Official Minutes of
MARION COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

June 19, 2025

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) met in a special session at 10:02 a.m. on Thursday, June 19, 2025 at the Rainbow Lakes Estates Community Center located at 4030 SW Deepwater Court in Dunnellon, Florida.

INTRODUCTION BY CHAIRMAN KATHY BRYANT
Chairman Zalak noted the purpose of the public hearing is to consider the tentative budget for Rainbow Lakes Estates (RLE).

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.

ROLL CALL
Upon roll call the following members were present: Vice-Chairman Carl Zalak, III, District 4; Commissioner Matthew McClain, District 3; and Commissioner Michelle Stone, District 5. Commissioner Craig Curry, District 1, and Chairman Kathy Bryant, District 2, were absent due to prior commitments. Also present were County Attorney Matthew G. Minter and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Tracy Straub.

PROOF OF PUBLICATION
Deputy Clerk Lewter presented Proof of Publication No. 11383008 entitled, “Notice of Public Hearing”, published in the Star Banner newspaper on June 15, 2025. The Notice states the Board will consider adopting the tentative budget for fiscal year (FY) 2025-26 for the RLE Municipal Service District (RLE MSD), the RLE Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) for Recreation Services and Facilities, and the RLE MSTU for Road Improvements.

STAFF PRESENTATION
1. Present Rainbow Lakes Estates Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budgets - Audrey Fowler, Budget Director

Budget Director Audrey Fowler presented a 29 page Agenda packet and read into the record a one page cover letter, dated June 19, 2025, from Clerk Harrell, presenting the FY 2025-26 budgets. Presented today are the proposed FY 2025-26 budgets for the RLE MSD, RLE MSTU for Recreation Services and Facilities, the RLE MSTU for Road Improvements and the RLE MSBU for Fire Protection and Community Resource Facilities in the aggregate amount of $2,825,738.00.
The proposed budget of the RLE MSD includes a 1.2500 mill property tax millage rate. The proposed District millage rate is the same as that of the current 2024-25 FY. The RLE MSTU for Recreation Services and Facilities includes a 0.8500 mill property tax millage rate. The proposed MSTU millage rate is the same as that of the current 2024-25 FY. Estimated property values have been used for the purpose of budget preparation. As presented, the total proposed budgets represent a decrease of $1,351,860.00 or (32.36 percent (%)), from $4,177,598.00 for adopted FY 2024-25 to the proposed budget of $2,825,738.00 for FY 2025-26.

Final adoption of the tentative millage rates and budgets will take place at duly advertised public hearings to be held during the month of September. Adjustments made necessary by changes in final property values, per parcel assessment rolls, or Fund Balance Carry Forward, will be made prior to final adoption of the budget.
Ms. Fowler advised that a summary of the revenues for the RLE MSD can be found on page 3, noting the taxable property value estimate was an increase of 19.6% over the prior FY. She stated there is a slight decrease in expectation of interest anticipating some declines in the Federal rates for next FY. Also, the fund balance is currently lower in the proposed budget because staff does not project the expenditure of capital when preparing the proposed budget and Carry Forwards will be provided in August.
Ms. Fowler advised that on page 4 there are 2 Cost Centers: the RLE General Government (500), which has a total of $1,108,995.00; and The Road and Street RLE MSD (502), which has $0.00 because it was moved to a separate MSTU fund 2 years ago. Page 5 contains a summary of the actual cost expenditures. Personnel Regular Salaries and Wages (512101) includes a 5% cost of living adjustment (COLA) and merit increase over the current FY. There is a slight adjustment for health insurance and a workers compensation increase due to claims and State required contributions. She stated 2 notable changes to the operating accounts are in line item 534101, Contract Serv Other Miscillanous, and line item 543101, Utility Services Electric Water Sewer. The changes were in relation to expenses moving from the recreation fund to the RLE MSD to ensure it was properly categorized with the maintenance of the buildings instead of going against the recreation expenses. Line item 563901, Capital Improvement Funding, represents excess new revenue in the fund for the accumulation of Fund Balance to be used for facility improvements and upgrades.
Ms. Fowler referred to page 6 and advised that there is a slight change in the line item 599101, Reserve for Contingencies and 599199, Reserve for Cash Carry Forward, due to a 10%/20% cap, noting any differences removed were added into the Capital Improvement Fund. She stated Page 7 contains the personnel detail and has no requested changes.
In response to Chairman Zalak, Ms. Fowler advised that she has requested Municipal Services (MS) staff work with the Budget Department to create a detailed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for RLE.
ACA Tracy Straub advised that the RLE Advisory Board has created a Master Plan, noting they have identified various projects and are saving funds to ensure those projects can move forward.
Ms. Fowler stated elements in the Master Plan can be used to start building the CIP.
Mr. Minter questioned the increase in line item 543101, Utility Services Electric Water Sewer. MS Director Chad Wicker advised that those funds were originally in the recreation budget, but because it is an MSD building and it is paid for by both Marion County and Levy County those expenses were moved to the MSD to allow the recreation budget to balance.
Ms. Fowler advised that page 9 contains the zero budget for Cost Center 502, Road and Street RLE MSD, which was transferred to the MSTU several years ago.
Ms. Fowler advised that page 10 contains the RLE MSTU for Recreation and Facilities revenues, noting there is a 19.7% increase in the taxable property value. A large portion of the increase is due to new construction. She stated the proposed 0.8500 of a mill is the same as prior years. Ms. Fowler advised that the interest income in this fund is anticipated to increase because it has accumulated some fund balance. There is also

recognition of County property rents, donation contribution and other income that was being counted in the other fund and are now being correctly attributed to this fund for operations and maintenance.

Ms. Fowler advised that page 11 contains the expenditure summary for RLE Recreation in the amount of $435,272.00. Page 12 contains the operating budget. The increase in line item 512101, Regular Salaries and Wages, includes the 5% COLA/merit increases and a slight adjustment for increases to health insurance and workers compensation insurance. She stated there have been pretty substantial changes to the operating cost, noting expenditures that were not recreation and were related to buildings were moved to the other fund.

Mr. Wicker advised that adjustments were made to ensure core recreational services remain funded in this budget. Operational infrastructure and general maintenance expenses relating to buildings, which is paid for by both Levy County and Marion County were moved into the MSD. This allowed staff to balance the recreation budget while preparing for some other recreation activities.

Ms. Fowler stated in terms of accounting it is more appropriate for the maintenance and repairs to be in the same fund as the asset. She advised that there is some capital improvement funding collection that does represent new income because there was such a decrease in the operating expenses by the reclassification that the fund generated extra funds that can be utilized for programming. Ms. Fowler stated Reserve for Contingencies and Reserve for Cash Carry Forward are within the cap limits.

Ms. Fowler advised that page 14 contains the current positions, noting there are a total of 1.5 full time equivalent (FTE) in this budget. She commented on the cost associated with adding an additional FTE.

In response to Chairman Zalak, Dan Wilshusen, RLE Advisory Board, SE 126th Terrace, Dunnellon, advised that the financial costs to add personnel has not been discussed by the Advisory Board.

Chairman Zalak directed staff to go over the cost with the Advisory Board.

Ms. Fowler advised that recurring revenue could be utilized for an additional FTE and it would not negatively impact funding.

General discussion ensued.

Ms. Fowler advised that page 16 reflects Fund 1302, RLE MSTU for Road Improvements. She stated this is a special assessment fund (per parcel rate), noting there are some adjustments to parcel counts or parcel changes that go into effect here. The interest income is slightly different due to expected declines in both fund balance and rates for next year.

In response to Chairman Zalak, Ms. Fowler advised that as the MSTU spends funds on one time projects (road paving, etc.) it will reduce the funds available to calculate and compound interest.

Ms. Fowler advised that the projected revenues are $1,281,471.00, noting this does not regularly include Carry Forward for projects that are not finished in the current FY. Page 18 contains the line item budget. Line item 512101, Regular Salaries and Wages, includes the 5% COLA/merit increases and a slight adjustment for increases to health insurance and workers' compensation insurance. She stated the operating expenses are slightly less overall.

Ms. Fowler addressed line item 563220 - Improvements Road and Bridge, which contains $706,000 remaining of new money to be used in the current year. She stated a Kubota

RTV 900 has been included in line item 564101 - Machinery and Equipment in the amount of $19,602.00

In response to Chairman Zalak, Mr. Wicker stated the Advisory Board has created a 5 year list of roads they identified as needing redone. He advised that the road projects identified will be completed as funding becomes available.

Zach Jacobson, RLE Operations Manager, advised that this year just short of 4 miles of road was completed, noting as the roads are being resurfaced the lanes are also being widened. He stated they are averaging 3 to 5 miles each year.

General discussion ensued.

Ms. Fowler stated the staffing will remain the same at 4.33 FTEs.

Ms. Fowler advised that page 21 relates to RLE MSBU for Fire Protection and Community Resource Facilities. She stated there was a three year plan to phase this one out and it is currently year three; therefore, next FY there will be no funding. It will be completely gone and absorbed into Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR). Ms. Fowler advised that if there is anything remaining in this fund at the end of FY 2025-26 staff will work with Finance to address it with the supplemental budget in November.

Ms. Fowler advised that page 24 contains the taxable value charts, which show the taxable value over the last 5 years. She stated there was $24,900,000.00 in new construction for the current FY, noting there is an increase of $40,000,000.00 in taxable value.

In response to Chairman Zalak, Ms. Fowler advised that the $24,900,000.00 is new construction on the books as of January 1st, but does not include anything that is currently under construction now.

In response to Commissioner McClain, Mr. Wilshusen advised that there is new construction taking place in Levy County, but it is no where near what is taking place on the Marion County side of RLE. He stated Levy County approved their budget last week.

Ms. Fowler stated Levy County does provide their estimate of taxable value and certified value, but unlike Marion County's Property Appraiser, they do not break down and provide the new construction portion of the value.

Ms. Fowler addressed page 25, which shows the historical, projected and current fund balance. She commented on the changes within the budget once the Master Plan and CIP is incorporated. Ms. Fowler advised that the most important thing is that the expenditures do not exceed revenues, noting at this time the millage rate is sustainable.

Ms. Fowler stated page 26 contains estimated taxable values for RLE MSTU for Recreation Services and Facilities. The new construction is outpacing the continuing taxable value. She advised that homestead properties were limited to a 2.9% increase this year because the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was at 2.9%.

Ms. Fowler advised that page 27 shows a huge bump in 2024 relating to a one time transfer from the MSD for recreational activities that were then moved to this fund. She stated as the Advisory Board begins to implement the recreational programs there will be more recurring operating expenses.

Mr. Wicker expressed appreciation to the RLE Advisory Board for all their hard work. He introduced the Board members present today: Chairman G. Dallas Seveland; Vice Chairman Allan George McKay, Jr.; Levy County Representative Dan Wilshusen; and Katherine E. Bryant. Currently, there are 2 vacant positions.

In response to Chairman Zalak, Mr. Wicker stated outside of staffing concerns there are no other issues that he is aware of.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Chairman Zalak opened the floor to public comment.
Chairman G. Dallas Seveland, RLE Advisory Board, read a 3 page prepared statement into the record, which expressed appreciation to the BCC, County staff and the RLE Advisory Board, as well as provided the history of the RLE MSD. He commented on the recent staffing changes.
Chairman Zalak expressed appreciation to Mr. Wicker for all his hard work.
Vice Chairman Allan George McKay, Jr., RLE Advisory Board, thanked staff for their hard work. He advised that the Advisory Board minutes are supposed to be posted on the website, but it has not been done in over a year.
Chairman Zalak advised that staff will address this matter.
Mr. Wilshusen expressed appreciation to the Board for addressing operating issues over the past year.
Chairman Zalak advised that public comment is now closed.

BOARD DISCUSSION
In response to Chairman Zalak, Mr. Wicker advised that the Community Supervisor position has been filled and the new employee will begin work on June 30, 2025. He stated interviews are taking place Thursday June 26, 2025 for the recreation position and the part time recreation position is posted, but they do plan on closing it next week.

CLOSING COMMENTS: NONE

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

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Kathy Bryant, Chairman

Attest:

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Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk

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