

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA  
BUDGET WORKSHOP  
April 25, 2023**

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners met for a Budget Workshop on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, in the County Commissioner Chambers. Present were Chair Nick Maddox, Vice- Chair Carolyn Cummings, and Commissioners Bill Proctor, Rick Minor, Brian Welch, Christian Caban, and David T. O'Keefe. Also present were County Administrator Vincent Long, County Attorney Chasity O'Steen, Board Secretary Beryl Wood, Deputy County Administrator Alan Rosenzweig, Assistant County Administrator Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator Wanda Hunter, Office of Financial Stewardship Director Scott Ross, and Budget Manager Roshaunda Bradley.

Chair Maddox called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. He asked Commissioners for initial comments.

Commissioner Welch thanked staff for preparing a great agenda and looking forward to a robust discussion.

Commissioner O'Keefe commended Deputy County Administrator Alan Rosenzweig and his team for their work in preparing a well-thought-out and strategic budget document. He acknowledged the importance of the budget and the decisions the Board would be making based on it.

Commissioner Minor emphasized the significance of the two workshops and expressed appreciation for the thorough overview provided. He commended the staff for their approach to the budget and their efforts in preparing for the workshops.

Commissioner Caban expressed gratitude to the staff for prioritizing Lake Munson and allocating an additional \$100,000 in funding for it. He also commended County Administrator Long for taking the lead on the Florida Retirement System (FRS) and working with counties across the state.

Vice-Chair Cummings acknowledged staff for their excellent preparation and documentation and expressed excitement for the upcoming presentations.

Chair Maddox expressed gratitude for the staff's exceptional efforts in preparing the budget, especially considering the unique circumstances and dependence on two budget scenarios. He highlighted the importance of conducting discussions in a respectful and equitable manner, with the well-being of Leon County as the primary focus. He specifically commended Deputy County Administrator Alan Rosenzweig and his team for their dedicated work in putting the budget together.

Commissioner Proctor commended the staff for delivering a flawless presentation and expressed his confidence in their abilities. He acknowledged the external factors and dynamics that are affecting the County, particularly emphasizing the impact of the state's decisions. He recognized that this year, Leon County faces specific concerns related to the decisions made at the state level and their potential consequences.

## **1. Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Budget Overview**

County Administrator Long provided opening remarks and an overview of the FY 2024 Preliminary Budget Highlights. He stated the Board would have another workshop in June with all recommendations received today. He shared the Board has provided a lot of direction. He shared how the budget is a multi-year process to fulfill the vision. He shared they have budgeted through a pandemic. He recalled the Florida Retirement System (FRS) legislation, along with the modest tax increase and ad valorem tax increase. Sheriff, SOE – Presidential Primary, no general revenue supported positions, modest capital budget, no millage increase (12 year). He thanked Deputy County Administrator Alan Rosenzweig, Office of Financial Stewardship Director Scott Ross, and OMB Budget Manager Roshaunda Bradley for their continuous work and the Board for the continued leadership.

Deputy County Administrator Alan Rosenzweig noted they are early in the budget process and continued sharing a presentation for the Board:

- American Rescue Plan (ARPA) revenues completed
- Inflation still significantly above normal rates
  - Resulted in increased costs for the County to purchase goods and services
- Federal Reserve raising interest rates intending to slow the economy
  - Resulted in lower tax collections for the County
- Uncertainty regarding future recession
- Locally, revenues increasing modestly with post-COVID economic rebound
- Property value growth return to normal
  - Modest growth rate of 7.5% projected

Cost Avoidance and Savings:

- Deliberate approach occurs throughout the year
- Not only during formal budget process
- Specific & targeted practices: LEAD's Listening Sessions, I<sup>2</sup> (squared) Leverage Partners
- Employees continuously empowered to seek and implement cost saving measures
- Occurs prior to seeking any new taxes, fees, and positions

**\$500,000 in current year savings**  
**\$63.6 million in cumulative savings since 2013**

Deputy County Administrator Alan Rosenzweig shared a table and provided details about the FY 2024 Preliminary Budget General Revenue and Expense Changes from FY 2023.

Commissioner Proctor discussed his contemplated direction for June, expressing his intention to propose a millage rate increase if the legislative process does not result in reduced projections for the FRS. He highlighted a longstanding constraint that the millage rate should never be raised due to an unwritten policy and mindset. Commissioner Proctor requested a thorough examination of the numbers and measures needed to

maintain stability, particularly in light of a projected \$14 million increase for FRS. He expressed interest in exploring the potential impact of a 5% raise for employees if the millage rate were to be increased.

Commissioner O'Keefe asked Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig for the expected percentage increase for the Sheriff's Budget.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig stated 8.1% to 8.2% and property value of 7.5%.

Commissioner O'Keefe expressed appreciation for including \$500,000 in federal funding to address the homeless initiative. He also expressed agreement with the proposed 5% increase for employee raises.

Commissioner Welch asked if they did 5% last cycle.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig stated yes.

Commissioner Welch asked how much it cost.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig stated about \$1.5 million to \$1.6 million, and this year they forecasted about \$1.2 million.

Vice-Chair Cummings spoke about increasing the millage rate and asked if that would cover the shortfall for EMS and Fire Rescue Services.

County Administrator Long indicated that the millage rate increase could potentially help offset the impact on EMS and Fire Rescue Services. However, he emphasized that the Board would review all the relevant information and staff would bring it back in June for further discussion and decision-making.

Commissioner Minor thanked County staff for the \$500,000 federal funds for homelessness. He stated they need to produce ideas to address the national issue as they address the issue locally. He commented on ad valorem taxes and asked what percentage of the residential properties are subject to save their homes.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig stated 60% - 70%.

Commissioner Caban inquired if there is a way to give employees a 5% increase without increasing the millage rate.

County Administrator Long replied yes, it is a matter of choices later in the process.

Commissioner Caban stated he was in favor of increasing the 5% employee raise but not in favor of increasing the millage rate unless they must.

Chair Maddox asked if there is any contemplation of an increase for staff whether it be cost of living or 5%.

County Administrator Long replied yes, they have taken the standard approach, which is a 0-5 merit performance-based average of three, the average of three is what is reflected in the budget.

Chair Maddox commented on looking at the MSTU this year as well as the fire services fee. He asked County Administrator Long if a raise in the MSTU would qualify as a raise in the millage rate.

County Administrator Long replied yes.

Chair Maddox asked if they are contemplating 0-5 % employee raise depending on what comes back from the legislation.

County Administrator Long replied yes.

Commissioner Proctor asked if the MSTU is to all County taxpayers.

County Administrator Long replied it is County-wide.

Commissioner Proctor expressed his desire for all County employees to receive a raise. He requested that the staff reassess the current \$10.00 hauling fee charged by Waste Management and consider reducing it to \$5.00. This reduction would free up \$1.2 million, which could be allocated towards increasing staff salaries. Additionally, Commissioner Proctor emphasized the need to evaluate fleet management and gasoline usage within the County.

Chair Maddox inquired whether implementing a 5% across-the-board increase would exceed the budget's current plans.

County Administrator Long confirmed that if the Board decides to proceed with a 5% across-the-board increase, staff would accommodate the direction and present funding options in June to support the 5% raise.

Chair Maddox inquired whether reducing the Waste Pro hauling fee to \$5.00 would result in the funds being allocated to the Board.

County Administrator Long stated it will be a cost to the Board.

Chair Maddox recommended that they come back in June with 5% versus 3% increase in the next Budget Workshop.

Commissioner O'Keefe inquired whether the Board needed to provide specific direction to staff regarding the options to be presented in June, or if they can rely on the staff to bring back all relevant ideas without specific instructions.

Chair Maddox emphasized that if the Board has specific numbers or scenarios in mind, they would provide staff with clear direction. This is because it can be time-consuming for the staff to evaluate and analyze every possible scenario without specific guidance.

Commissioner Welch clarified that the proposed 5% increase for employee salaries applies uniformly across the board and is not an average. He also mentioned the FRS increase of \$14 million and the additional 3% increase for employees along with potential merit raises.

Commissioner Minor provided an additional perspective on the matter, focusing on the importance of merit increases in retaining employees. He expressed his intention to initiate a discussion in June regarding the benefits of merit increases and the value of rewarding those who demonstrate exceptional performance. Furthermore, he voiced his opposition to increasing the millage rate.

Chair Maddox expressed agreement with Commissioner Minor's viewpoint. He stated his support for increasing employee salaries and expressed curiosity about the potential impact of a 5% increase. Chair Maddox then directed a question to County Administrator Long regarding the possibility of providing pay raises to employees based on their performance across the Board.

County Administrator Long agreed.

Chair Maddox emphasized that their organization prioritizes employee well-being and cares about their workforce. He expressed the belief that if there is room to consider doing more for the employees, they should explore those possibilities.

Commissioner Proctor referenced a letter sent on April 5th to the Legislative Delegation regarding waivers for counties that do not experience a 10% increase in growth. The letter highlighted the possibility for the state to offset any owed amounts from the \$13 billion surplus, of which \$7.5 billion remains unallocated in the general revenue reserve. Commissioner Proctor suggested that the Board write another letter including these arguments and inquired about potential legal challenges and whether anyone had addressed the issue of unfunded mandates with County Attorney O'Steen.

County Attorney O'Steen responded by stating that the County has the option to explore alternative retirement plans instead of solely relying on the FRS.

Commissioner Proctor expressed his view on the proposed 5% increase across the board for non-executive level individuals. He mentioned the tipping fee and raised the issue of ambulance services, suggesting that a thorough examination should be conducted to ensure fair compensation for every individual involved. Commissioner Proctor requested a new approach to be presented and proposed for consideration.

Commissioner O'Keefe expressed his anticipation of hearing the most effective strategies to retain valuable employees. He emphasized that increases in property insurance, Waste Pro fees, fire services fees, and EMS fees should not deter them from delivering quality services to the community. He affirmed that the Board would consider all available options, with a millage rate increase being the last resort among a range of creative alternatives. He requested an updated assessment of the costs associated with providing enterprise or business-type services before burdening taxpayers. Additionally, he urged

the Board to adopt a long-term perspective, ensuring that capital investments and infrastructure development align with future community needs, cautioning against short-sighted decision-making observed in other governments.

Chair Maddox inquired with County Administrator Long whether the 5% increase across the board would include employees of the Constitutional Officers when presented for consideration in June.

County Administrator Long replied yes.

Chair Maddox asked if the 5% increase included all BOCC employees.

County Administrator Long replied yes.

Chair Maddox asked if the Constitutional Officers have the discretion to do whatever they want to do.

County Administrator Long stated the Board approves the budget for the most part.

Chair Maddox raised the question of whether, if the Board approves the increase and allocates funds to the Constitutional Officers, they would have the authority to decide whether to implement a 3% or 5% increase for their own employees.

County Administrator Long responded by stating that in the past the Constitutional Officers have followed the lead of the Board and have not independently implemented different salary increases.

Vice-Chair Cummings expressed solidarity among the Board members and acknowledged their appreciation for the hard work of County employees. She affirmed their desire to provide a salary increase across the Board but noted the need to understand the potential impact of legislation before finalizing decisions. She emphasized the Board's commitment to delivering essential services to the citizens of Leon County. Regarding tipping fees, she inquired whether County Administrator Long had engaged in any negotiations with hospitals on the matter.

County Administrator Long responded that it is not legally permissible for the County to engage in negotiations with hospitals regarding tipping fees.

*Commissioner Proctor moved, second by Vice-Chair Cummings, to approve Options #1-#3, as amended, to have staff bring back a budget contemplating 5% across the board increases for all County and Constitutional Officer employees.*

*Option #1: Accept the report on the Preliminary Budget overview.*

*Option #2: Approve increasing the Primary Health Care Provider patient visit reimbursement rate from \$125 to \$175 in FY 2024 and to \$225 in FY 2025.*

*Option #3: Approve the \$500,021 of Federal Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Funding to be considered as part of the May 23, 2023, Homelessness Workshop or the Board may wish to provide any additional direction on the use of these funds.*

*In addition, this item seeks any other direction the Board wishes to provide in the development of the FY 2024 Preliminary Budget.*

*The motion carried 7-0.*

The Board recessed at 10:23 a.m. for a morning break. The meeting was resumed at 10:40 a.m.

## **2. Joint City/County 2023 Fire Rescue Services Fees**

County Administrator Long introduced this item. He stated this item sought Board approval to implement updated fire rescue assessments and fire rescue services fees in the unincorporated area of Leon County effective October 1, 2023, to provide adequate funding for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area. This item has a fiscal impact. The updated fire rescue assessments and fire rescue services fees will generate \$11.6 million annually. This is an annual increase of \$2.1 million generated from the imposition of the existing rates.

Sandi Neubarth, Government Services Group, provided an overview of the Fire Assessment Program Update Fiscal Year 2023-24.

What is a Fire Assessment:

- Charge imposed against real property to pay for fire protection services
- Does not include EMS-type services above level of first responder

Case Law Requirements

- Special benefit to the property and
- Fair and reasonable apportionment

Historical Demand Methodology

- Court tested and approved
- Most widely adopted
- Easy for property owners to understand
- Historical demand is the driving factor

She commented on the Updated Apportionment Methodology

- Data Components
  1. Service delivery

- Benefit area – entire County
  - ALS without transport
  - Service Zones – based on proximity to fire stations
2. Fire Department's 5-Year Pro-forma Budget
    - EMS vs Non-EMS (Fire)
    - 5-Year average Fire Assessable Budget
    - \$51,423,076
  3. Fire Call Data – 3 Years Call Data
    - EMS vs Non-EMS (Fire)
    - Analyze Non-EMS (Fire) calls
  4. Ad Valorem Tax Roll/Assessment Roll
    - Non- Government Rate Calculations
    - Government Fee Calculation

Commissioner Proctor raised a concern about the fairness of charging the same amount of money for fire services in Zone 2, particularly in the case of Crawfordville Road where there is no fire hydrant. He questioned the equity of this situation and highlighted the need to address this issue.

Ms. Neubarth stated that Zone 2 is actually being charged less than Zone 1 for fire services, despite still responding to calls in Zone 2. She mentioned that responding to calls in areas without fire hydrants may require sending out tanker trucks with water, which could potentially increase costs.

Commissioner Proctor highlighted the geographical imbalance and expressed concern about the lack of fairness in providing the same level of service in areas without fire hydrants. He mentioned that residents in those areas may not have the same level of security and might face higher insurance rates due to the absence of fire hydrants. Commissioner Proctor expressed discomfort with this situation and emphasized the need to address the issue.

Ms. Neubarth clarified that the City responds to all calls for service, with the volunteers providing supplementary assistance. She emphasized that there is always a response from the City for every call.

Commissioner Proctor expressed his concern about not having the same level of access to volunteers in the Woodville area compared to the Bannerman area. He emphasized that the quality of service may not be equal in these different areas.

Commissioner Caban commented on the use of fill-up stations as substitutes for fire hydrants and cited an example of a fill-up station at Ft. Braden School. He inquired about



the sufficiency of fill stations in rural communities and whether they would serve as adequate alternatives to fire hydrants.

Ms. Neubarth responded by stating that their analysis aimed to provide a legally defensible fire assessment.

County Administrator Long explained that the fire rating of a community is determined by factors such as ISO (Insurance Services Office) ratings. He noted that not all insurance companies recognize ISO fill-up stations and instead focus on the overall community rating when assessing insurance rates.

Commissioner Caban expressed his desire to ensure that rural communities are represented and treated equally in terms of the services and resources they receive.

Ms. Neubarth clarified that the ISO rating for the area in question is 3, which is considered to be a very good rating. She provided this information to give context regarding the quality of fire services in the community.

Commissioner Minor inquired whether Zone 1 and Zone 2 align with the City limits.

Ms. Neubarth replied yes.

Commissioner Minor asked about the decision-making process for determining the ratio between residential, commercial, and industrial properties in the context of fire services.

Ms. Neubarth explained that the determination of the ratio between residential, commercial, and industrial properties is based on the analysis of call volumes. The distinction between Zone 1 and Zone 2 is influenced by the demand for non-residential services and the number of residential units, rather than solely considering square footage.

Commissioner Minor inquired as to how Ms. Neubarth produced those ratios.

Ms. Neubarth clarified that they established tier values and assigned them to the properties with the lowest square footage. This approach likely influenced the determination of the ratio between residential, commercial, and industrial properties for fire services.

Commissioner Minor clarified that they take the unit cost per square foot and categorize properties into different tiers based on that unit cost. This allows for the assignment of the respective unit cost per square foot to each tier, which contributes to the determination of fire services fees.

Ms. Neubarth replied yes.

Commissioner Minor expressed gratitude towards Ms. Neubarth for her analysis, as well as County Administrator Long and the staff for their efforts in keeping rates low for residents, commercial properties, and industrial properties.

Commissioner Welch clarified that this study is done every 5 years.

County Administrator Long confirmed.

Commissioner Welch conveyed that they have been postponing the use of fund balance to fulfill this requirement. He pointed out that the majority of the County falls within Zone 2. He mentioned that the approximate total increase in fire services fees would amount to around \$3 per month.

Commissioner Proctor raised concerns about the City's responsibility and their lack of interest in extending infrastructure, such as sewer pipes, to the Southside. He expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of equity in terms of fire services and infrastructure development. He specifically mentioned Lake Munson and expressed apprehensions regarding fire services in that area.

Commissioner O'Keefe inquired whether any alternative options have been explored to provide water for fire suppression purposes in the Southside.

Chair Maddox confirmed that a few years ago, the Board examined alternative options for the placement of fire hydrants in all the unincorporated areas, including the Southside. This indicated that efforts were made to explore potential solutions for water availability for fire suppression purposes.

County Administrator Long responded that they have explored alternative solutions and continued to add fire hydrants to the system on an annual basis. They have also looked into potential federal appropriations for water tanks to assist in enhancing the system. These efforts demonstrate their ongoing commitment to improving the fire suppression infrastructure.

Chief Chad Abrams provided information about an existing policy in place for adding fire hydrants to the current water systems. He mentioned that Public Works collaborates with Utilities to identify suitable locations where hydrants can be added. This process ensures a systematic approach to expanding the fire hydrant network.

Commissioner O'Keefe inquired about the number of new fire hydrants that have been installed in Commissioner Proctor's area in recent years.

Chair Maddox requested an agenda item to be added regarding fire hydrant placement in unincorporated areas.

Commissioner Caban asked if they can request a status report on fire hydrants in the unincorporated areas including fill up stations.

County Administrator Long replied yes.

Vice-Chair Cummings expressed commendation towards the Commission and staff for their efforts in maintaining low rates over the past five years. This acknowledgment highlighted their commitment to fiscal responsibility and ensuring affordability for the community.

Commissioner Proctor expressed his opposition to the motion and stated that he would have to answer to his constituents regarding the proposed action. He also inquired about the possibility of co-locating sewer pipes with water pipes in the Woodville area.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig responded by stating that the co-location of sewer pipes with water pipes in the Woodville area would depend on the availability of infrastructure provided by the City.

Commissioner Proctor questioned the reasons behind the City's reluctance to consider running water pipes and installing hydrants in the Woodville area. He reiterated his stance of not supporting the motion.

*Vice-Chair Cummings moved, second by Commissioner O'Keefe, to approve Options #1-3, as amended to have staff bring back an agenda item on Fire Hydrant Placement in the unincorporated areas and any alternative fire suppression methods.*

*Option #1: Direct staff to prepare an updated Rate Resolution to adopt the Fire Rescue Assessments and Fire rescue services fees at the July 11, 2023, meeting.*

*Option #2: As required by Section 197.3632(4)(a) and (b), Florida Statutes, authorize mailing of first-class notices to property owners regarding proposed changes to the fire rescue assessments and authorize scheduling a Public Hearing on July 11, 2023, to impose the updated assessments and to place the assessments on the tax bill if applicable.*

*Option #3: Direct staff to amend the Fire Rescue Services Interlocal Agreement with the City of Tallahassee based on the terms discussed in this item and authorize the Chair to execute the updated agreement subject to legal review by the County Attorney.*

*The motion carried 6-1 (Commissioner Proctor opposed).*

### **3. Consideration of Proposed Emergency Medical Services MSTU Increase**

County Administrator Long introduced this item. He stated that during last year's budget development process, this item considered long term Emergency Medical Services fiscal strategies to include increasing the EMS millage rate to support funding EMS operations. This item had a fiscal impact, as it recommended increasing the EMS Municipal Services Tax Unit (MSTU) by 0.25 mills for a total millage rate of 0.75 mills. This increase would generate an additional \$5.46 million in annual revenue for the EMS fund and eliminate the need to transfer any general revenue to support EMS operations.

Commissioner Proctor highlighted the hospitals that benefit and profit from fire services, emphasizing the need for specific measures in relation to their contributions. He suggested that if a certain methodology is applied to one system, it should be applicable

to others as well, indicating a desire for fairness and consistency in how services are funded.

Commissioner Welch mentioned the County taking over EMS services in 2001 and noted that rates have not been increased since then. He inquired about the average cost of an ambulance, seeking information on the financial aspects related to EMS services.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig stated about \$700,000.00.

Commissioner Welch expressed admiration for the ability to cover the rising costs of providing services without raising the millage rate. He highlighted the significance of maintaining affordability for the residents. Commissioner Welch also mentioned that the proposed increase would result in a \$3.00 rise in ad valorem taxes for the citizens of Leon County.

Commissioner Minor inquired about the resulting new ratio after the adoption of the motions under consideration. He sought clarification on the specific changes that would occur in the ratio related to the discussed matters.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig responded that the new ratio, after the adoption of the motions, would be close to a 50/50 distribution. This indicated a more balanced allocation of resources and services.

Commissioner Caban inquired about whether all other potential funding options have been thoroughly explored to meet the necessary financial requirements. He expressed a desire to ensure that all avenues have been considered before deciding.

County Administrator replied yes.

Commissioner Proctor inquired about the cost of an EMS ride across town to the hospital. He sought information regarding the financial implications associated with transporting patients via EMS services within the county.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig stated that the cost of an EMS ride across town to the hospital is around \$1,100.

*Commissioner O'Keefe moved, second by Commissioner Proctor, to approve Options #1 and #2.*

*Option #1: Establish the maximum Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) for FY 2024 at 0.75 mills.*

*Option #2: Schedule the first and only public hearing to consider adoption of an Ordinance amending Chapter 11, Article XIII of the Leon County Code of Laws regarding the Emergency Medical Service Taxing Unit, for July 11, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.*

*The motion carried 7-0.*

**4. Proposed Revisions to Policy No. 17-2, “Street Lighting Eligibility Criteria and Implementation” to Provide Street Lights at School Bus Stop Locations**

County Administrator Long introduced this item. The budget discussion item provided proposed revisions to Policy No. 17-2, “Street Lighting Eligibility Criteria and Implementation” to implement a school bus stop street lighting program in unincorporated Leon County. This item also recommended the Board consider amending the Land Development Code to require new residential subdivisions provide streetlights for school bus stops. This item has a recurring fiscal impact for the installation, maintenance, and monthly electric utility costs associated with new streetlights. The annual funding for the street lighting program is adequate to support the proposed School Bus Stop Lighting Program. The ongoing maintenance and monthly electric utility costs are nominal and will be included in Public Works utility budget.

Commissioner Proctor asked about the lighting on Crawfordville Road, specifically from Wilson Green Boulevard to Capital Circle. He sought information regarding the status or plans for installing lighting in that area.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig stated that the funding for the lighting project on Crawfordville Road, from Wilson Green Boulevard to Capital Circle, is fully provided by the State. He also mentioned that the City and the State are working together to coordinate the implementation of this project.

Commissioner Welch expressed gratitude towards the staff for their creativity and efforts in finding solutions to address various challenges. He emphasized the importance of facilitating a creative and cost-effective approach to ensure the safety of children and the entire community. Commissioner Welch highlighted the need for innovative solutions that meet the objectives efficiently and effectively.

Commissioner Caban highlighted the significance of equality, particularly when it comes to youth. He expressed satisfaction with the inclusion of the discussed item on the agenda and extended his gratitude to the staff for their efforts. He emphasized the importance of addressing equality issues and ensuring equal opportunities for all members of the community, starting with the younger generation.

Commissioner Minor expressed gratitude towards the County staff and County Administrator Long for their efforts in initiating the agenda item and addressing the need for lighting to benefit the youth. He acknowledged the importance of providing appropriate resources and facilities for the youth and appreciated the commitment of the staff in fulfilling this objective.

Chair Maddox acknowledged the partnership between the County and Leon County Schools and expressed enthusiasm for further expansion in the future. He recognized the value of collaboration and working together to enhance the services and opportunities for the community. Chair Maddox expressed a positive outlook and a commitment to strengthening the partnership between the county and the school district.

Vice-Chair Cummings expressed her enthusiasm for the discussed item and highlighted the role of the Children's Service Council. She emphasized the positive impact this program would have on the future of children in the community. Vice-Chair Cummings

also emphasized the importance of collaboration and working together with other entities to maximize the benefits and outcomes for the children. She recognized the value of partnership and expressed her commitment to fostering effective cooperation among different organizations and stakeholders.

*Commissioner Caban moved, second by Commissioner Welch, to approve Options #1 and #2.*

*Option #1: Adopt the proposed revised Policy No. 17-2, "Street Lighting Eligibility Criteria and Implementation" to Provide Street Lights at School Bus Stop Locations (Attachment #1).*

*Option #2: Direct staff to draft amendments to the Land Development Code to require new residential subdivisions to provide streetlights for school bus stops.*

*The motion carried 7-0.*

## **5. Overview of Legislative Changes Concerning Publication of Advertisements and Legal Notices**

County Administrator Long introduced this item. He stated the item sought Board direction regarding whether to eliminate publishing certain advertisements and legal notices in the local newspaper and, instead, post these notices online. During the FY 2022 legislative session, state law was amended, effective January 1, 2023, to allow a governmental agency the option to publish certain types of advertisements and legal notices on a publicly accessible County website or other private website designated by the County instead of in a print newspaper if certain conditions were met.

Commissioner Proctor expressed his preference for maintaining the status quo and voiced his support for Option #3. He referred to the Capital Outlook Newspaper and raised the issue of equality in terms of access. He emphasized the importance of ensuring equal opportunities and resources for all members of the community. His stance indicated his desire to preserve the existing arrangement and advocate for equitable access to services and information.

*The motion died for a lack of second.*

Commissioner Proctor inquired about legal notices.

County Administrator Long addressed the process of advertisements and legal notices, highlighting the distinction between required notices and those that may be exempt. He clarified that the proposed changes would only apply to specific legal notices and not all types of advertisements.

Commissioner Proctor asked about including the Capital Outlook in circulation.

County Administrator Long clarified that the County already advertises extensively in the Capital Outlook publication.

Commissioner O'Keefe proposed an amendment to the motion, suggesting the inclusion of paper copies of all public notices at each library and County Courthouse.

Vice-Chair Cummings inquired about the potential adverse effects of the proposed amendment and sought confirmation regarding the County's current advertising practices in the Capital Outlook newspaper.

County Administrator Long confirmed that they will provide paper copies of the public notices to the libraries and County Courthouse as per the amendment. He clarified that the amendment pertains to specific legal notices that are required to be posted in the Tallahassee Democrat, and it would not impact the existing advertisement practices in the Capital Outlook newspaper.

Chair Maddox inquired if they need to make a decision today.

County Administrator Long stated no.

Commissioner Minor suggested an alternative approach to not printing notices and instead relying on library staff to assist citizens in accessing the information digitally. He suggested it aims to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and encourage citizens to utilize computer resources available at the libraries.

*Commissioner Caban moved, seconded by Commissioner Welch, for Option # 1, as amended to include to include paper copies of all notices at each library and County Courthouse of current public notices.*

*Option # 1: Direct staff to:*

- a. Prepare an Ordinance and schedule a public hearing for July 11, 2023, that requires Leon County to host a publicly accessible website for the digital publication of certain advertisements and legal notices as allowed by Florida Statutes.*
- b. Authorize the County Administrator to prepare a cost sharing agreement with the City of Tallahassee for Board approval.*

*Amended to add*

*The motion carried 7-0.*

County Administrator Long expressed gratitude towards County Staff and the Board for their guidance and stated that he looks forward to reconvening with them in June on the budget.

Commissioner O'Keefe congratulated Assistant County Administrator Wanda Hunter for being recognized as one of the Top 25 Women to Know in 2023.

**Adjourn:**

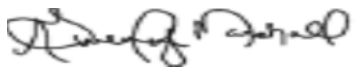
There being no further business to come before the Board, the workshop was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

**LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA**

ATTEST:



BY: \_\_\_\_\_

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

BY: \_\_\_\_\_



Nick Maddox, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners