

A Budget Workshop Meeting of the Lee County Board of County Commissioners and State and Constitutional Officers was held on this date in the Administration East Building, for the purpose of providing an opportunity for review and discussion by the Board with the Constitutional Officers of their immediate and long-term needs and impacts on the upcoming Fiscal year 2013-14 County Budget, with the following in attendance:

Board of County Commissioners

Cecil L Pendergrass, Chairman
Larry Kiker, Vice-Chairman
John E. Manning

Acting County Attorney Andrea Fraser
Interim County Manager Doug Meurer

Constitutional Officers

Clerk of Circuit Court Linda Doggett
Supervisor of Elections Sharon Harrington
Tax Collector Larry Hart
20th Judicial Circuit State Attorney Steve Russell
Lee County Sheriff Mike Scott
20th Jud. Circuit Public Defender Kathleen Smith
Deputy Medical Examiner Patti Wheaton
Lee County Property Appraiser Ken Wilkinson
Trial Court Administrator Scott Wilsker

COMMISSIONERS HALL AND MANN WERE NOT IN ATTENDANCE DUE TO SCHEDULING CONFLICTS.

I. WELCOME

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and welcomed the participants, adding there would be a brief budget update by each Constitutional, beginning with three specific items as noted on the Agenda.

II. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS BUDGET DISCUSSION

A. PUBLIC DEFENDER KATHLEEN SMITH provided an overview of her budget noting areas of increases, reductions, and upcoming expenditures the department would need to make. She expressed serious concerns over issues currently being dealt with by the Department as a result of the ongoing Justice Center Project, primarily because of the department being so spread out, and requested that the funding for centralization of the department (4th Floor of the SunTrust Building) be added back into the budget in order to facilitate completion as expeditiously as possible. Construction & Design Manager Damon Grant provided a brief update on the project and defined what was required for resolution of the issues, with input provided by Clerk of Courts Linda Doggett. Commissioner Kiker asked the Constitutional Officers to include more specifics regarding the status of their budgets and stated that he would like to have the actual numbers provided as soon as possible. Commissioner Manning asked Mr. Grant to send a detailed analysis as to how best to proceed and the financial projections for resolution of the issues to the Board for additional consideration.

B. SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS SHARON HARRINGTON reviewed budgetary issues and requests, specifying the need for new scanners in all of the precincts to eliminate the massive delays experienced in the 2012 General Election, the mandated replacement of touch screens for ADA machines, and a budgetary increase due to the decision to utilize First Class mailings in avoidance of added delays. Ms. Harrington described Express Poll Books which has become popular nationwide, and noted that consideration of additional precincts would not be an option due to the prohibitive expenses involved. In summary, she stated that her budget would probably increase from \$6.2 to \$6.4 million dollars.

C. CLERK OF COURTS LINDA DOGGETT advised that the Clerk’s Office budget would be very close to the same amount FY2012-13, and reviewed State-mandated implementation of e-filing adding it was more costly in the initial phase due to maintenance of paper records while undergoing the transition. Mrs. Doggett described the ‘Work from Home Program’ being implemented throughout the Clerk’s offices noting it had resulted in a substantial savings and that Department Managers were being urged to participate. She added that despite the extra spending, the Clerk’s overall budget may still come in under the budget for last year.

D. LEE COUNTY SHERIFF MIKE SCOTT reviewed the consistent budgetary reductions by his department over the past five (5) years and reported the possibility of consolidation of the Central Echo District currently located near the Bell Tower area in with the Six Mile Cypress Station which could result in a significant decrease, and that the possibility for deployment of LCSD Deputies due to security increases in area elementary schools was under consideration in the Legislature and could equate to an expenditure increase. The Sheriff also noted that the impact of negotiations with unionized deputies was unknown as this time. He referenced reductions in the crime rate and indicated he was finalizing the new budget for the June 1, 2013 submission date.

E. PROPERTY APPRAISER KEN WILKINSON provided a brief financial overview and stated the possibility of a noteworthy savings due to cutting the costs of mailing by utilization of electronic communications and that State Legislation could put Truth In Millage forms online and property owners would receive postcards

announcing they could view their TRIM notices at the Property Appraiser's website. He added that his department is not filling vacated positions, and that he planned to have the budget completed by the June 1st due date.

F. TAX COLLECTOR LARRY HART reviewed new projects being undertaken by the department as a result of taking over the issuance of drivers' licenses and birth certificates and a combination of departmental resources with the Clerk of Courts and the potential to e-mail tax bills currently under Legislative consideration, and enhancements to online services would most likely result in a decreased budget for his office.

G. STATE ATTORNEY STEVE RUSSELL briefly reviewed state funding for his office and noted that the Twentieth Judicial Circuit consists of a five-county area, including Lee, Collier, Hendry, Glades and Charlotte Counties, and his budget reflects the costs for building and communications. He also reviewed a budget increase due to FBI mandates for security issues arising from a recent audit in the approximate amount of \$53,000.00. State Attorney Russell briefly described a reduction in the jail population due to implementation of the Fast Track/Early Intervention Programs which avoid the high expenses entailed in essentially needless jail time, and also the positive financial impacts of the Drug Court System.

H. TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR SCOTT WILSKER, on behalf of Chief Circuit Judge Jay B. Rosman, reported on court activities and efforts by court administration to bring in a basically flat budget, crediting the reductions to process improvements, reallocation of resources, and initiatives for reduction of time delays, adding that there were no plans to add new programs for the new budget.

I. MEDICAL EXAMINER PATTI WHEATON, on behalf of Chief Medical Examiner Rebecca Hamilton, reported there were new mandates for drug reporting which could add from three to six hundred dollars per test, and described equipment updates needed by the department for the upcoming budget year.

III. ADJOURN

Chairman Pendergrass expressed gratitude on behalf of the Board for the fiscal responsibility demonstrated by the Constitutional Officers, noting that because most had expressed the possibility of bringing in flat budgets, there was cause for Hope! The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 2:27 p.m.

ATTEST:
LINDA DOGGETT, CLERK

Deputy Clerk

[Chairman, Lee County Commission](#)