Chairman Proctor inquired if the funding available is for technical support. Ms. Perez stated that those costs are covered by the FAMU Credit Union.

Commissioner Cummings shared her concerns with the vaccine hesitancy program. She applauded the program, but questioned the money allotted for the program and its timeline to be spent.

- Mr. Cavell responded that there will be \$600,000 in funds between the County and City.

Commissioner Dozier asked for clarification on when the money would be disbursed.

- County Administrator Long stated that after the actions taken have been ratified at the next regular meeting, the money will be disbursed.

Vice-Chairman Proctor mentioned that a local reverend contacted him about vaccine hesitancy and that there was a need for more education regarding the vaccine.

Workshop Item #3: Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA 2) Funding under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

County Administrator Long introduced this item. It seeks Board consideration to accept \$7.01 million in additional federal funding from the U.S. Treasury for Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA 2) to pay rent and/or utilities (including internet services) for eligible applicants.

Vice-Chairman Proctor inquired why Leon County will be entering an agreement with the Florida Department of Children and Families.

- Mr. Rosenzweig stated that by doing so, the County will share data with the state to ensure that duplicate payments are not being paid out.

Commissioner Dozier asked if being unemployed was one of the qualifications to receive aid from ERA 2.

- Mr. Lamy stated that an applicant must be unemployed for 90 days before the application can be considered or living under the cost of living for the area.
- Mr. Rosenzweig stated that the applications are being analyzed as they are received.

Commissioner Welch moved, seconded by Commissioner Dozier, to adopt Option 1-7 as stated below.

Option #1: Ratify the request to the U.S. Treasury to receive the County's allocation of \$7.01 million in Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2 funds (Attachment #1).

Option #2: Approve the utilization of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2 funds for the continuation of the Leon County Emergency Rental Assistance Program in accordance with the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Option #3: Authorize the County Administrator to make modifications to program criteria for Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2 funds as may be needed to ensure the efficient and timely use of the County's allocation, and enter into subgrant agreements with fund recipients, subject to legal review by the County Attorney.

Option #4: Authorize the County Administrator to expend up to 15% of the County's funding allocation to continue to administer the Leon County Emergency Rental Assistance Program and the other purposes authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Option #5: Authorize the County Administrator to execute any contract amendments with Tetra Tech necessary for the implementation of ERA 1 and ERA 2.

Option #6: Authorize the County Administrator to enter into an agreement with the Florida Department of Children and Families for the purpose of sharing ERA program data, subject to legal review by the County Attorney.

Option #7: Approve the associated Resolution and Budget Amendment (Attachment #2).

The motion carried 7-0.

Workshop Item #4: Plan to Implement the Essential Libraries Initiative

County Administrator Long introduced this item. It presents for the Board's consideration a proposed plan to implement the Essential Libraries Initiative, a re-envisioning of the Leon County Public Library System to address the changing needs of residents and trends in library use. The plan includes several enhancements to the Library such as new programs and services, capital improvements, existing position reclassifications, and policy revisions to support the initiative.

Vice-Chairman Proctor moved, seconded by Commissioner Maddox, to adopt Options 1-5.

Option #1: Adopt the proposed plan to implement the Essential Libraries Initiative.

Option #2: Approve the creation of a Community Resources Specialist position within the Department of Library Services through the realignment of an existing position thereby having no fiscal impact.

Option #3: Accept the \$15,000 donation from the Friends of the Library to establish a Library of Things and approve the Resolution and associated Budget Amendment Request (Attachment #4).

Option #4: Adopt the proposed revised Policy "Library Code of Conduct" (Attachment #5), thereby repealing the current Policy No. 98-15 "Library Patron Rights & Responsibilities."

Option #5: Adopt the proposed Enabling Resolution to reauthorize the Library Advisory Board (Attachment #6) and approve the revised membership.

The motion carried 7-0.

Vice-Chairman Proctor stated that the library system reflects the level of literacy for the community. It also points to the commitment to providing resources to the community. He noted

that during the school year, there have been many children who did not have access to the internet and have fallen behind.

Commissioner Jackson stated that different internet providers have reached out to Title 1 schools to provide internet to anyone who needed it and could show that their children were enrolled in a Leon County Title 1 School.

Commissioner Dozier noted that there was a large interest in the library programs in the schools. She also stated that some students may have done well with virtual school but struggled socially.

Ms. Hunter stated that the library does currently offer the books needed in schools. She added the Homework Hub will continue throughout the summer.

Commissioner Welch commended the libraries for their work.

Commissioner Cummings agreed with the other Commissioners. She commended their work with creating events that bring families together.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the workshop was adjourned at 2:22 p.m.

ATTEST:



BY:

Gwendolyn Marshall, Clerk of Court
& Comptroller, Leon County, Florida

LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY:

Rick Minor, Chair
Board of County Commissioners