

BOARD MINUTES FOR 09/26/06

SEPTEMBER 26, 2006

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, IN AND FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY, MET ON THE ABOVE DATE AT 5:30 P.M. AT THE WASHINGTON COUNTY ANNEX, BOARD MEETING ROOM, 1331 SOUTH BOULEVARD, CHIPLEY, FLORIDA. COMMISSIONERS COPE, CORBIN, FINCH, SAPP AND STRICKLAND WERE PRESENT. ADMINISTRATOR HERBERT AND DEPUTY CLERK CARTER WERE ALSO IN ATTENDANCE.

CHAIRMAN SAPP STATED THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO HOLD THE FINAL PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT THE MILLAGE RATE AND THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2007. THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS ADVERTISED IN THE CHIPLEY NEWSPAPER ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2006.

HE ADVISED THE CHANGES TO THE TENTATIVE BUDGET ON SEPTEMBER 12 AND THE TENTATIVE BUDGET ADVERTISED WAS AN INCREASE IN THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS BUDGET TO COVER SALARY INCREASES. THERE WAS ALSO AN INCREASE IN HER OTHER CONTRACTURAL LINE ITEM OF \$1,000, \$300 INCREASE IN COMMUNICATIONS AND FREIGHT AND \$1,800 INCREASE IN OPERATING SUPPLIES. HE ADDRESSED THE CONTINGENCY FOR THE GENERAL FUND NOW TOTALS \$187,305.

HE STATED THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2007 TOTALS \$38,223,054 AND THE PROPOSED MILLAGE RATE WAS 8.5 MILLS. HE ADVISED THE 8.5 MILLAGE RATE WAS 37.27% MORE THAN THE ROLLED BACK RATE OF \$6.192%.

CHAIRMAN SAPP ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYONE IN THE AUDIENCE WHO WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS THE BOARD WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THE PROPOSED MILLAGE RATE OF 8.5 MILLS.

WENDELL HODGES SR. ADDRESSED HIM BEING A SENIOR CITIZEN ON A FIXED INCOME; EVERYTHING IS GETTING HIGHER AND HIGHER INCLUDING THE TAXES. HE SAID SOME OF THE COUNTIES SOUTH OF WASHINGTON COUNTY HAVE ROLLED THEIR MILLAGE RATE BACK TO GIVE PEOPLE A TAX BREAK; WASHINGTON COUNTY'S TAXES SEEM TO BE GOING UP. HE ASKED EACH INDIVIDUAL COMMISSIONER WHAT THEY PLANNED TO DO IN THEIR DISTRICT TO AID THE SENIOR CITIZENS OF THEIR DISTRICTS IN REGARD TO TAXES THAT CONTINUE TO INCREASE.

COMMISSIONER COPE ASKED MR. HODGES IF HE HAD APPLIED FOR THE ADDITIONAL SENIOR HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION. MR. HODGES SAID HE HADN'T; HE WAS AWARE OF IT. HE SAID HE WAS ACTUALLY SPEAKING MORE FOR OTHER SENIOR CITIZENS THAN FOR HIMSELF; HE SAID HE WAS A FORTUNATE SENIOR CITIZEN AS HE RETIRED FROM THE POST OFFICE AND MAKES ENOUGH TO PAY HIS TAXES. HOWEVER, HE SAID THERE WERE A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE COUNTY ON FIXED INCOME WHO WERE BARELY GETTING BY; A LOT OF THEM GO TO THE CHURCHES IN THE COUNTY.

MR. HODGES ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYTHING IN THE BOARD'S PLAN TO ROLL BACK THE MILLAGE RATE FOR A TAX BREAK OR IS IT GOING TO CONTINUE TO GO HIGHER AND HIGHER.

COMMISSIONER COPE ADVISED MR. HODGES THE BOARD ROLLED BACK THE MILLAGE RATE A HALF MILL IN 2005-2006; THEY ARE PROPOSING TO ROLL IT BACK A FULL MILL IN THE FY 2006-2007 AND THE 8.5 MILLAGE RATE IS A ROLLED BACK RATE.

MR. HODGES SAID WHEN HE SAW THE NOTICE OF INCREASE ADVERTISED IN THE PAPER, HE THOUGHT THE TAXES HAD INCREASED.

DEPUTY CLERK CARTER TOLD MR. HODGES THE NOTICE OF TAX INCREASE PUBLISHED IN THE PAPER IS MISLEADING; HOWEVER, THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE REQUIRES THIS NOTICE BE PUBLISHED IF THE MILLAGE RATE ADOPTED IS HIGHER THAN THE COUNTY'S ROLLED BACK RATE. SHE EXPLAINED IF THE COUNTY ADOPTED THE ROLLED BACK MILLAGE RATE, THEY COULD HAVE THE SAME BUDGET AS THEY DID FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006; HOWEVER, THEY COULDN'T INCREASE IT ANY. SHE SAID THE ROLLED BACK RATE WOULD PROVIDE THE SAME AMOUNT OF AD VALOREM TAXES THE COUNTY RECEIVED FOR THE FY 2005-2006 YEAR. SHE ADDRESSED THE BOARD DID REDUCE THE MILLAGE RATE FROM 9.5 MILLS TO 8.5 MILLS FOR THE FY 2006-2007 YEAR; IF THEY HADN'T, PEOPLE'S TAXES WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE.

COMMISSIONER COPE ASKED MR. HODGES TO ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR THE ADDITIONAL SENIOR HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION.

COMMISSIONER FINCH TOLD MR. HODGES THERE WAS A STRONG PUSH THIS YEAR TO INCREASE THE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION TO \$50,000; HE SAID HE THINKS THIS WILL BECOME A REALITY THROUGHOUT THE STATE BECAUSE PROPERTY VALUES CONTINUE TO GO UP. HE SAID THE BOARD WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPERTY; BUT, THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MILLAGE RATE. HE REITERATED THE BOARD DID ROLL BACK THE MILLAGE RATE BY A WHOLE MILL.

MR. HODGES COMMENDED THE BOARD FOR ROLLING BACK THE MILLAGE RATE BY A MILL; BECAUSE OF THE NOTICE OF INCREASE ADVERTISED, HE ASSUMED THEY HAD INCREASED THE MILLAGE RATE.

COMMISSIONER FINCH SAID THE NOTICE OF TAX INCREASE DID MAKE IT APPEAR THE BOARD HAD INCREASED THEIR MILLAGE; HE AGREED IT WAS MISLEADING.

COMMISSIONER SAPP SUGGESTED THE NEWSPAPER MIGHT COULD PRINT SOMETHING IN THE PAPER STATING THE BOARD DID REDUCE THE MILLAGE RATE BY ONE MILL.

COMMISSIONER CORBIN SAID THE COUNTY DID HAVE MORE MONEY COMING IN FOR FY 2006-2007; THEY GAVE THE COUNTY EMPLOYEES A NICE RAISE BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN PROMISING THEM THEY WOULD IF THEY EVER HAD THE FUNDING. HE ADDRESSED THE EMPLOYEES BEING VERY APPRECIATIVE AND DUE TO THE INCREASES IN COST OF GAS, ETC., THEY NEEDED THE RAISE THEY RECEIVED. HE SAID THE EMPLOYEE RAISES AND HEALTH INSURANCE IS WHAT WENT WITH A LOT OF THE TAX REVENUE INCREASE.

COMMISSIONER SAPP ASKED IF ANYONE ELSE WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS THE BOARD ON THE 8.5 MILLAGE RATE. NO ONE RESPONDED.

COMMISSIONER SAPP ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYONE ON THE BOARD WHO WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ON THE PROPOSED MILLAGE RATE OF 8.5 MILLS. NO ONE RESPONDED.

COMMISSIONER SAPP ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYONE IN THE AUDIENCE WHO WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS THE BOARD WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2007 TOTALLING \$38,223,054. NO ONE RESPONDED.

COMMISSIONER SAPP ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYONE ON THE BOARD WHO WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ON THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2007. NO ONE RESPONDED.

COMMISSIONER SAPP STATED THE MSBU BUDGET TOTALS \$564,791. HE ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYONE WHO HAD ANY COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE PROPOSED MSBU BUDGET FOR FY 2006-2007.

COMMISSIONER CORBIN, FOR THE BENEFIT OF PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE, STATED THE MSBU IS FOR PEOPLE IN SUNNY HILLS. COMMISSIONER SAPP REITERATED THE MSBU WAS FOR SUNNY HILLS; THEY ARE USING THE FUNDS TO DO A TREMENDOUS JOB WITH IMPROVEMENTS TO ROADS, ETC.

COMMISSIONER STRICKLAND OFFERED A MOTION, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER COPE AND ON A ROLL CALL VOTE, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT THE TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE OF 8.5 MILLS AS THE MILLAGE RATE FOR FY ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2007.

COMMISSIONER COPE OFFERED A MOTION, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FINCH AND ON A ROLL CALL VOTE, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT THE TENTATIVE BUDGET AS THE FINAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2007 TOTALLING \$38,223,054.

COMMISSIONER FINCH OFFERED A MOTION, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER COPE AND CARRIED TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION IMPLEMENTING THE MSBU BUDGET TOTALLING \$564,791 FOR FY ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2007.

COMMISSIONER SAPP STATED THE FINAL PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2007 WAS CONCLUDED. HE THANKED THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE PUBLIC HEARING AND ADJOURNED THE MEETING.

ATTEST: _____

DEPUTY CLERK

CHAIRMAN

END OF MINUTES FOR 09/26/06