

A [Budget Workshop Meeting](#) of the [Board of Lee County Commissioners](#) was held this date with the following Commissioners present:

Cecil L Pendergrass, Chairman  
Larry Kiker, Vice-Chairman  
John E. Manning  
Tammara Hall  
Frank B. Mann

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Assistant County Manager Pete Winton provided brief opening comments stating that this meeting would be a discussion of three items broken out from the overall budget, including the Lee County Sheriff's Office (LCSO), the Library System and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

**1. SHERIFF'S BUDGET**

**The Sheriff's budget is the single largest budget in the General Fund, which is why it is being addressed separately.**

Lee County Sheriff Mike Scott delineated the top five priorities of the LCSO and, narrating a [PowerPoint](#) presentation (Copy on file in Minutes Office), discussed a proposed increase to the FY13/14 budget of \$4.8 million dollars, pointing out an unfunded mandate for the FRS (Florida Retirement System) in the amount of \$2.4 million dollars due to an increased employer portion; three (3%) percent raises for staff amounting to \$1.6 million dollars, and operational increases of \$900,000.00. Sheriff Scott detailed five-year capital improvement needs, including personnel expansion, communication upgrades and replacement of fleet vehicles, vessels and motors, equipment upgrades, physical space expansions and facility upgrades. The Sheriff's suggestions for improving efficiencies/service levels consisted of funding to support the School Resources Officers (SRO's) in elementary schools, expansion of the Forensics Division to include DNA testing, expansion of the Traffic Unit to include commercial vehicle enforcement, and relocation of the Central District into Main Headquarters, resultant in a cost savings of rent and utilities. The Sheriff responded to questions and comments by the Board and a question by Commissioner Kiker regarding the issue of providing School Resource Officers and the Lee County School Board's position on funding. Board discussion of increasing 2013-14 Ad Valorem taxes and a change in the millage rate ensued, with support indicated by Commissioners Manning and Hall. The Commissioners voiced their appreciation to Sheriff Scott for cooperation throughout the budget constraints of the past years and his continuing efforts toward the well-being of the Community.

**2. LIBRARY SYSTEM PROPERTY TAX RATE**

**The library tax rate was reduced by 25% in Fiscal Year 2008-09 as a way to intentionally spend down library reserves and provide tax relief. The Board understood at the time that this would result in revenues being less than expenses (and thus the spend-down of reserves, and that the rate would have to again be increased once reserves reached a minimum level (which will happen at the end of this fiscal year).**

Library System Director Sheldon Kay provided a brief update of adopted budgets from 2008-09 to the present proposed system budget for 2013-14 with the use of a [PowerPoint](#) presentation (copy on file in Minutes Office). He noted \$5 million dollars in spending cuts over the past year, and stated that the library fund is currently operating at a deficit, due primarily to Library Tax Rate cuts in 2008-09. Mr. Kaye indicated that library usage has doubled and detailed the needs for expanding the Bonita Springs and North Fort Myers facilities at a cost of approximately \$12 million dollars each, plus additional operating costs. Mr. Kaye provided five (5) and ten (10) year funding breakdowns for the projects through increases in millage rates and an estimate of the impact on taxpayers, and recommended that a consultant be hired to review and define overall long-term needs of the entire Library System. Questions and comments by the Board ensued with Commissioners Manning, Hall and Kiker stating support for the proposals, and a notation by Library Fiscal Manager Sue Lange, in response to a question by Commissioner Mann, that library staffing increases were previously budgeted and there would be no request for added staff in the proposed budget.

**3. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Assistant County Manager Pete Winton referenced [recommendations](#) of the Local Planning Agency (LPA) (Copy on file in Minutes Office) for the FY2013-14 Capital Improvement and Major Maintenance budget proposals and noted a proposed reduction over the next two years in funding for capital improvement projects.

Commissioner Hall voiced concern for the CIP and Major Maintenance budgets moving forward, and Mr. Winton responded to Commissioner Mann's questions and concerns regarding the General Fund and Reserves, and the Homestead Road Improvements Project, and assured him that overall budget proposals would provide additional clarification of the overall budget at the next Budget Meeting scheduled for June 24, 2013. Commissioner Kiker observed that policies for Reserves should also be discussed at that meeting.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 2:43 p.m.

ATTEST:  
LINDA DOGGETT, CLERK

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Deputy Clerk

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[Chairman, Lee County Commission](#)