

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA
BUDGET WORKSHOP
June 20, 2023**

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners met in the County Commissioner Chambers for a Budget Workshop on Tuesday, June 20, 2023. Chair Nick Maddox, Vice-Chair Carolyn Cummings, Commissioners Bill Proctor, Rick Minor, Brian Welch, Christian Caban, and David T. O’Keefe were present. Also present were County Administrator Vincent Long, County Attorney Chasity O’Steen, Deputy County Administrator Alan Rosenzweig, Assistant County Administrator Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator Wanda Hunter, Budget Manager Roshaunda Bradley, and Board Secretary II Beryl Wood.

Vice-Chair Cummings called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. She thanked everyone for coming.

1. Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Budget Overview

This budget discussion item seeks Board guidance on developing the FY 2024 Preliminary Budget.

County Administrator Long provided opening remarks and an overview of the FY 2024 preliminary budget, as follows:

- A balanced budget totaling \$347,917,896 which is a 9.4% or a \$30,013,674 increase. \$13.1 million or almost half the increase is associated with special revenue programs such as EMS, Tourism, Fire, and Solid Waste.
- A 7.46% increase in taxable property values, resulting in an additional \$12,599,451 in revenue.
- 12th consecutive year with no increase in the Countywide millage rate.
- An increase in the Emergency Medical Service MSTU for the first time since the inception of the Leon County EMS program in FY 2004 to ensure sufficient funding for current and future service provision.
- Continued fiscal constraint in the operating budget with no new general revenue positions.
- To maintain current service levels, funding is included to address contractual obligations and inflationary cost increases.
- Support for all Constitutional Officer budget requests, including:
 - Support for the Sheriff’s budget, including funding for the pay plan for sworn officers to achieve and maintain recruitment and retention efforts.
 - Increased funding for the Supervisor of Elections operation to address the additional Presidential Preference Primary costs.
- No general fund balance currently budgeted, pending Board action on 5% across-the-board employee raises.
- Continued funding for primary healthcare and community health service partners.

- Implementing a planned rate increase for the fire service fee.
- Capital funding to maintain strategic, long-term investments in infrastructure.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig provided more details about the FY 2024 preliminary budget, as follows:

FY 2024 Preliminary Budget Support for Board Approved Strategic Initiatives.

- Support the Sheriff in implementing a step pay plan for sworn officers.
- Increases Primary Health Care Provider patient visit reimbursement rates from \$125 to \$175 in FY2024 and to \$225 in FY2025.
- Leverages \$500,000 in Federal funding to address homelessness.
- Allocates \$283,135 of SHIP funding towards building affordable rental housing for low and low-income families.
- To enhance engagement and awareness of resources available for those experiencing homelessness, provide additional funding for the United Partners for Human Services.
- Support for the Tallahassee/Leon County Bicentennial Celebration.
- Support for the 2024 World Athletics Cross Country Championships.
- Funding for Lake Munson water quality testing and aerial surveys.
- Promoting opportunities for youth training through the Tallahassee Community College EMT Certification Program at Godby High School.

Economic Outlook.

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) final revenue replacement.
- Inflation is still significantly above normal rates.
 - This resulted in increased costs for the County to purchase goods and services.
- The Federal Reserve is raising interest rates intending to slow the economy.
 - Result in lower tax collections for the County.
- Uncertainty regarding future recession.
- Locally, revenues are increasing modestly with a post-COVID economic rebound.
- Property value growth returning to normal levels.

Cost Avoidance and Savings.

- Deliberate approach occurs throughout the year.
- Not only during the formal budget process.
- Specific & targeted practices: LEADs listening Sessions, I² (squared), Leverage Partners.
- Employees are continuously empowered to seek and implement cost-saving measures.
- Occurs prior to seeking any new fees and positions.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig discussed a table of the FY 2024 Preliminary Budget Overview: General Revenue and Expense Changes from FY 2023.

In addition, he showcased the FY2024 Preliminary budget: General Fund Balance Use History. He stated we have the lowest net budget compared to other counties in the state of Florida.

FY2024 Budget Process Next Steps

- July 1: Property Appraiser's final property values
- July 11: Budget Workshop (If necessary)
- July 11: Ratification of June 20, 2023, Budget Workshop
- September 12 and 26: Tentative and Final Public Hearings

Commissioner O'Keefe moved, seconded by Commissioner Minor, for Commissioner Welch to appear by phone. The motion carried 6-0.

Commissioner Proctor moved, second by Commissioner O'Keefe, for approval:

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

Option # 2: Approve the recommended changes to Sections 5.12, "On-Call, Stand-By, and CallOut Pay" and 6.02.1, "Retiree Health Insurance Contribution" as reflected in Attachment # 6.

Option # 3: Approve the appropriation of \$291,318 in available Tourism fund balance, and advance funding capital projects in FY 2023 as reflected in the Resolution and Budget Amendment (Attachment # 8).

Option # 4: Authorize the County Administrator to execute a contract amendment with Waste

Management increasing the hauling rate to \$18.80 effective October 1, 2023, and \$22.71 effective October 1, 2024, and approve the updated Transfer Station Tipping Fee resolution (Attachment # 10), subject to legal review by the County Attorney.

Option # 5: Approve the District Medical Examiner Fees Schedule (Attachment # 11).

Option # 6: Accept the FY 2023 annual status report and recommendations on the Sidewalk

Program implementation (Attachment # 12).

Option # 7: Accept the status report on the FY 2022 – FY 2026 Strategic Plan (Attachment # 14)

Board direction for the following option:

Option # 8: Include a 5% pay raise for all Leon County Government and Constitutional Officer employees in the FY 2024 Preliminary Budget to be provided by fund balance appropriation.

Vice-Chair Cummings thanked the staff for the presentation.

Commissioner Proctor proposed including support for Item #5: Florida Civil Rights Museum, Inc., funding request and asked staff if there was a way to include Item #5 in the budget.

County Administrator Long stated that the option they provided for the Commissioners is out of the current budget.

Chair Maddox asked staff how much money was left in contingency for this year.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig acknowledged there is \$190,000 left in contingency.

Chair Maddox stated he liked the idea of including Item #5 in this year's budget and urged the Board to consider taking it out of contingency, leaving about \$130,000 left.

Commissioner Proctor expressed that he was comfortable with Options 1-8.

Commissioner O'Keefe pointed to the Sheriff's Office budget. He is worried because he doesn't understand how we went from \$103 million and then we increase to \$109 million. He highlighted it's a consistent rise. He asked staff to explain the reasoning behind this.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig noted a 5% projected growth rate in the budget. He continued it's a large base, so that's why you see that big of an increase. He also pointed to the Supervisor of Elections Office with a decrease, however, every four years with the Presidential Elections it increases.

Commissioner O'Keefe stated he would like to consider adding a sidewalk implementation program – Item #6. He motioned to add Apalachee Parkway on Highway 27 from Conor Boulevard to Apalachee Regional Park, where there is not sidewalk. He asked that it be added to the list to be considered. He asked Commissioner Proctor if he would approve of this amendment to his motion.

Commissioner Proctor asked staff if this is a federal road, US Highway 27.

County Administrator Long stated the sidewalk policy, has several tiers of priorities. He shared all it does was gives staff direction to analyze and place the project in the appropriate category.

Commissioner Proctor stated he is worried about the failure to close Magnolia Drive and Jim Lee and how they can't seem to close it in, with the absence of sidewalks and he also included Tharpe Street that needed sidewalks. He emphasized those areas are the most chronic areas of foot traffic.

Commissioner O'Keefe reminded Commissioner Proctor that a sidewalk for Magnolia Drive was currently in the lineup and is currently being slated for construction.

County Administrator Long clarified that Tharpe Street sidewalk has been addressed and is included in the budget.

Commissioner O'Keefe noted he will be coming back to this concern to make a substitute motion later. He asked regarding the strategic plan, and he noted staff's definition of completed doesn't mean done, but instead means the project is currently in

progress. He referenced an item from January that is currently marked as “done” that is as follows: “to increase entry-level apprenticeship opportunities or parties specifically training on the job hiring positions.” He asked how this could be marked as “done” in 60 days.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig replied that it isn’t complete, and staff will continue to work on it for the next five years.

Commissioner Proctor asked staff if they could use the term in progress or it’s happening now. He explained when he hears the word “done”, he believes that the projects are actually done.

Commissioner O’Keefe made a substitute motion to approve Options 1-7 and to discuss Option 8.

Commissioner O’Keefe motioned, seconded by Commissioner Minor, to approve Options 1-7 and to discuss Option 8. The motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Minor thanked County Administrator Long and staff for working on this budget. He stated he wanted to discuss the 5% increase, and he disagreed with across-the-board pay increases. He recommended having merit increases that balance out the 5% increase. If the Board is going to do approve a financial increase, it gives managers discretion to give increases based on merit to reward their employees.

Commissioner Caban asked staff if we move forward with the 5% increase, are we taking away supervisors’ ability to reward exceptional employees?

County Administrator Long replied yes, it would take away that ability.

Commissioner Proctor stated he wants a permanent increase across the board, and it won’t be a one-time thing. He stated that our employees will be receiving a 9% increase within the overall county budget from the last two years. He stated the \$104 million budget reflects the state of our budget. He’d say that employees aren’t a one-night stand for him, and he wants to continue to persuade our employees to stay. He asked staff to comment on the Bicentennial support and our insurance program.

Deputy County Administrator Rosenzweig noted there are ample tourism funds and the County has maintained the employee split for health insurance in the last 6 or 7 years.

Commissioner Proctor asked if they are still paying 87% of the premium.

He replied yes.

Commissioner Proctor believed that we need to keep morale in mind. He stated he’d like to choose to respect everyone.

Vice-Chair Commissioner Cummings thanked the administrators and staff for their presentation. She stated she was pleased to approve Option 5, and that it was time for funds to be increased. She was concerned about the healthcare of our marginalized communities. She believed that Commissioners must establish policies that recognize the worth of all our County employees. She confirmed that across-the-board pay increases would be the best option. She asked if any administrator wants to give their employees a merit increase based on outstanding performance, do we have a policy that prohibits such a request?

County Attorney O'Steen says yes, we have HR policies in place of when it is permissible to give raises. In addition, she clarified that staff is also stating that it is a budget issue.

County Administrator Long stated that the County has annual based increases. He continued that traditionally we conduct a performance evaluation. He agreed it is important to have a performance appraisal in place, but he said it is up to Board discretion if they would..

Vice-Chair Cummings asked if there are instances if the annual evaluation is performed, some employees won't receive a 3% raise based on performance levels.

County Administrator Long replied yes.

Vice-Chair Cummings asked if they are concerned about employees feeling the inflation impact, she believed that Option 8 would address this. She believed that would be the best option.

County Administrator Long clarified this will be a merit increase of 5%. Each employee will have an evaluation and will receive 5%.

Commissioner O'Keefe motioned, seconded by Commissioner Minor motioned for Options 1-7 and to discuss Option 8.

The substitute motion failed 4-3. (Commissioner's Proctor, Maddox, and Caban opposed the motion).

Chair Maddox reiterated Commissioner Proctor's motion.

Chair Maddox recognized Commissioner Minor and Commissioner O'Keefe to speak.

Commissioner Minor shared he would support Options 1-8. He understood Commissioner Proctor's reasoning, but he emphasized that we are taking away the power for managers to give pay raises based on merit. He believed that this takes away power from managers and stressed it's about rewarding the exceptional workers who have done great work. He furthered stated it gives other employees something to work towards.

Commissioner O'Keefe stated when we look at this pay increase, we would be dipping into our fund balance. He is concerned about the fund balance if we continuously give out raises every year. He stated they have a long-time view of treating employees well. He believed that if we want to give more money to employees, there are other ways to do it. He doesn't know if going into our savings account is the right choice when we've had a pandemic happen or impending recession. He will vote for Options 1-8 even though individually he would vote against this.

Commissioner Proctor highlighted that the most important asset of Leon County is the employees. He feels the most important thing they must consider is that our employees can afford their lives and come back ready to work. He stressed that we must save everyone. He stated in previous years he has supported merit based raises, but he does support Options 1-8.

Chair Maddox asked how many times we have given across-the-board raises two years in a row.

County Administrator Long said last year would be the first time.

Chair Maddox wanted to reassure Commissioner O'Keefe that this isn't a trend. He stated they're not a Board that does things because they sound good. He asked as we take up this motion, he doesn't think there is a manager in Leon County that would be uncomfortable with the Commission taking the responsibility away or gaining the same raise as the lowest on the chain. He stated that we have had so many good employees because of the culture of Leon County. He asked the County Administrator how often someone leaves for a higher-paying job either in Leon County or in the State of Florida.

County Administrator Long replied not as often as some organizations but it does happen.

Chair Maddox emphasized it doesn't happen often and that employees stay because of the culture Leon County has built.

*Commissioner Proctor motioned, seconded by Commissioner Caban, for options 1-8.
The motion carried 7-0 with Commissioner Welch voting by Zoom.*

Commissioner Proctor reflected on the Sheriff's budget and pointed to the amount of money in the budget. He stated we are in an era where we will up the budget just because. He stated that we are in an era of being politically correct. He would like a workshop for law enforcement. He doesn't believe the numbers for the budget for the Sheriff make sense. He emphasized that he doesn't have any desire to offend.

2. Plan for the Use of Opioid Litigation Settlement Funds

This item seeks Board approval of the proposed plan to use current and future funds from the opioid litigation settlement for substance abuse treatment and other ancillary

services for people involved in the criminal justice system, and those adversely impacted by opioids in Leon County.

Commissioner O'Keefe moved, second by Commissioner Minor, for approval: Option #1: Approve the proposed plan for the use of current and future funds received as settlement from opioid litigation for substance abuse treatment and ancillary services for people involved in the criminal justice system and adversely impacted by opioids in Leon County. 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.

3. Report on County Investment in Human and Homeless Services

As requested by the Board at the May 23, 2023, Workshop Addressing Homelessness, this item provides a report on the County's investment in human and homeless services.

Commissioner Minor moved, second by Commissioner Caban, for approval: Option #1: Accept the report on County investment in human and homeless services. The Motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Minor asked if the follow-up items would come back soon.

County Administrator Long stated it is scheduled for the public hearings.

Commissioner Caban is concerned that Operation Veteran homeless is third to last within the charts; it doesn't sit well with him, and he would like more money allocated from this preliminary budget.

County Administrator Long stated this simply represents the need for the operation.

Assistant County Administrator Wanda Hunter further clarified that the amount reflected is simply the amount requested by the Board.

Commissioner Caban stated he believed that anyone who rides down Tennessee Street who cares about homeless veterans would believe that this doesn't look well with how this budget is allocated.

Vice-Chair Cummings commented in relation to this chart, she brought up by the CHSP Report and how the homeless stand out. She stated that veterans were specifically targeted in this expo. She noted all service goods were given out to the veterans. She doesn't have an issue with the number being allocated for this item. She asked if the staff could explain if the \$62,000 is what the Commission allocated.

County Administrator Long replied that the money allocated is the County's line-item funding, which doesn't include CHSP funding.

Commissioner Caban asked if they could reach out to our providers and ask how much of their budget we allocate to them to spend on veteran services.

County Administrator Long asked whether Commissioner Caban was speaking of all the agencies funding the community services partnerships.

Commissioner Caban replied yes.

Chair Maddox asked whether Commissioner Caban is asking about veteran services or veteran services related to homelessness.

Commissioner Caban motioned, seconded by Commissioner Minor, for a status report on county investment and homelessness related to veteran services.

The motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Proctor appealed to the Commission for a dedicated workshop centered around human services agencies, specifically emphasizing understanding the agency's goals. Furthermore, he intended to integrate his plan into Commissioner Caban's request, fostering a cohesive and comprehensive approach.

Commissioner Caban inquired of the Chair whether they could incorporate Commissioner Proctor's concerns into the status report, ensuring a well-rounded approach that doesn't solely concentrate on veteran services.

Chair Maddox asked for clarification on specifically what they're asking for.

Commissioner Caban clarified that he was only speaking for veteran services but didn't see an issue with including Commissioner Proctor's request.

Commissioner Minor asked if the two-year funding cycle for CHSP will end soon.

Shington Lamy answered yes.

Commissioner Minor stated that if we were close to the cycle of CHSP, it would be the perfect time to have that conversation.

Mr. Lamy stated as part of the item they're bringing back in the fall, in reference to line-item funding for homeless providers, that will be a part of the larger conversation for CHSP.

Vice-Chair Cummings asked Shington Lamy if there is any input on the policies that CHSP uses to determine funding levels for the applicants.

Mr. Lamy answered that there is an entire application process that is submitted by agencies with funding requests and those are reviewed by review teams. They make a recommendation regarding the funding level.

Vice Chair Cummings clarified that she is asking if CHSP is establishing its own criteria.

Chair Maddox reminded the Commission to remain focused on the current topic of discussion. He assured everyone that he comprehended the points raised during the meeting. Furthermore, he expressed his willingness to consider scheduling a workshop dedicated to addressing homelessness when the topic of CHSP arises again. He wholeheartedly supports their concerns and priorities for the allocations in the coming year related to CHSP.

Commissioner O'Keefe stated he knows the status report is important and asked Shington Lamy to explain.

Chair Maddox asked how much money we spend on veteran services.

County Administrator Long stated about \$150 million dollars is spent towards veteran services.

Mr. Lamy passionately shared their unwavering commitment to serving our veterans daily, especially redoubling their efforts to combat veteran homelessness. Their top priority is to prevent veterans from losing their homes, and they actively implement initiatives like HUD-VASH, which ensures veterans receive rental vouchers for housing support. Additionally, Operation Thank You is significant in their mission, reflecting their dedication to prioritizing family well-being.

During the discussion, Mr. Lamy outlined a wide range of services they offer, showcasing the County's remarkable veteran-friendly environment. With great pride in their department, they reaffirmed their dedication to positively impacting the lives of those who have served our nation.

Chair Maddox asserted that the County excels in providing exceptional support to our veterans, making it one of the leading counties in the nation in this regard.

Commissioner Caban is proud of what we do for our veterans.

Commissioner Proctor moved, seconded by Commissioner Caban, for a workshop on homelessness.

The motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Proctor stated that he'd like for the City to be involved in this discussion as well.

Chair Maddox asked that they motion for the County have its own workshop.

Commissioner Proctor motioned, seconded by Commissioner Caban, to have a County workshop and reach out to the City to find out if the City is willing to participate.

The motion carried 7-0.

4. Establishing the Maximum Millage Rate for the FY 2024 Tentative Budget

Pursuant to Florida Statutes, the Board is required to establish the maximum millage rates for utilization in the Truth in Millage (TRIM) process.

Commissioner O'Keefe moved, second by Vice Chair Cummings, for approval:

Option #1: Establish the maximum countywide millage rate for FY 2024 at 8.3144.

Option #2: Establish the maximum Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) for FY 2024 at 0.75 mills.

Commissioner Proctor stated this is a phenomenal millage rate. He asked if another County had done this.

County Administrator Long stated this is not an unusual increase.

Commissioner Proctor asked how we reflect on how the school board levels off on property taxes.

County Administrator Long stated that they have generated a substantial increase.

Commissioner Proctor stated that this is amazing in Year 12. He commented taxes are not paid on government property and we get nothing in exchange for that. He stated we do need a homeless campus. He applauded the staff for their hard work.

The motion carried 7-0.

5. Florida Civil Rights Museum, Inc.'s Funding Request

This budget discussion item is provided for the Board's consideration of the Florida Civil Rights Museum, Inc.'s, funding request of an additional \$60,000 to develop a virtual civil rights museum.

Commissioner Proctor moved, second by Commissioner O'Keefe, for approval of Option #2. Approve the funding request in the amount of \$60,000 to be supported from general fund contingency and direct the County Administrator to bring the associated Budget Amendment as part of the ratification agenda item to be brought back at the July Board meeting.

Commissioner Proctor passionately emphasized the personal significance of this item, expressing how it uplifts and inspires him. He voiced his preference for experiencing history firsthand rather than through a television screen. Additionally, he took a

moment to genuinely thank the staff for their unwavering dedication and acknowledged the often unnoticed, yet invaluable work they perform.

Commissioner O'Keefe stated this museum is an impressive investment. He is excited to see it happen.

Vice-Chair Cummings supported the funding request for this year, and she believed this will be a great investment in African American history, especially when it is being targeted in schools.

The Motion carried 7-0.

County Administrator Long thanked the Board for their direction.

Commissioner O'Keefe motioned, seconded Commissioner Proctor motioned, for staff to vet the property for sidewalks to be considered from stretch Apalachee Parkway to Connor Boulevard East to Apalachee Regional Park.

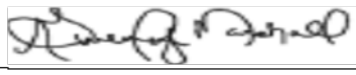
Commissioner Caban asked did Commissioner O'Keefe want to move that particular sidewalk request up on the list. Commissioner O'Keefe replied he was not. He was asking that it be vetted by staff to determine which list it belongs on the priority list and not that it be moved before any project.


The motion carried 7-0.

Adjourn:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the workshop was adjourned at 11:08 a.m.



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

BY: 
Nick Maddox, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners