

**Official Minutes of  
MARION COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

July 8, 2024

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners met in a workshop session in Commission Chambers at 9:07 a.m. on Monday, July 8, 2024 at the Marion County Governmental Complex located in Ocala, Florida.

**INTRODUCTION OF WORKSHOP BY CHAIRMAN MICHELLE STONE**

Chairman Stone advised that the workshop was scheduled this morning regarding the fiscal year (FY) 2024-2025 proposed budget.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The meeting opened with an Invocation by Chairman Stone and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon roll call the following members were present: Chairman Michelle Stone, District 5; Vice-Chairman Kathy Bryant, District 2; Commissioner Craig Curry, District 1; Commissioner Matthew McClain, District 3; and Commissioner Carl Zalak, III, District 4. Also present were Clerk Gregory C. Harrell, County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes, Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Angel Roussel, ACA Tracy Straub, ACA Amanda Tart, and Executive Director of Internal Services Mike McCain.

**OPENING REMARKS – Audrey Fowler, Budget Director**

Budget Director Audrey Fowler presented the following documents: a 5 page Budget Workshop Agenda, which lists the dates and times for each department to present their proposed budget; a 5 page handout entitled, "Marion County Board of County Commissioners Budget Adjustments Tentative Budget Fiscal Year 2024-25, Adjustments through July 2, 2024"; a 1 page handout entitled, "Marion County Board of County Commissioners Schedule of Approximate Salary Adjustment Costs by Fund Estimated Budget Fiscal Year 2024-25 at 1% Salary Adjustment"; a 1 page handout entitled, "Marion County Board of County Commissioners Schedule of Approximate Salary Adjustment Costs by Fund Estimated Budget Fiscal Year 2024-25 at 4% Salary Adjustment"; a 15 page handout entitled, "Marion County Board of County Commissioners Position Changes FY 2024-25"; and a 43 page document entitled, "Marion County Board of County Commissioners Budget Workshop Proposed Budget Overview". She noted copies of the "Proposed Line Item Budget Fiscal Year 2024-25", and "Proposed Capital Improvement Program Fiscal Years 2024/25 – 2028/29" are available online through County's Agenda website.

Ms. Fowler advised that the County received the certified property values on July 1, 2024, noting there was a slight increase over the estimated tax values. She referred to page 3 of the proposed budget overview handout, which provides a comparison of Rolled-Back and proposed tax levies for FY 2024-25. The Countywide taxable value is \$34,087,725,071.00. The Rolled-Back rate is the millage rate that will generate the same amount of revenue on the same properties that existed in the prior year. The Rolled-Back millage rate for the General Fund is 3.1382 mills, and the proposed/tentative millage rate is 3.3500 mills (difference of \$7,219,780.00). The Fine & Forfeiture had a Rolled-Back

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millage rate of 0.7775 of a mill and the proposed millage rate is 0.8300 of a mill (difference of \$1,789,606.00). The Rolled-Back millage rate for the Health Unit Trust Fund was 0.1030 of a mill, and the proposed millage rate is 0.1100 of a mill (difference \$238,614.00), for a total Countywide difference of \$9,248,000.00.

Ms. Fowler addressed non-Countywide Special Districts, noting for the Municipal Service Taxing Units (MSTU) for Law Enforcement the Rolled-Back millage rate is 3.4604 and the proposed millage rate is 3.8200 mills (difference \$9,202,124.00). She advised that the Fire/Rescue MSTU Rolled-Back millage rate is 1.0327 mills with a proposed millage rate of 1.1100 of a mill (difference \$2,030,462.00).

Ms. Fowler addressed the Rainbow Lakes Estates (RLE) MSTU for Recreation, which has a Rolled-Back millage rate of 0.7804 of a mill and a proposed millage rate of 0.8500 of a mill (difference \$15,265.00). She stated the Marion Oaks MSTU for Recreation has a Rolled-Back millage rate of 0.9657 of a mill and a proposed millage rate of 1.02 mills (difference \$90,692.00). Ms. Fowler advised that the Silver Springs Shores (SSS) MSTU for Recreation has a Rolled-Back rate of 2.7333 mills and a proposed millage rate of 3.0000 mills (difference \$108,208.00) and the Hills of Ocala MSTU for Recreation has a Rolled-Back millage rate of 0.1678 of a mill with a proposed millage rate is 0.1800 of a mill (difference \$3,967.00). She noted that the total non-Countywide increase is \$11,450,718.00 and the total increase for Countywide and non-Countywide combined is \$20,698,718.00. Ms. Fowler stated the RLE Municipal Service District (MSD) is a stand-alone separate District with the Rolled-Back of 1.1445 mills to 1.2500 mills (increase of \$24,744.00).

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Fowler stated the only millage rate that is different from the current FY is the MSTU for Law Enforcement, noting the current millage rate is set at 3.720 mills and the proposed millage rate is at 3.8200 mills.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Ms. Fowler advised that the cap for the MSTU for Law Enforcement is 4.000 mills per the Ordinance, noting there is a combined 10 mill cap for all non-Countywide Special Districts. She noted there is also a combined 10 mill cap for Countywide.

Page 4 is a Comparison of a Simple Majority Maximum and Tentative Tax Levies. Ms. Fowler noted the State Legislature enacted a maximum millage rate in 2007 that addresses the maximum that can be proposed with a simple majority vote. She provided an overview of the process used to determine the maximum levy, noting that 4 Commissioners' votes are required to go 10% above the maximum levy and anything higher than that requires a unanimous vote. Ms. Fowler stated for the total Countywide, the maximum millage rate could be set at 5.3005 mills by a simple majority vote (currently at 4.29) for a difference of \$34,616,085.00. She advised that for non-Countywide Special Districts, (which is cumulative), a single fund can be over as long as the cumulation of all other funds together is under the maximum.

General discussion ensued.

Page 5 contains several graphs of the Countywide Certified Taxable Property Values, Millage Rates and Property Tax Levies for FY's 2015-16 through 2024-25 Tentative. This is Countywide and is a \$4,000,000,000.00 increase over the 2024 levy as far as the taxable value.

Page 6 provides an Estimate Of The Taxable Property Value for FYs 2020-21 through 2024-25 Tentative. Ms. Fowler stated new construction values have increased year after year and commented on the very large taxable increase in new construction from 2023 to 2024. She commented on the continuing taxable values for FY 2025, noting this is the

first year that the continuing taxable value is less than the new construction taxable value, which is reflective of a stabilizing market. Ms. Fowler stated in FYs 2026-27, when new construction values start to decrease, the total increase year over year will start to go down. She commented on the need to be mindful of how this will impact long term recurring expenses, noting new growth will affect all funds except Silver Springs Shores due to the fact that it is largely built out.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Fowler stated she has not yet met with the Constitutional Officers to advise them to be mindful relating to the expectation of decreasing new construction values, but will meet with them when preparing their budgets in the spring. She noted this year new construction made up 51.5% of the increase in taxable values compared to last year, which was at 29.7%.

Ms. Fowler referred to pages 7 and 8, which reflect an Analysis of Change in Millage Rate for the General Fund for FY's 2023-24 adopted and 2024-25 Tentative, including the increases/decreases in revenues, as well as the increases/decreases in expenditures by organizational unit. She commented on the increase in revenues for the Tax Collector's Office due to the increase in services. Ms. Fowler noted "Other General Revenue" includes State Shared Revenue and the Half-Cent Sales Tax Revenue. She stated Reserves are 3.4% over for FY 2024-25 in order to maintain the necessary 20% for operating costs. Page 8 reflects budget impacts on the General Fund millage rate. Ms. Fowler clarified that in the Countywide budget, one hundredth of a mill equates to \$323,834.00. She advised that the millage change from the increase in taxable property values is a gain of .4000 of a mill, noting the bottom of page 8 provides a summary of change increase in taxable property value.

Ms. Fowler advised that page 9 addresses an Analysis of Change in Millage Rate for the Fine & Forfeiture Fund for FY's 2023-24 adopted and 2024-25 tentative, noting an increase of \$3,200,000.00 in ad valorem at 95%. She commented on Fund Balance Carry Forward, which staff is working to get closer to 20%. This increase in that Reserves comes from the prior year Fund Balance Non-Recurring Revenue and is not utilizing any of the millage to get that Fund Balance to its target. Ms. Fowler stated interest income is substantially greater this year, aiding in recovery relating to cuts made in prior years.

Page 10 contains information relating to the Fire Rescue and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Fund. Ms. Fowler advised that the taxable property value increased over last FY, and the millage rate is again proposed at 1.1100.

Page 11 contains information relating to \$1,693,151,726.00 of new construction in the unincorporated area that is in the Fire Rescue MSTU.

Page 12 addresses the Analysis of Change in Millage Rate for the Fire Rescue and EMS Fund FYs 2023-24 adopted and 2024-25 Tentative.

Ms. Fowler advised of an ad valorem increase of roughly \$3,542,853.00 and an additional \$1,320,511.00 in Special Assessments due to new property. She provided a breakdown of additional revenues and expenditures, noting there is a slight decline in the Fund Balance Carry Forward. The millage rate is proposed to be the same as the previous year at 1.1100 mills.

Page 13 addresses the Certified Taxable Property Value, Millage Rate and Property Tax Levy from FY's 2015-16 through 2024-25 Tentative for the MSTU for Law Enforcement. Ms. Fowler stated this Fund contains a 14.8% increase in taxable property values over the prior year. The millage rate is proposed at 3.8200 mills.

Page 14 reflects a 53.2% increase in new construction.

Page 15 addresses the Analysis of Change in Millage Rate for the MSTU for Law

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Enforcement FY 2023-24 Adopted and 2024-25 Tentative. Ms. Fowler advised that the ad valorem revenue increase is \$14,072,637.00, noting the Sheriff – Patrol and Criminal Investigation Division (CID) expenditures reflect an increase of \$13,313,121.00. She stated for the MSTU for Law Enforcement, one-hundredth of a mill equates to \$243,104.00. Ms. Fowler noted there is approximately \$1,000,000.00 of additional revenue in certified values for this fund so the Board could decrease the millage rate by 0.6000 of a mill without impacting the Sheriff's requested budget.

Page 16 addresses the Average Tax Levies to Single Family Properties Countywide & Major MSTUs (all housing regardless of whether they are homesteaded or not).

Chairman Stone passed the gavel to Commissioner Bryant who assumed the Chair.

Commissioner Stone out at 9:33 a.m.

Ms. Fowler advised that the average taxable value went from \$130,683.00 last year to \$145,094.00. She stated the tax levy as proposed is an increase of \$145.00 to the average single family home. Ms. Fowler noted the average homesteaded property value went from \$111,387.00 to \$122,671.00, with an average increase of \$11,284.00. She provided an overview of a homestead single family property, noting the average property tax levy increase is \$115.00.

Commissioner Stone returned at 9:35 a.m.

Chairman Bryant returned the gavel back to Commissioner Stone who resumed the Chair.

Page 17 provides a comparison of tax levies on selected property categories Countywide & major MSTUs 2023-24 Adopted and 2024-25 Tentative. Ms. Fowler advised that the largest increase is on properties defined as Warehouse/Distribution/Storage, noting the tax levy increase is approximately \$2,717.00.

Page 18 addresses the Marion Oaks MSTU Certified Taxable Property Value, Millage Rate and Property Tax Levy Fiscal Years 2015-16 through 2024-25 Tentative. The taxable property value increased from \$1,317,000.00 in FY 2023-24 to \$1,670,000.00 in FY 2024-25. Ms. Fowler stated the millage rate remains the same at 1.0200 mills.

Page 19 reflects that 80% of the taxable value increase within Marion Oaks is new construction. Ms. Fowler noted there was only a 5.6% increase in recurring property values.

Page 20 addresses the Marion Oaks MSTU for Recreation Financial Forecast Fiscal Years 2022-23 through 2027-28. Ms. Fowler commented on the increase in the Fund Balance, noting there has been discussion relating to not trying to reduce this and allowing the fund balance to build up Capital Improvement needs in Marion Oaks.

Page 21 contains graphs relating to the SSS - Special Tax District Certified Taxable Property Value, Millage Rate and Property Tax Levy Fiscal Years 2015-16 through 2024-25 Tentative. Ms. Fowler noted a 9.8% increase in taxable property value. She stated this Fund is at its cap at 3.0000 mills and is generating approximately \$1,217,000.00.

Page 22 relates to an increase of approximately \$400,000.00 in new construction.

Chairman Stone opined that commercial development needs to come online out in SSS, noting that will drive their taxable rates.

Ms. Fowler clarified that Commercial development would not pay into the MSTU for Recreation.

General discussion ensued.

Ms. Fowler advised that compared to Marion Oaks, the new construction is much smaller as a proportion of the taxable property increase in SSS. She noted the majority of the taxable increase is on the taxable value of the properties in that community.

General discussion ensued relating to the possibility of expanding the MSTU boundaries

in this Special Tax District.

Page 23 reflects SSS Special Tax District Financial Forecast Fiscal Years 2022-23 through 2027-28. Ms. Fowler noted the ending Fund Balance is slightly increasing into future years (approximately 5%). She stated the Fund Balance can be utilized for capital projects (community pool, etc.). Ms. Fowler reiterated the importance of keeping a good balance between revenues and expenditures as this Fund is at its millage cap.

Page 24 contains charts relating to Hills of Ocala MSTU for Recreation Certified Taxable Property Value, Millage Rate and Property Tax Levy Fiscal Years 2015-16 through 2024-25 Tentative. Ms. Fowler stated there was an increase in Taxable Property Values from \$265,000,000.00 to \$325,000,000.00. Property tax revenues increased from \$48,000.00 to \$59,000.00. She noted one hundredth of a mill equates to \$3,000.00.

Page 25 relates to the Estimate of Taxable Value as of June 1 for Hills of Ocala MSTU for Recreation Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2024-25. Ms. Fowler stated 66% of the taxable value increase was due to new construction.

Page 26 provides the Hills of Ocala MSTU for Recreation Financial Forecast Fiscal Years 2022-23 through 2027-28. Ms. Fowler noted the ending Fund Balance is \$119,771.00. She opined that if there are no capital projects expected in the near future, the Board could consider reducing the millage.

Page 27 addresses RLE - Municipal Service District Certified Taxable Property Value, Millage Rate and Property Tax Levy Fiscal Years 2015-16 through 2024-25 Tentative.

Page 28 reflects the Estimate of Taxable Value as of June 1 for Rainbow Lakes Estates MSD Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2024-25. Ms. Fowler advised that 51.9% of the property value increase is due to new construction.

Page 29 addresses RLE Municipal Service District Financial Forecast Fiscal Years 2022-23 through 2027-28. Ms. Fowler advised that the District continues to spend down some of the excess Fund Balance on capital expenditures.

Page 30 reflects RLE - Comm Res Facility MSTU Certified Taxable Property Value, Millage Rate and Property Tax Levy Fiscal Years 2015-16 through 2024-25 Tentative. Ms. Fowler stated there was an increase in the millage rate from 0.4700 to 0.8500 in FY 2023-24. Taxable property values are at \$219,000,000.00 and property tax revenues increased from \$157,000.00 to \$186,000.00.

Page 31 reflects the Estimate of Taxable Value as of June 1 for RLE MSTU Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2024-25. Ms. Fowler noted new construction made up 56.8% of the increase in taxable values

Page 32 relates to RLE - Comm Res Facility MSTU Financial Forecast Fiscal Years 2022-23 through 2027-28.

Page 33 provides a Comparison of State Shared Operating Revenue Estimates - General Fund Fiscal Years 2015-16 through 2023-24, and 2024-25 Tentative. Ms. Fowler advised that the 2024-25 figure is her estimate, noting the information produced by the State of Florida will come after their revenue estimating conference later this year. She advised that the tentative estimate for State Shared Revenue is at \$14,840,000.00, noting when the State passes extra tax holidays it impacts those projected numbers. Ms. Fowler commented on the Half-Cent Sales Tax, which is projected at \$37,990,000.00.

Page 34 provides a comparison of State Shared Operating Revenue Estimates - Transportation Fund Fiscal Years 2015-16 through 2023-24, and 2024-25 Tentative. Ms. Fowler noted this fund contains the 1 Cent Fuel Tax, Local Option Fuel Tax 6 Cent, and the County Fuel Tax (7<sup>th</sup> Cent). She stated the County typically receives approximately \$200,000.00 to \$300,000.00 more than the previous year and it appears it will happen

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again this year.

Page 35 reflects the Revenue Adjustment for Certified Taxable Values at 95% FY 2024-25. Ms. Fowler advised that there was very little change from the estimate to the certified taxable value figures provided by the Property Appraiser's Office (PAO).

In response to Commissioner Curry, Ms. Fowler advised that the RLE Fire Department was brought under Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR) in phases over the past 3 years. Fire Chief James Banta, MCFR, advised that next year the RLE Fire Department will be included in the MCFR assessment, noting it is still operating as a Volunteer Fire Department at this time.

Ms. Fowler referred to the handout entitled, "Budget Adjustments Tentative Budget Fiscal Year 2024-25", noting it contains information relating to any increases or decreases in revenues and expenditures from the time the budget was proposed. She provided a brief overview of the changes made as of July 2, 2024, including recurring and non-recurring changes in the Reserve for Contingencies. Ms. Fowler advised that a "true-up" was performed in the proposed budget to include the increase in certified taxable value over estimated value, noting \$967,886.00 was added into the General Fund. However, the County took a hard hit by the increase of 22.2% for Medicaid matching funds, which wiped out the funds that were gained in the "true-up". She noted there was also a reduction in employee costs for ambulance fees. Ms. Fowler stated the County received a little extra money from the PAO in turn back funds. She noted the entirety of the Reserves is non-recurring revenue. Ms. Fowler advised that \$239,805.00 of certified taxable value was added to the Fine & Forfeiture Fund, noting there is \$228,764.00 of recurring revenue in this Fund. She noted there is \$706,067.00 of non-recurring revenue that can be utilized for capital expenses or maintained as reserves. Ms. Fowler stated the remainder of the changes are minor at this point. She advised that the MSTU for Law Enforcement Reserve for Contingencies is at \$1,038,330.00, noting these are recurring revenues. This amount will allow the Board to reduce the proposed millage rate for this fund if it so chooses. Ms. Fowler noted a reduction of 0.400 of a mill would equate to \$972,416.00. She advised that to get back to the 3.72 mills, there would need to an additional reduction of \$1,392,710.00.

General discussion ensued as to whether or not to wait until the Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) presents its budget to utilize the \$1,038,330.00 in recurring revenues to lower the millage rate for the MSTU for Law Enforcement.

Ms. Fowler reiterated that reducing the millage rate by 0.400 of a mill would not affect the MCSO current proposed budget, noting the reduction is due to the certified property values coming in higher than the estimated property values.

Commissioner Zalak requested Ms. Fowler reach out to Sheriff William "Billy" Woods to advise him of the reduction amount needed to get back to the 3.72 mills.

It was the general consensus of the Board to direct Budget staff to utilize the \$1,038,330.00 in recurring revenues to lower the millage rate for the MSTU for Law Enforcement by 0.400 of a mill to a new proposed millage rate of 3.78 mills. Ms. Fowler stated she would make the change.

Ms. Fowler referred to the handout entitled, "Marion County Board of County Commissioners Position Changes FY 2024-25", noting it provides the impact of the 2024 Salary and Benefits changes to the proposed 2024 Budget before any merit calculation.

Ms. Fowler referred to the 2 handouts entitled, "Marion County Board of County Commissioners Schedule of Approximate Salary Adjustment Costs by Fund Estimated Budget Fiscal Year 2024-25", noting they provide a breakdown based on 1% and the 4%

salary adjustments as proposed.

To review the proposed 2024-2025 budget, please refer to the following link:  
<https://www.marioncountyclerk.org/departments/budget/bocc-budget/>

## **BUDGET PRESENTATIONS AND BOARD DISCUSSION**

### **OPENING REMARKS – Mounir Bouyounes, County Administrator**

County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes stated it was his pleasure to present the proposed FY 2024/25 budget as it relates to all BCC Departments. He referred to a binder presented to Commissioners, which contains the talking points from each Department and other budget related information.

Mr. Bouyounes highlighted a few global items, which included a 4% set aside for pay adjustment, noting his recommendation is to provide 1% across the board on October 1<sup>st</sup>, (first pay schedule in October) and 3% to be used for “pay for performance” on the employee’s anniversary date in alignment with performance evaluations.

Commissioner Bryant advised that she would prefer to see employees get their raises at one time (beginning of the FY) and not have to wait for their employee evaluation. She opined that if an employee is not performing their job duties, the Supervisor should be aware of that, and immediate action should be taken at that time to ensure that all employees are functioning at the levels expected.

Mr. Bouyounes referred to the 2 handouts entitled, “Marion County Board of County Commissioners Schedule of Approximate Salary Adjustment Costs by Fund Estimated Budget Fiscal Year 2024-25” presented by Ms. Fowler, which details the costs associated with a 1% raise for employees, as well as the 3% “pay for performance” (4% overall associated costs). He noted included in the binder is information relating to the average pay adjustments over the past several years based on evaluations. Mr. Bouyounes stated he would like to continue to utilize the same “pay for performance” method as in the past, unless the Board wants to make changes.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Bouyounes stated the average “pay for performance” score was a 4 out of 5 with an average pay increase of 3.36%. Commissioner Bryant advised that the County also rewards employees that go “above and beyond” with the HICARD employee recognition program (where employees can spend points earned in the store for various gifts and rewards), “Employee of the Quarter”, “Employee of the Year”, etc. Mr. Bouyounes advised that the benefits to an employee selected as “Employee of the Quarter” is a day off with pay and eligibility to be entered into the “Ideal Team Player”, who if chosen, will receive a \$2,000.00 pay increase.

Chairman Stone noted she would like to continue utilizing “pay for performance”.

General discussion ensued.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that the County’s self-insurance plan is doing very well, and the reserve is funded to the level that an employee clinic can be established with no impact to the General Fund or any other Enterprise Fund. Therefore, this budget reflects a 0% increase in health insurance premiums. He opined that an employee clinic will save even more money for the County in the future.

Mr. Bouyounes commented on the need to ensure the Fire Rescue/EMS Department is staffed appropriately as the County’s population continues to grow, noting Exhibit B details the personnel changes being requested including 37 new positions (15 positions in the General Fund (EMS) and 22 positions in the Fire Rescue Fund). He advised that through the Fire Rescue Fund, the County will be able to staff another volunteer fire

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station and improve safety factors without having to utilize mandatory overtime. Mr. Bouyounes noted most of the proposed EMS positions would be utilized to enhance the paramedicine program, as well as enhance the relief factor. Also in the BCC's General Fund budget are 27.24 new positions (in addition to the 15 mentioned above), including several reclassifications and few salary adjustments as shown in Exhibit C. He stated Exhibit C1 lists requested positions that were deleted from the proposed budget during his review. Mr. Bouyounes commented on the 12 additional positions being requested on behalf of the Library Department that were eliminated, noting those positions will not need to be filled until next year after the completion of the Freedom Library expansion. He commented on the Evergreen Pay Adjustment Study that was recently performed, noting there were some compression issues created in the lower level positions of the Office of the County Engineer (OCE) that will need to come back to the Board to be adjusted. Mr. Bouyounes noted there were 3 positions he previously eliminated, but may come back to the Board for reconsideration at the end of the budget workshops.

Mr. Bouyounes stated Exhibit D provides the list of machinery and equipment in the General Fund Departments proposed for FY 2024/25 at an estimated cost of \$1,288,547.00. Other administrative items to bring to the Board's attention include: 1) MSTU Department name change. It is requested that the name of this Department be changed to Municipal Services and more information will be presented by the Director; 2) Solid Waste Master Plan is in the works and should be presented to the Board in the fall of 2024 with recommendations including any impact that it may have on the assessment rate; and 3) Gap Analysis is being conducted by the Tourist Development Council (TDC) and the preliminary results should be available for discussion in August 2024. He advised that the Transportation Impact Fees are being updated. The consultant is evaluating new data and any other changes from the last Legislative session before the final draft report is made available. Fire Impact Fees are also being evaluated and the final draft with recommendations will be provided in the fall of 2024. Mr. Bouyounes advised that last year, a future Capital Improvement Project (CIP) at the McPherson Campus was initiated and \$19,000,000.00 was set aside for that purpose, noting \$6,000,000.00 of that money was transferred to fund the initial land acquisition and design for the Medical Examiner (ME) building with the understanding that this money will be transferred back to the McPherson campus project once the bond is acquired for the ME project.

Mr. Bouyounes addressed CIP, noting there is approximately \$4,800,000.00 in projects for FY 2024/25. He advised that one of those projects is the Freedom Public Library, which currently has a \$2,000,000.00 shortfall, so he will be requesting a BAR to transfer funds in order to fully fund the project. Mr. Bouyounes stated another project is the new Animal Services Center in coordination with the City of Ocala (budget for this project is \$24,275,439.00). Partial funding has been approved in FY 2023/24 in the amount of \$9,012,504.00. The additional funding of \$15,062,335.00 is projected to be included in Sales Surtax 3. If the Surtax is not renewed, funding for all projects will need to be reprioritized. The new Fleet Facility is in design and permitting stages. In the current FY 2023/24 budget is \$8,060,000.00 with another \$7,305,000.00 proposed for FY 2025/26. Mr. Bouyounes stated the Medical Examiner property has been acquired at the new location and design is ongoing. The total estimated cost including land, design and construction is approximately \$27,000,000.00 and construction is planned for FY 2025/26. He advised that the Sales Surtax is sunsetting at the end of December 2024 and there are only few new projects being programmed in the FY 2024/25 budget. The

proposed projects for FY 2024/25 are budgeted at \$45,312,731.00. Approximately \$40,000,000.00 of this budget is for road projects. Mr. Bouyounes stated there are some FY 2023/24 ongoing projects that will carry forward such as the Fire Stations 2, 11 and 20 being rebuilt or expanded. MCSO Operation Center remodeling is ongoing in coordination with the MCSO to minimize interruption and operational impact. The EMS Central Facility is under construction and should be completed by November 2024.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that the following projects are listed in the Sales Surtax schedule (Exhibit F) for FY 2024/25 new projects and include the rehabilitation of an approximate 1.2 mile stretch of NW/NE 42<sup>nd</sup> Street from West Anthony Road to NE Jacksonville Road; and beginning the design of Phase 1 of the Marion Oaks Manor Extension project from SW 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Marion Oaks Lane. The majority of next year's budget will be to add funds to 3 current projects: 1) NW 49<sup>th</sup>/35<sup>th</sup> Street Phase 3B from CR 225A to NW 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue; 2) SW 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue from SW 80<sup>th</sup> Street to 1/2 mile north of SW 38<sup>th</sup> Street; and 3) the Emerald Road Extension (fully funded and construction is scheduled for 2025).

Commissioner Bryant questioned the expected completion date for these projects.

ACA Tracy Straub clarified that these are 18 month construction jobs. She stated some of the project intersections are very complicated due to the utilities that are already in place. Commissioner Bryant expressed concern that some of the projects are not even going out to bid until December 2024 or April 2025. She commented on the traffic issues, especially around 475A going down to Williams Road from SW 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.

Mr. Bouyounes noted one of the challenges has been the right-of-way (ROW) acquisitions.

General discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Bouyounes advised that the northern phase of the project will go out to bid in December 2024 and the southern phase (connection to Williams Road) is scheduled to go out to bid in April 2025.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Bouyounes stated Tillman and Associates Engineering, LLC is the design consultant on this project.

General discussion resumed.

Commissioner Zalak opined that the project needs to be done at the same time as the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is working on that bridge. Commissioner Bryant disagreed and advised that while the bridge construction is taking place, citizens would be able to utilize SW 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue Road extension to SW 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and go around the bridge construction.

Commissioner Zalak requested staff bring back a map and timeline on this project at the next regularly scheduled BCC meeting. Ms. Straub stated the information being requested will be brought back at the first BCC meeting in August.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Straub clarified that the project will be done in 2 phases, noting phase 1 will be the north end of the project (by the Executive Park area) and will go out to bid in December 2024 (the signalization portion will go out to bid this August). She stated the portion that will extend to Williams Road (phase 2) will begin in April 2025. Commissioner Bryant expressed concern that when FDOT begins working on Williams Road it will be almost impassable, which makes the County's project all that more important.

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General discussion resumed.

Commissioner Curry requested clarification relating to timeline for the Animal Services Center project. He expressed concern that the project will be \$15,000,000.00 short if the Sales Tax fails to get renewed.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that if the Sales Tax does not pass, staff will come back to the Board in order to reprioritize projects, noting this project is a priority and will get funded. He stated staff is working hard to keep the completion timeline of December 2025.

(Ed. Note: The Deputy Clerk received a 3 page handout containing the County Administrator's talking points. The Deputy Clerk did not receive a copy of the binder presented to Commissioners containing Exhibits.)

### **OPENING REMARKS - Matthew "Guy" Minter, County Attorney**

County Attorney Matthew G. Minter appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget for Cost Center 103, County Attorney (page 29).

Mr. Minter provided an overview of the 10 full time employee (FTE) positions that comprise the County Attorney's Office, noting there are 9 positions currently filled and includes the Legal Services Manager Heather Flynn, Chief Assistant County Attorney Dana Olesky, Assistant County Attorneys Thomas Schwartz and Valarie Shealey, Paralegals Lori Zirkle and Vicky Ryder, Public Records Coordinator James Blevins and Legal Assistant Ashlyne Tuck. He stated there is 1 Assistant County Attorney position that is currently vacant. Mr. Minter commented on the difficulty associated with identifying where that position would be stationed once it is filled, noting all office space in the Legal Department is currently occupied.

He advised that the Department's budget is increasing by \$40,000.00 over last year, noting there is an increase in line item 552108, Operating Supplies, in the amount of \$2,000.00.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Minter stated line item 554101, Books Publications and Subscriptions, includes annual subscriptions for Microsoft Office, as well as for Westlaw, which is a legal research platform. He noted each attorney must have their own license to utilize that research platform.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Minter clarified that the open attorney position is a carryover from the current year's budget and not a new request.

Commissioner Bryant out at 10:48 a.m.

Mr. Minter advised that he has worked with the Facilities Department to try and reconfigure the office space to accommodate a new attorney; however, the acoustics in the current space are not very good and when dealing with legal issues there needs to be a certain amount of privacy.

General discussion ensued in regard to finding space for the Legal Department.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the County Attorney budget.

### **OPENING REMARKS – Mike McCain, Executive Director Internal Services**

Executive Director of Administrative Services Mike McCain appeared to review the proposed FY 2024–25 budgets for Cost Center 105, County Administrator (page 31) and Cost Center 153, Industry Development, which can be found on page 54. Also present was Director of Public Relations (PR) Bobbi Perez.

Mike McCain, Executive Director of Administrative Services, stated the first thing the

Board will notice is that the budget has decreased. This is not due to any cuts that were made, but instead due to Public Relations Department moving out of the County Administrator's budget and into their own Cost Center. The County Administrator's budget still includes Fiscal Review and Legislative Coordination. He advised that the only item that is increased is line item 540101, Travel & Per Diem, noting this is really just getting the budget to match actual costs and not necessarily adding more trips.

Commissioner Bryant returned at 10:53 a.m.

Mr. McCain advised that as with almost all of the Departments for FY 2024/25 expenditures in the following line items are without budgets this year or next: line item 569903, Lease Agreement Equipment; line item 571205, Principal Lease Agreements; and line item 572205, Interest Lease Agreements, noting the Finance Department has moved these funds in response to GASB 87 concerning the leasing of printers.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Fowler advised that after the close of the FY, Rentals and Leases will be reallocated to Debt Services (line item 571205, Principal Lease Agreements and line item 572205, Interest Lease Agreements, to comply with GASB 87, noting leases for the Information Technology Department (IT) will be done the same way.

Mr. McCain addressed the Industry Development budget on page 54. He stated staff is continuing to budget \$50,000.00 in line item 534101, Contract Serv Other Misc. and \$500,000.00 in line item 582101, Aid to Private Organizations, to address any unbudgeted costs that may come up during the year. Line item 582183, Aid to Private Org EDFIG, is where staff budgeted current agreement obligations. There is a page in the binder that lists the companies and budgeted amounts.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there were no further questions regarding the County Administrator or the Industry Development budgets.

(Ed. Note: EDFIG is the acronym for Economic Development Financial Incentive Grant.)

Commissioner Zalak out at 10:56 a.m.

### **OPENING REMARKS – Bobbi Perez, Director Public Relations**

Ms. Perez appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budgets for Cost Center 106, Public Relations (page 33) and Cost Center 250, Crime Prevention, which can be found on page 231. Also present was Executive Director of Internal Services Mike McCain.

Ms. Perez presented a 2 page handout entitled, "2024-2025 Crime Prevention Fund Expenditure proposal".

Ms. Perez noted that the 2024 year has been a great one for the Public Relations team so far. This year the Department has completed more than 2,000 projects requested by the County Departments, helping them to share their stories and accomplishments with the public. This includes the Annual State of the County Address presentation that staff works on with the Chair. This presentation is designed to help ensure the public has a clear understanding of current County initiatives and current projects. Each year this presentation is delivered at 5 locations in Marion County, helping to ensure consistent messaging with the public. The Department submitted the No Horsin' Around with Marion Anti-Litter campaign to the National Association of Counties (NACo) and won the Achievement Award for civic education and public information for 2024. The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Citizens Academy graduated this year in sequence with the Alumni Academy. These academies are intended to enlighten the public on the services, offerings and the day-to-day operations of the County Departments and Marion County Constitutional Offices. The

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Department led many educational campaigns such as the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month campaign, bringing together first responders, veterans, and patriots from all over the community to help bring awareness to this mental health crisis. With sponsors and shirt sales, this year's event raised nearly \$20,000.00 benefiting local mental health providers, making it a record-breaking year.

Commissioner Zalak returned at 10:58 a.m.

Ms. Perez stated on the Fire Rescue side of things, staff has been busy connecting and engaging with the community more than ever before. Between live fires, station visits, personnel showcasing, and the Annual Rescues & Rescuers Calendar release, the team has been busy ensuring first responders get the recognition and support they deserve. She advised that the Public Relations Department is now a stand-alone budget, noting in prior years the Department fell under the County Administrator budget. With the implementation of the project management system, having a separate budget will also allow Public Relations to allocate costs to the other County Departments in the future. Staff is requesting one additional FTE this year, which falls under the Fire Rescue budget, as well as the reclassification of the Fire Life Safety Educator title to Public Safety Information Manager. The new position titled the "Fire Rescue Multimedia Technician" is found on page 346 of the budget books, and will report directly to the proposed newly titled "Public Safety Information Manager" within the Fire Rescue budget found on page 347 of the budget book. The Board will receive more details on this request during the Fire Rescue budget presentation.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Perez clarified that Fire Life Safety Educator James Lucas reports to her, noting she is requesting that his title be changed to Public Safety Information Manager with oversight of both MCFR and Public Safety Communications (PSC), noting underneath James will be the new Fire Rescue Multimedia Technician.

In response to Chairman Stone, Ms. Perez stated the Fire Life Safety Educator, and the new Fire Rescue Multimedia Technician are "on-call" positions (24 hours/7 days per week).

Ms. Perez appeared to review Cost Center 250, Crime Prevention (page 231), noting this fund reflects no increase to the overall expenses of the program. In partnership with the MCSO, staff is proposing the Crime Prevention program continues with the same outreach methods used in previous years. These methods include billboards, radio, social media, and streaming/television commercials amongst other means. As in past years, this messaging will continue to be based on crime-related trends within our community and agreed upon in collaboration with the MCSO team. Although not in the proposed budget, the MCSO is requesting to include a few additions to the Machinery and Equipment and Promotional line item expenditures. This includes the proposed addition of a Crime Prevention Educational Trailer. The trailer will be wrapped with crime prevention messaging and will include walk through educational stations for all ages. The cost of the trailer and wrap is approximately \$62,000.00, with \$12,000.00 coming from the promotional line item and \$50,000.00 coming from the operating supplies line item. Additionally, MCSO is requesting the purchase of a Crime Prevention truck to pull this trailer. The primary use of this vehicle will be to pull the educational trailer to events. Due to the size of the trailer, the truck will need to be an F350 or similar at an estimated cost of approximately \$70,000.00. The proposed additions would lead to an increase of

\$9,500.00 in the Promotional Activities line item of the account, as well as an addition of \$125,000.00 in the Machinery and Equipment line item (truck and trailer). These additions would not increase the overall proposed budget, just the line item expenditures. The overall increase in the Crime Prevention Budget of \$75,000.00, is based upon the estimated available revenues required to balance the Fund as provided by the Budget Department.

Commissioner Curry out at 11:04 a.m.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Lieutenant Paul Bloom, MCSO, stated that funding for the "TIPS" program does not come out of the Crime Stoppers funding. Commissioner Bryant questioned if that program would be an eligible use of Crime Prevention funds. Lieutenant Bloom opined that it would be, noting the Florida Sheriff's Association, as well as local citizens have helped provide reward funding in the past. He opined that a legal opinion may be needed to determine funding eligibility.

General discussion ensued.

Mr. Bouyounes stated staff will review the funding eligibility and bring the information back for Board consideration.

Commissioner Curry returned at 11:08 a.m.

Commissioner Bryant opined that if funding can be utilized for the "TIPS" program, then it should have its own line item in this budget and requests for funding could be brought to the Board for consideration.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Public Relations and Crime Prevention funds.

Ms. Fowler clarified that the cost of the trailer (\$50,000.00) and wrap (\$12,000.00), as well as the \$75,000.00 for the truck is being added and then staff will be adjusting the line items for Other Current Charges Misc Expenses, Reserves, and Contract Serv and other Miscellaneous, to balance out with the current proposed budget. Chairman Stone stated that is correct.

### **OPENING REMARKS – Sara Caron, Human Resources Director**

Human Resources (HR) Director Sara Caron appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budgets for Cost Center 170, Human Resources, which can be found on page 55; Cost Center 172, Employee Health Clinic, which can be found on page 57; Cost Center 162, Risk and Benefit Services, which can be found on page 665; and Cost Center 163, Employee Wellness Program, which can be found on page 667. Also present were Benefits Manager Sarah Bland, Risk Manager Thomas Futch, Clinic Manager Robin Robarge, RN, and Assistant HR Director Jessica James.

HR Director Sara Caron stated over the last two years staff has continued to focus on the Strategic Plan for Empowering Marion for Success 2. As stated last year, staff has increased efforts in recruiting to reach a wider audience and will now be tracking how applicants found the job, got to the site, and applied. Retention continues to be a focus as the Department strives to retain and grow the phenomenal workforce in Marion County. Staff is increasing the Customer Service Boot Camp (CSBC) and supervisory training to quarterly. She advised that numbers regarding advertisements and recruitment are as follows: number of jobs advertised last FY was 416 and this FY, (to date) it is 156. Number of people hired last FY was 412; this FY (to date) is 242. Average days of advertisement last FY was 50 days, and this FY is 28 days. Average days from interview to hire day is 34 days and the average number of days for HR processing hiring packet to start date is up to 14 days, depending on background screen, giving notice, approvals, etc.

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General discussion ensued.

Commissioner Zalak expressed concern with the hiring process timeframe, noting it could take someone 40 to 50 days to get hired.

Ms. Tart clarified that once a candidate is selected the average timeframe to begin working is 14 days.

Commissioner Zalak requested more information relating to the number of people that can start immediately versus those who must give notice to their current employer.

Ms. Caron stated the overall increase for the Human Resources Department budget is \$39,508.00, which is just over a 4% increase. She advised that notable changes include line item 512101, Regular Salaries and Wages, noting the Human Resources Department is fully staffed. The Department is requesting the re-class of a position in the Operational Plan, it was originally requested to have an additional position; however, in lieu of an additional FTE, the Department is requesting a re-classification and pay grade change for the Human Resources Coordinator to a Human Resources Talent Specialist position from a pay grade 108 to 111 due to increased work load of recruitment and training, as well as retaining quality candidates for this position. (Salary impact \$12,056.00). The job class code will change as well. Other changes or increases are standard for the Florida Retirement System (FRS), fringe, etc.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the HR budget.

Ms. Caron appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 172, Employee Health Clinic, which can be found on page 57. She stated the overall increase for the Employee Health Clinic Department is \$13,904.00 due to contracted services, which have increased in cost, as well as other standard increases (FRS, fringe, etc.).

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to Employee Health Clinic budget.

Ms. Caron appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 162 Risk and Benefit Services, which can be found on page 665. She advised that the Risk and Benefits Department continues to provide exceptional customer service, quality benefits, proactive risk management, and effective safety awareness programs in an effort to prevent and minimize the County's consequences from losses. Each year the Risk and Benefits team reviews the Health & Self-Insurance programs to ensure that all measures, strategies, and programs are in place to produce the most cost-effective programs and insurances for the County and its employees. The budget for Risk & Benefits has a decrease of \$73,504.00 overall, (almost 10%) due to no new/additional Capital requests for FY 2024-2025. Ms. Caron advised that the decrease does not include any Capital improvements, noting if those improvements are approved and added to the budget, there would be an increase of \$25,409.00.

Ms. Caron provided a brief update on the proposed Employee Clinic, noting the first attempt in reviewing proposals identified that there was a need for additional design and service specifications, which resulted in re-posting the request for proposal (RFP). It was taken to the Board for approval to re-advertise for an RFP in April. The selection committee has the material from the six organizations submitting a bid, and the first review meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2024. As of now, the benefits Reserve Fund has enough money for the State-required minimum, as well as additional funding for the anticipated clinic build-out, and at least the first year of expenses for this clinic. The cited location has been identified and County Administration is currently in negotiations with Central Florida College (CF) for a lease agreement, with an architectural quote for build-out to follow.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Risk and Benefit Services budget.

Ms. Caron appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 163, The Employee Wellness Program, which can be found on page 667. She advised that staff continues to implement Wellness programs that provide ongoing education and incentives to employees encouraging them to get preventive health care and to maintain healthy lifestyles that assist in reducing long term health care costs. Staff continues to promote the Employee Assistance Program with an increased emphasis on mental health education and the addition of Mental Health First Aid training, as well as with the peer support platform, which is rolling out any day now. Additionally, the Department has invested training dollars in more “train the trainer” programs, such as “Stop the Bleed” and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). This will provide an overall savings to multiple Departments since our Wellness Coordinator can now provide these training sessions. The budget for the Wellness Center has a decrease of \$14,227.00 overall. This is a result of a reduction in contracted services, with an increase for new software. Additionally, the CIP funding was reduced. Ms. Caron acknowledged the changes that the Wellness Coordinator has implemented such as the weekly reports and live video notifications. There has been an increase in participation after changing the notifications from email messages to video messages. Wellness by the numbers this FY (to date) is as follows: number of new cards issued is 195; number of workouts (by sign in) 882; number of class participants is at 257 and the average number of visits per week is 55.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Employee Wellness Program budget.

**OPENING REMARKS – Michelle Hirst, 9-1-1 Management Director**

9-1-1 Management Director Michelle Hirst appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 313, 9-1-1 Management, which can be found on page 310. She presented a 1 page handout entitled, “Marion County 9-1-1 Management Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Proposed Budget”.

Ms. Hirst stated as the Director of the 9-1-1 Management Department, she is grateful for the opportunity to present the proposed annual budget for FY 2024-2025. She expressed her appreciation to the Board for its continued support of the Department and its mission. This enables staff to excel in providing a Countywide 9-1-1 system, addressing, and emergency services mapping. Ms. Hirst provided a brief overview of a few key requests from the proposed budget, which includes a request for a 9-1-1 Specialist position to be reclassified to a 9-1-1 Operations Manager. She advised that given the increased workload and her frequent obligations out of the office, the need for a dedicated manager has become increasingly evident. Ms. Hirst stated she identified an individual for this role as part of her succession plan. This person consistently steps up to lead, embodies the HICARD values, and is respected by her peers.

Ms. Hirst referred to line item 546301, Repairs & Maintenance of Equipment, noting this account has increased to cover the Logging Recorder maintenance for the Ocala Police Department (OPD), which will be reimbursed by the City of Ocala annually. Line item 552108, Operating Supplies, has an increase due to the necessity of replacing the office chairs. She advised that aligning with the Strategic Plan, she is ready to begin the process of migrating to Next Generation 9-1-1. To initiate this transition, she will be bringing back for Board consideration a contract for Next Generation Core Services to begin that process.

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In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Hirst advised that Next Generation 9-1-1 will change the Department's service provider, noting the new company only provides Next Generation Core Services and will increase location capabilities. She stated the County's Communication Centers will see a much improved location accuracy, as well as enable the Communication Centers to accept live videos, pictures, etc.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the 9-1-1 Management Department.

### **OPENING REMARKS – Susan Olsen, Procurement Services Director**

Procurement Services Director Susan Olsen appeared to review the proposed FY 2024–25 budget for Cost Center 176, Procurement Services, which can be found on page 64.

Ms. Olsen advised that the County's growth has led to a significant increase in workload, particularly for the Procurement Contract Analysts, or PCAs. She recognized PCAs have historically carried a heavy load, and is taking positive steps to address this workload without adding new positions. Recently, the Board approved the purchase of an innovative e-procurement software. This software promises to streamline processes for staff, vendors and for the County departments. The Department has begun training staff and building out the contract and solicitation templates. Staff is actively populating it and hopes to go live very soon. Ms. Olsen expressed her appreciation to the Board for its support of this purchase, noting staff is truly excited about this opportunity. It is anticipated that the new software will improve customer service for both departments and vendors, reduce turnaround times, increase competition, and significantly minimize potential errors. Staff continues to be committed to leveraging technology and exploring new methods to improve service. This will benefit all customers while allowing the Department to maintain current staffing levels. The Procurement Department is data-driven, and proud of their performance. She provided a brief overview of some of the Department's noteworthy highlights from last fiscal year, noting staff processed a remarkable 54,000 transactions and are currently managing 600 active contracts. The Department tackled over 200 solicitations and related tasks. Most importantly, staff secured over \$14,000,000.00 in savings through competitive solicitations and effective negotiation. Staff is actively building relationships with vendors and partner agencies to both increase awareness and foster competition, ultimately maximizing savings for the County. The proposed budget reflects an increase, but this is primarily driven by the investment in the new e-procurement software. The majority of the remaining operating budget increases are meant to address essential equipment upgrades for Department staff. This includes replacing 8 outdated laptops, 4 monitors, and 5 large-capacity scanners.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the significant amount of contract increases over the past several years, noting some companies are being asked to reduce those costs by 10% this year.

Commissioner Bryant out at 11:31 a.m.

Commissioner Zalak opined that the Procurement Department needs to reach out to vendors and negotiate decreases on any renewed contracts.

Commissioner Bryant returned at 11:32 a.m.

General discussion ensued.

Commissioner Bryant stated there are times when it is appropriate to request the vendor to consider a 10% decrease.

General discussion resumed.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Ms. Olsen stated there are times where the vendor is requested to hold the price for multi-year contracts.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Procurement Services budget.

There was a recess at 11:37 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 1:34 p.m. with all members present, except Commissioners Bryant and Zalak.

### **OPENING REMARKS – Michael Savage, Building Safety Director**

Building Safety Director Michael Savage appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 318, Building Safety (pages 359-366). Also present was Assistant Building Safety Director Chuck Brown. He presented a 1 page organizational chart, and a 5 page handout entitled, "Budget Workshop". Mr. Savage commented on growth, noting up to May of FY 2023/24, the Department has completed 169,857 inspections (FY 22/23 - 254,977), served 15,481 customers in the office by staff, received 25,268 applications and issued approximately 22,615 permits. Through May of FY 2023/24, the Department received applications for 5,030 single family residential (SFR) permits, the Plan Review Division reviewed 13,333 sets of plans, and there were 6,509 advanced property searches processed. To help manage the additional workload that growth has brought the Department, the Remote Video Inspections (RVI) program has expanded and enhanced staff's ability to provide inspections, averaging 1,931 RVI's each month, which is roughly 7.5 percent (%) of the inspection load.

Mr. Savage advised that in FY 2023/24 the Licensing Investigators of the Department processed a total of 2,942 Action Orders and 729 Code Cases resulting in a combined activity log of 3,671. Currently, there are 2,231 Code Cases on the docket for the Licensing Investigators.

Mr. Savage advised that based on a significant number of customer service surveys, the Department is hitting a 100% positive mark.

Commissioner Zalak arrived at 1:39 p.m.

Mr. Savage stated the Department has added a couple of budgetary measures to help maintain and expand the customer service experience being offered. He advised that Building Safety is requesting to maintain the same budget relating to line item 534101, Contract Services Other Miscellaneous (page 361), in the amount of \$1,419,639.00. That contract amount goes to 2 government support agencies the Department utilizes, funds contract positions that exist on the Building Safety team and pays for 1 of the Licensing Specialist positions.

Mr. Savage referred to line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment (page 366), noting the expenditure of \$302,565.00 is to replace 4 pickup trucks and add 1 vehicle for a proposed Licensing Investigator position the Department is requesting in the budget this year. He provided an overview of statistics relating to customers served, permits issued, and inspections.

Mr. Savage advised that the Department is requesting to expand the Inspector/Plans Examiners staff by 3 dedicated Remote Video Inspectors, who will be in an office, working at a computer to conduct RVI. The current estimated RVI total for FY 2024/25 is 27,000, which will be divided between 3 inspectors, averaging 36 daily RVIs per inspector. The national average is roughly 25 inspections per day. He stated the field inspectors are performing well above the national average. This budget change will cost \$149,199.00 and require equipment and support systems to facilitate the work of the positions.

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In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Savage clarified that the chart depicting inspections, as seen on the overhead screens, is the total number of inspections performed during a particular FY.

Mr. Savage stated based off of the previous numbers there is a lot of work for Licensing Investigators and the Department is constantly receiving emails and texts from contractors providing information relating to unlicensed contract work being advertised on social media platforms. When such information is received, the Department has to investigate. The additional position would allow staff to divide the County into quadrants rather than thirds as it is today. The salary for this position is \$42,236.00 (page 365).

Mr. Savage stated there is a request to reclassify a current Business Technologist to the position of Building Business Manager to help coordinate with the implementation of Enterprise Permitting and Licensing (EPL) and to reflect changes in the position and supervisory responsibilities. This budget change will cost \$4,663.00, no additional equipment will be required. The budget will include the correction in the pay grade for the Licensing Investigator to better coordinate with the pay grade of Code Enforcement Officers (CEO). The pay grades will increase from 104 (\$33,134.40) to 106 (\$37,939.20) on the lower scale to 109 (\$46,467.20) up from 106 (\$37,939.20) on the high scale. Those increases are shown under Personnel (page 361).

Mr. Savage advised that the Department is requesting the addition of 1 Resource Contract position to function as a liaison between the government support agencies, the public, and the Department including plans, records, and inquiries. The salary for this position will cost \$60,680.00 and does not include the required equipment and supporting systems to facilitate the work of the position. The position is found under line item 534101, Contract Services Other Miscellaneous (page 361).

Mr. Savage stated House Bill (HB) 447 in 2019 changed how local governments treat their Carry-Forward and Fund Balances, this was enumerated in FS 553.80(7)(a). The Building Safety Department has implemented a course of action to change the Departmental policy on how building permit fees are collected. County Resolution 20-R-207 meets the Statute requirement that the local government establish a schedule of reasonable fees; however, when HB 447 was debated and passed, the amount of growth that Marion County experienced was not foreseen. He advised that the County essentially grew 14.5% each year since HB 447 came out.

Commissioner Curry questioned if there is other technology the Department can access. Mr. Savage commented on artificial intelligence (AI), noting there is a group he plans to meet with to tour their facility. They have AI technology that conducts plan reviews, which currently takes 20 days through a private provider and 30 days through Marion County. He stated that agency just started up approximately 1 year ago, so he is waiting and watching to see how that program is working.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Savage stated the agency charges per plan review.

Chairman Stone questioned where the facility is located. Mr. Savage advised that the facility is in Gainesville, noting he has been waiting for testing and identification of any issues relating to the system or the plan review process.

Commissioner Zalak opined that the Board exercise caution relating to the AI technology and stated there is a benefit to waiting and not being the test case.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Savage advised that the Department's workload has not slowed down, noting the inspections are tracked daily, as well as the permit numbers. He stated the recent Impact Fee Ordinance has partially driven the requests as

individuals are trying to submit their documents prior to July 1, 2024. Mr. Savage advised that he expects roughly 300,000 inspections this year.

Commissioner Zalak stated the Board never sees the properties that are already zoned correctly, noting a lot of what the Building Safety Department is currently seeing is at least 24 months old from when it was before the Board. He noted the Department also performs work relating to door, window, air conditioning (AC) replacements, etc.

In response to Commissioner Curry, ACA Straub advised that the Growth Services Department tracks every time the Board approves a subdivision and has that data for the last 5 years. She stated the number of units approved during that period can be provided and that figure can be compared to the number of permits Building Safety is producing.

Commissioner Zalak noted that a lot of the Commercial is already approved, outside of the World Equestrian Center (WEC).

Commissioner McClain questioned the capabilities/uses of RVIs. Mr. Savage advised that not all inspections would be done via RVI, noting certain things need to be in-person. The RVI program started off for re-roofing and allows the inspector to perform an in-person inspection if he sees something of concern. He stated once the Department became successful with that, the program was broadened into water heater, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system inspections.

In response to Commissioner McClain, Mr. Savage advised that the RVI is a live video, and the inspector instructs the contractor through the process. He stated there is not staff dedicated to this program, noting he is borrowing from the actual field inspectors who coordinate the RVIs with their normal inspection route. There are occasions when a Plan Reviewer performs this work. Mr. Savage advised that the current system prevents outside Plan Reviewers from conducting RVIs, but there is the possibility of including them once the Department begins utilizing EPL.

Commissioner Curry commented on inspection times and questioned if there are minimum and maximum time frames relating to inspections. Mr. Savage advised that RVIs can occur multiple times in a day and get inspections. In-person inspections are always performed the next day and sometimes the same day if it is an emergency inspection.

Ms. Fowler addressed the Licensing Investigators pay grade changes, noting that was not included in the proposed budget. She stated Human Resources (HR) approved the change, but the change was not submitted to the Budget Department and is not included as a pay grade change. She requested consensus from the Board to allow her to itemize the positions, which show as reclassifications and provide the old and new paygrades for transparency.

It was the general consensus of the Board to agree.

Ms. Fowler addressed changes to be made relating to positions 11358 and 11359 to ensure they are reflected correctly.

Ms. Straub stated during the calendar years (CY) of 2022 and 2023, the Board approved 6,600 units (individual lots). During the FY 2022/23 the Building Safety Department issued in excess of 36,000 permits.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that the figure Ms. Straub provided (6,600) should be compared with the number of single family permits.

Ms. Straub stated the monthly tracking that will be on the next Agenda, contains the number of single family permits that are issued.

Mr. Savage advised that single family residential (SFR) permits, including mobile homes, is 6,291 (October 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024).

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It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Building Safety Department budget.

**OPENING REMARKS – Thomas Northey, Information Technology Director**

Information Technology (IT) Director Thomas Northey appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 174, Information Technology (IT) (page 59). He presented a 3 page handout entitled, "Information Technology 2025 Proposed Budget Presentation". Also present was Operations Manager Michael Vann.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Northey advised that IT is currently working with Tyler Technologies to revise the timeline for Building Safety projects, noting Tyler Technologies is struggling to get the data conversion clean. He stated there are outstanding issues relating to tasks to be completed in the system prior to going live.

Mr. Northey advised that IT collaborated with Public Safety Communications (PSC) to successfully complete its first official disaster recovery test for the new backup 9-1-1 Center. This test included a live migration of the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and mobile communications systems while actively taking and dispatching calls from the primary to the backup 9-1-1 Center. This test provides PSC a high level of confidence that services will remain operational in the event of a disaster. He stated IT expanded the County's mobile video production capabilities and successfully live streamed public meetings from various locations, including the historic Fort King site.

Mr. Northey advised that the IT team has worked continuously to improve the County's cybersecurity position by implementing new enhancements such as additional security measures for the libraries' public access computers. He stated IT collaborated with Facilities and Administration to update the BCC Auditorium's technology. Some highlights include the modernization of the audio-visual control room and enhancements to the sound system, stage lighting, and cabling infrastructure. Mr. Northey advised that to effectively serve citizens, IT is moving to a modern cloud-centric business design. This will empower employees to remain customer service driven in an evolving mobile world. These enhancements aim to improve collaboration and streamline the user experience. Mr. Northey addressed line item 512101, Regular Salaries and Wages, noting the County's expanding demand for technology has caused a surge in the number of IT related projects and work orders. The current work order volumes are exceeding the Department's capacity. The number of active projects alone has increased 229% over the past year. To address these growing workloads employees are working an additional 22% over their expected capacity. In reviewing these trends and consulting with leading industry experts such as Gartner, it was discovered that similarly sized organizations typically staff 1 IT professional for every 27 employees served (1:27). Currently, IT operates 48% below industry standards, with 1 IT professional for every 51 employees served (1:51). Based on these trends and data points the Department is requesting 4 additional FTEs and 2 reclassifications of positions with a proposed increase of \$307,000.00. He provided an overview of the requested new positions and reclassifications.

Mr. Northey referred to line item 544101, Rentals and Leases, noting there is a proposed increase of \$239,000.00. The current enterprise resource planning (ERP) servers are reaching end-of-life (EOL) this calendar year. He stated this lease will provide the County with the time required to prepare, test, and move the extensive ERP environment to the Cloud.

Mr. Northey addressed line item 546301, Repairs and Maintenance Equipment, which increased by \$151,000.00 to renew the County's 3-year maintenance contract for 53 firewalls and 3 Virtual Private Network (VPN) servers. Line item 552106, Computer Software, has an increase of \$283,000.00 due to several changes including: moving critical security services, the County's time and attendance system migrating to the Cloud, price increases relating to virtualization software, and a new project management solution used by several County departments. In line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment, there is a decrease of \$371,000.00 (page 63). This account varies yearly as equipment goes EOL. The upcoming fiscal year expenditures include replace EOL network switches servicing multiple locations, including the Growth Services building, Library Headquarters, and Procurement Services for \$110,000.00 as well as center video surveillance system cabling and camera replacement. Phase IV will continue replacing EOL cameras and provide increased visibility to areas of concern at the Judicial Center. The projected cost is \$225,000.00. In line items 571201, Principal Lease Purchase; 572201, Interest Lease Purchase, there are increases of \$100,000.00 and \$17,000.00 respectively. This increase is due to the main data center servers going EOL. These servers store hundreds of millions of files, numerous databases, and nearly a hundred of the Department's business line applications. For the next several years, these servers will be required as the County transitions to the Cloud platform.

Chairman Stone commented on line item 569907, Subscriptions Software, noting it is zeroed out.

Ms. Fowler advised that the FY 2023 column shows line item 552106, Computer Software, actual was \$158,584.00. She stated Mr. Northey has a \$1,500,000.00 budget. The actual budget for 2023 would have been much higher, but when the Finance Department makes their accounting structures, they reduce the expenditure there and add it under Debt Service. Ms. Fowler advised that staff do not know what the amortization schedule is going to be during the year. It was decided to leave the funds in those accounts. She stated if those Debt Service numbers are added to Computer Software, it will wash out. Ms. Fowler advised that there is not a good mechanism to chase how that split will occur for the Department, noting it is best to allow Finance to perform their work behind the scenes after the end of the FY.

Commissioner McClain requested clarification relating to line item 541101, Communication Services.

Mr. Northey advised of a delayed project, noting the Department supports external Constitutionals and a lot of agencies with the phone system. To help maintain the upcoming proposed budget, IT is delaying some projects to a later date.

Commissioner Curry questioned if there are additional measures required to protect the Constitutional Officers and the County relating to cyber-attacks. Mr. Northey stated he is confident in the County's firewalls as well as the capabilities of the IT professionals on the security team. There are many great tools provided by the State and the County will be moving to tools that are comparable to those based on consultation with Gartner. They are the best tools in the industry. He advised that there is adequate coverage under the County's liability policy.

Mr. Bouyounes clarified that the only Constitutional Officer the County interacts with is the Clerk, all the others have their own IT and do not interact with the County.

Commissioner Zalak requested an update relating to Tyler Technologies and the transition of Departments.

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Mr. Northey advised that financials are in place and working well, HR is working very well, Utilities billing is in place and working fairly well. The Department is in the process of getting ready to implement a big change with Utilities relating to the new online resident access that will allow individuals do everything online without having to come into the office. There are a couple of pieces from Tyler Technologies to get in place before that including Tyler Notify (boil water notices, etc.), and Tyler Payments. He addressed issues with the work order system, noting the Department is working closely with Tyler and has recently made progress relating to issues/concerns. There are outstanding issues the Department is working through, and it is a beta test site for Tyler's latest application that has not yet been released.

Mr. Northey stated there are still a couple issues relating to Tyler's Parks and Recreation side; however, the Department was able to do kids camps online this year to mixed reviews. Work continues and the system will be enhanced. He advised that relating to the work order management side, the Department still has the Office of the County Engineer (OCE) to get done and anticipate adding them to the system next year.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Northey stated IT, Facilities, Fleet Management, Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR), Parks and Recreation, and Municipal Service Taxing Units (MSTU) are currently live in the work order system. He stated the Department is roughly 55% through the EPL project, noting the data conversion poses the biggest challenge. Mr. Northey advised that the completion of the Building Department projects will likely continue into next year. He stated other transitions this year include the new Utilities resident access, OCE will be coming online, Tyler payments and Tyler notify. In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Northey advised that the application for citizens will probably be rolled out in 2025, noting there are additional pieces to get in place first. He stated there is a new MyCivic App that will allow citizens to download an app that will provide access to all County services.

Commissioner Zalak opined that the system should allow citizens to access multiple services/functions across Departments without the need for separate logins or accounts. He questioned if IT tracks repeat work orders. Mr. Northey advised that the Department does so to a degree, noting there are often variances of the problem. He stated the Department looks for trends and addresses them when identified.

Chairman Stone questioned if Mr. Northey is happy with the Tyler Technologies system. Mr. Northey stated overall he is happy with the system, noting the biggest lesson learned was to focus on implementing 1 module at a time.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the IT Department budget.

### **OPENING REMARKS – Cheryl Martin, Community Services Director**

Community Services Director Cheryl Martin appeared to review the Department's proposed budget for FY 2024-25 for Cost Center 330, Health (page 145); Cost Center 335, Unclaimed Decedent Program (page 147); Cost Center 337, Assessments Public Assistance (page 149); Cost Center 340, Community Services (page 151); Cost Center 341, Community Development Block Grant (page 201); Cost Center 342, Home Investment Partnership (page 203); Cost Center 343, Neighborhood Stabilization Program 1 (page 205); Cost Center 344, Neighborhood Stabilization Program 3 (page 206); Cost Center 345, Emergency Solutions Program (page 207); Cost Center 346, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) CARES (page 208); Cost Center 347, Emergency Solutions CARES (page 203); Cost Center 348, Continuum of Care Program

(page 211); Cost Center 349, Continuum of Care Program Florida (page 213); Cost Center 351, Continuum of Care Program Challenge (page 215); Cost Center 352, Continuum of Care Emergency Solutions (page 216); Cost Center 353, Continuum of Care TANF (page 217); and Cost Center 350, State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Act (page 369). Also present was Assistant Director John Crawford.

Ms. Martin presented an 11 page handout containing documents relating to the various Cost Centers under the umbrella of Community Services. She advised that the Department oversees Federal and State locally mandated programs to serve the vulnerable population. She provided an overview of the Department's accomplishments over the past year.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 330, Health (page 145), noting this budget remains the same.

Ms. Martin stated the budget for Cost Center 335, Unclaimed Decedent Program (page 147), remains the same.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 337, Assessments Public Assistance (page 149), which remained the same. She stated the Department is actively accepting applications for this program now, noting the program ends September 1, 2024.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 340, Community Services (pages 151-152). A portion of this budget pays for Personnel and Operating Costs to administer all the programs throughout the Department. Last year the Board, Budget, Finance, HR, and IT helped the Department with the implementation of Kronos resulting in time management efficiencies relating to spending down grant allocation administration caps. It reduces the time staff spends processing payments.

Ms. Martin stated this budget reflects an increase of roughly \$77,081.00, noting the addition of 1 FTE, Community Development Administrator.

Ms. Martin stated the next budgets she will address are grant-funded budgets (starting on page 200). She advised that the County received an allocation of approximately \$3,244,561.00, a slight decrease from last year's allocation. The 5 year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan are due on August 15, 2024.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 341, CDBG (page 201). She referred to her handout, noting it provides details relating to the projects the Department is funding. This grant received a slight decrease of \$2,000.00. She stated as outlined in the May workshop, the Department has coordinated with budget and Code Enforcement on the process to fund a Code Enforcement Officer who will be dedicated to low-income census tracts in Marion County. The budget remains the same with a minor decrease.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 342, HOME (pages 203-204). The HOME Investment Partnerships Grant aims to provide affordable housing to low-income families. This annual allocation realizes a \$179,440.00 decrease to this budget compared to the previous year. She advised that these funds are shared with the City of Ocala, noting they are a HOME consortium with the County.

Ms. Martin commented on Cost Centers 343 and 344 Neighborhood Stabilization Program 1 (NSP1) and NSP3 (pages 205-206). She stated the close out application for NSP1 has been submitted, and the Department is awaiting HUD's approval. The Department is working to close out NSP3, once the official close out is received from HUD, the Department will seek guidance from the Board relating to those program income dollars.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 345, ESG (pages 207-208). Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) provides rapid rehousing, homeless prevention, and outreach to homeless

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families. This budget has a slight increase from the prior year's allocation in the amount of \$8,313.00

Ms. Martin commented on Cost Center 346, CDBG Cares (Page 209), noting it is fully encumbered and is anticipated to be fully expended by 2025.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 347, ESG Cares (page 210). Those funds have all been expended and the Department is reviewing close out.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 348, Continuum of Care (CoC) Program (pages 211-212). She stated this grant supports personnel and operating expenses for CoC staff. Ms. Martin advised that there was an increase this year (\$64,000.00 to \$119,000.00) due to the receipt of bonus dollars relating to domestic violence. She stated any HUD funds that community partners are awarded go directly to those organizations, noting this is the only funding the Department receives directly from HUD on CoC.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 349, Continuum of Care Program Florida (pages 213-214). This grant covers personnel and staff.

In response to Chairman Stone, Ms. Martin clarified that the funding covers County staff.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 351, Continuum of Care Challenge (page 215) in the amount of \$86,000.00. She advised that the CoC Board of Governors and the BCC has already approved contracts, noting the Ocala Housing Authority, Arnette House, and Project Hope will be sharing those dollars.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 352, Continuum of Care ESG (page 216) in the amount of \$172,000.00. Saving Mercy will be administering those funds for rapid rehousing and homeless prevention.

Ms. Martin commented on Cost Center 353, Continuum of Care TANF (page 217). She stated the Community Services/CoC Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a grant fund cash assistance program for low-income families and will be administered by the Ocala Housing Authority this year.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 332, Opioid Settlement, (Pages 284-285), which relates to the regional opioid settlement funds. She reiterated that committee has been launched, the priorities have been established and the claim has been submitted to the State. The next steps for the opioid settlement include amending an Interlocal Agreement between the County and the City of Ocala, and potentially entering into an agreement with a third-party to assist with administering and overseeing how the funds are spent.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 350, Local Housing Assistance Trust Fund, also known as SHIP (pages 367-370). The County received an allocation from the State this year of in the amount of \$2,553,788.00, which was less than last year's allocation. These are all affordable housing dollars and run from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Martin addressed Cost Center 342, HOME ARPA, (page 380-381) HUD has approved the County's HOME ARPA plan. HOME ARPA is a unique housing allocation for homeless people. The County received an allocation 2 years ago for \$3,217,585.00. She advised of an agreement coming before the Board at its next meeting for an acquisition and renovation of a non-congregate shelter and the Department is moving forward with allocating the funds.

In response to Chairman Stone, Ms. Martin advised that the Code Enforcement Officer position in the Code Enforcement budget will be reimbursed by Community Services on a monthly basis and will come from the grant allocation rather than the administrative caps due to meeting a national objective to serve low-income parties.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Community Services Department budget.

**OPENING REMARKS – Jeffrey Askew, Veterans Services Director**

Veterans Services Director Jeffrey Askew appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 378, Veterans Service Office, which can be found on page 174. He advised that there are more than 40,000 Veterans in Marion County, noting an influx of individuals moving to Marion County. He stated Veterans Services also provides services for the Veterans' widow/widowers and their children who are qualified to receive VA benefits.

Mr. Askew stated the County has a one of a kind Veterans Exhibit and Education Center, noting inside the Center is a room for WWI, WWII, Korean Conflict, Vietnam Conflict, 9/11 Attack on America, as well as other memorabilia. He advised that line item 534101, Contract Services Other Miscellaneous, has a proposed increase of \$20,000.00 for a part-time temporary position for Veterans Park.

Mr. Askew commented on line item 582101, Aid to Private Organizations, noting the Department is still collaborating in concert with Vets Helping Vets to aid Veterans and their families. (For services such as gas cards, rental, utilities, car repair, food and etc.). The organization is conducting Veterans Benefits Briefings in outlying areas of Marion County, as well as Gated Communities and Assisted Living Facilities (ALF). Mr. Askew advised that there is also a satellite office in the V.A. Clinic, located at SW Highway 200 on SW 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue Road.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Askew stated the satellite office position is rotated between staff members Tuesday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. The temporary position at Veteran's Park would be responsible for giving tours, taking applications for bricks, benches, plaques, set up and take down programs, running the sound system, and checking the facility for vandalism. The hours will be 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and this will be a trial run to see how this position is working out.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Veteran Services Department budget.

**OPENING REMARKS – Charles Varadin, Growth Services Director**

Growth Services Director Charles Varadin appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 317, Code Enforcement (page 138) and Cost Center 320, Planning and Zoning (page 142). Also present were Growth Services Deputy Director Ken Weyrauch and Code Enforcement Supervisor Robin Hough.

Mr. Varadin presented a 5 page handout entitled, "Marion County Growth Services Department Proposed Budget - FY25", a 1 page handout entitled, "Marion County Board of County Commissioners Planning and Zoning Proposed FY 25 Budget Adjustments", a 1 page handout entitled, "Marion County Board of County Commissioners Code Enforcement Board Proposed FY 25 CDBG Budget Adjustments" and a 2 page handout containing a map indicating FY 24 Code Enforcement abatement projects.

Mr. Varadin addressed Cost Center 317, Code Enforcement Budget (page 138), noting the Department is looking to offset some increases to this budget by utilizing \$200,000.00 from the CDBG funds. This is a reimbursement which will cover many of the low and moderate income tract areas. He referred to a map, noting the blue areas depict low to moderate income areas around the County and the red dots represent this year's abatements. Mr. Varadin commented on the number of abatements within the low to

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moderate income areas that the CDBG funds would assist in covering. He stated the Department is proposing 1 current Code Enforcement Officer who would be reassigned to these areas.

Mr. Varadin commented on the handout reflecting budget adjustments, noting the highlighted column is the proposed FY 25 budget and the next column represents the adjustments. He stated the increase would change the Department's operating expenses from \$464,935.00 to \$589,403.00.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Bouyounes advised that the change is not reflected in the handout containing position changes.

Mr. Varadin stated the other significant item impacting the budget is 2 new Code Enforcement Supervisor positions. These positions would result in salary increases and other operational expenses for things like radios, gas, etc., as well as capital for vehicles to allow these individuals to be in the field. The total loaded cost for the personnel for those 2 positions is \$179,000.00.

Mr. Varadin addressed Capital costs in the amount of \$176,280.00 for 3 new vehicles, noting 2 are for the new positions and 1 replacement vehicle.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Bouyounes advised that the plan is most likely to promote a candidate from within to the Supervisor role, and 1 of the current Code Enforcement Officers (CEO) would take on the CDBG areas.

Ms. Straub clarified that Ms. Fowler will make the adjustment to show the expenditure being paid for out of Code Enforcement's salaries, and the reimbursement which will be like a grant.

Mr. Fowler stated she would add \$200,000.00 in revenues to the General Fund, \$75,532.00 of expenses already sits in the General Fund for the position, she will add \$124,468.00 for the operating expenses resulting in a net increase of revenue to the General Fund in the amount of \$75,532.00 which will show up in the Reserve for Contingencies as additional funding.

Ms. Straub advised that there will be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) drafted between the Departments to clarify what is the operation to occur and what how the payment will be facilitated.

Mr. Varadin addressed Cost Center 320, Planning and Zoning (page 142). He advised that the Department's request is slightly higher than \$3,000,000.00. There is an adjustment to Personnel expenses, which reduces the total by \$59,161.00.

In response to Commissioner McClain, Mr. Varadin confirmed there is a new planner position in the proposed budget. He stated this is a time limited position for a Senior Planner who will be retiring in less than 2 years, noting this role will allow him to mentor other staff.

Commissioner Zalak opined that the Department needs to hire additional personnel, noting the time it takes to hire a good planner and the time relating to training individuals.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Varadin advised that the Department has been working to set up internships with the University of Florida (UF) and other local schools.

Mr. Bouyounes stated the County advertises in the professional magazines.

Mr. Weyrauch stated the Department advertised through the Florida American Planning Association (APA), LinkedIn, local schools and recent alumni.

General discussion ensued relating to recruitment.

Chairman Stone stated she wanted to see that position staffed quickly, noting the Department will likely need to stay overstaffed for a while based on the growth of the community.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Growth Services budget.

**OPENING REMARKS – Julie Sieg, Library Director**

Library Director Julie Sieg appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 375, Marion County Public Library System (page 168). Also present were Senior Manager of Technical and Digital Services Susan Reynolds, Administrative Manager Neshe Frye, and Assistant Director Lee Schwartz. She advised that new Senior Library Division Manager, Jenny Ransone was promoted from her previous role as the Children's Division Manager.

Ms. Sieg presented a 3 page handout, which addresses her speaking points.

Ms. Sieg stated with this proposed Library budget, the Department is seeking a 6% increase. This requested increase represents staffing and operating the new library in the Silver Spring Shores (SSS) area, general increases in standard operational activities and an increase in expenditure for library materials to help stock both the Shores library and in anticipation of the Freedom Public Library expansion.

Commissioner Bryant arrived at 3:22 p.m.

Ms. Sieg advised that some accounts have decreased. In most cases, this is in an effort to pare down expenditure as much as possible based on historical expenditure data. The renovation of the SSS youth activity building is expected to begin in the new fiscal year with the availability of funding through Community Services. Facilities Management is managing the renovation project and move-in is anticipated in the spring of 2025.

Ms. Sieg stated the Department is proposing three new positions for the SSS public library: 1.) one Branch Library Supervisor II and 2.) two Public Services Assistants. This staffing plan mirrors the Marion Oaks and Sankofa staffing levels. There are also plans to replicate the Marion Oaks, 6 days a week operation. Additionally, to build staff capacity, the Department is requesting to reclassify one part-time Public Services Assistant position at Belleview to FTE status. as previously mentioned under County Administrator comments. If approved for consideration, the library seeks to include in the budget a second Technology Librarian to oversee and develop staff technology competencies and patron technology training; conduct research, evaluation, and facilitation in the use of new library electronic resources and manage the library online presence of such public facing resources as the library website, library social media and the library public catalog.

Ms. Sieg addressed line item 534101, Contract Services, noting this account has increased due to the estimated cost for janitorial services for 9 months at the SSS library, and an increase in the system-wide pest control contract. There is an increase in line item 543101, Utilities Services Electric Water Sewer, due to a slight uptick across each of the libraries, as well as an estimate of the cost for electric, water and sewer for the Shores public library. The increase to line item 544401, Rentals and Leases Buildings, is an estimate of the cost to lease the building from the MSTU for the SSS public library.

Ms. Sieg noted a significant increase in line item 552106, Computer Software, relating to the Department's Microsoft software licensing and a change in the required account from which all library electronic resources must be paid. This includes all software, databases and electronic books (e-books). This accounting clarification is required by Finance. She addressed line item 552108, Operating Supplies, noting this account is slated for an increase due to the need to replace some of the Department's book drops. The intent is to replace the three 20-year-old, heavily used book drops at Headquarters (HQ), and replace them with two double book drops. Belleview, Dunnellon and Freedom would also

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receive new double book drops. Their current book drops would be cleaned and moved to locations with lower book-drop use, including the SSS public library and Marion Oaks and possibly Reddick or Ft. McCoy.

Ms. Sieg stated line item 566101, Books Publications and Library Materials, appears to have decreased because of the transfer of funds to the Computer Software account, it has actually increased by \$25,000.00 for library materials at SSS and Freedom libraries. As for the Freedom expansion, presently, the Department is looking forward to a potential grand opening at the end of calendar year (CY) 2025. This would put the opening in FY 2025-26. During construction the library will remain open as much as possible. Ms. Sieg stated it was her understanding that the expansion will be completed, furniture and equipment will be installed, staff will move into the new space and then the existing library will be renovated. With the expansion in square footage, from 8,100 sf to 32,000 sf, increased usage, increased service points and increased programming, there will be a need for additional staff, which is a process. New positions will need to be funded, advertised, go through the hiring process and, finally, go through the training process prior to the opening, yet all of this can't be accomplished within the first quarter of FY 2025-26. Rather than including these new positions in this proposed budget for a full year, the plan is to come back to you with a budget amendment next fiscal year, to fund a partial year, utilizing unspent salary dollars as far as they will go, with the remainder coming from other sources, to be determined. In anticipation of this, \$170,000.00 has been earmarked within the various personnel accounts to support this. We believe this plan is the most cost effective, while still allowing the opportunity to address the need. With new faces, new ideas and new service points, the Department looks forward to the opportunities the future holds.

Commissioner Bryant questioned the amount of funding that is included in this budget for staffing at Freedom Library. Mr. Bouyounes advised that \$170,000.00 is being placed in the budget.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Sieg stated she expects to start the hiring process for Freedom Library around the beginning of the summer, noting the Department is working with HR and Administration. She advised that the Department plans to have staff employed by October 1, 2025, noting the Department's extensive training process. Commissioner Bryant expressed concern relating to earmarking those funds this year.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Sieg stated there will be an additional 11 positions proposed at a cost of approximately \$750,000.00 during next year's budget when that facility is completely open.

Commissioner Zalak expressed support for the funding for this budget, noting the training process relating to this Department. He stated there should be an Agenda Item to make the Board aware when the funds will be utilized, noting staff should provide the Board a building update at that time.

ACA Amanda Tart stated the Agenda Item staff will present to the Board will include the actual creation of the positions and the \$170,000.00 is roughly 3 months of the salary and is spread out across all the positions.

Ms. Sieg stated there is \$140,000.00 in salaries and the remaining is applied to benefits. She advised that the Department funnels its work orders through 2 individuals to prevent duplicate work orders in addition to meeting with IT every 2 weeks to review work orders and status.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Sieg stated the process with IT is working well for the Department.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Library's budget.

**OPENING REMARKS – Jared Goodspeed, Facilities Director**

Facilities Management Director Jared Goodspeed appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budgets for Cost Center 180, Facilities Management (page 70); Cost Center 181, Facilities Management Health (page 75); and Cost Center 182, Courthouse Security (page 76). Also present was Fiscal Manager Samantha Ritcher.

Mr. Goodspeed presented a 4 page document entitled, "Facilities Management the Fiscal Year 2024/25 Budget Narrative".

Mr. Goodspeed advised that the Department maintains over 370 County-owned buildings, totaling over 3,400,000 square feet (sf) of occupied space. There is a team of construction and maintenance trade experts responding to facilities' day-to-day concerns. Facilities Management is also responsible for a complete preventative maintenance program, managing contracted maintenance services and vertical construction in the County. Over the past year, Facilities Management has seen an increased demand for in-house renovation projects to maintain the operational satisfaction of the County's Departments. The Department has prioritized the project management team to meet the challenge of the continued push to construct major CIP vertical construction projects to support our citizens and staff's critical services.

The proposed budget changes aim to strengthen the Department's capacity and focus on the foreseeable future obstacles. This year Facilities Management is focused on internal priorities to achieve the Department goal for technician efficiency, employee retention, and focused capacity.

Mr. Goodspeed advised that for FY 2025 the Facilities Management budget has an increase of 2.03% over the past year, noting there are 3 additional FTEs being requested: 2 technician positions including a plumber and an additional support position at the Courthouse, in addition to a Supervisor for Operations.

Mr. Goodspeed addressed line item 541101, Communication Services, noting the Department is changing out all of the staff cell phones. Line item 552116, Operating Supplies Computer Hardware, there are 7 laptop replacements and 1 desktop computer replacement. Mr. Goodspeed stated line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment, reflects 2 additional cargo vans relating to new positions, and an 18 foot U-Dump Trailer needed for remodel projects.

Commissioner Bryant questioned if it is cheaper to purchase the U-Dump Trailer or to rent one. Mr. Goodspeed advised that the trailer the Department has is currently used frequently, and for a cost of \$18,000.00 he cannot see renting one and having to wait on a schedule.

Mr. Goodspeed addressed Cost Center 181, Facilities Management Health, (page 75), noting there is no change to the revenue increase for this budget this year.

Mr. Goodspeed advised that Cost Center 182, Courthouse Security, (page 76), has no planned increases.

Commissioner Bryant questioned if Giddens Security Corporation is still providing that service. Mr. Goodspeed stated they are performing the security function.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Goodspeed advised that he expects to break ground in October for the new Animal Services facility. He provided an overview of the work required to have the facility completed by the end of November, 2025, noting as long as there are no long lead time items and the Department can replace them with things having

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equal specifications the timeline will be fine. The bid process for this job will be unique. Mr. Goodspeed advised that the Department has requested multiple options, especially on the kennels.

Commissioner Bryant requested an update relating to Freedom Library. Mr. Goodspeed stated the timeline for breaking ground is October to November and the Department is awaiting the invitation to bid.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Goodspeed advised that projects occurring this year are larger efforts that are continuing. He stated the jail plumbing has been completed, noting depending on the location some of the sleeves worked well and others required the use of epoxy.

Clerk Harrell expressed appreciation towards Mr. Goodspeed and his team.

Commissioner Curry requested status relating to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor at the Courthouse. Mr. Goodspeed advised of a small change order with the architect because of the duration and Code changes. The project is expected to go out for bid in the next quarter.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Facilities budget.

**BOARD DISCUSSION:**

Ms. Fowler provided a brief overview of the budget adjustments as a result of today's meeting.

**CLOSING COMMENTS: NONE.**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

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Michelle Stone, Chairman

Attest:

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Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk