

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

July 9, 2024

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners met in a workshop session in Commission Chambers at 9:05 a.m. on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at the Marion County Governmental Complex located in Ocala, Florida.

**INTRODUCTION OF WORKSHOP - CHAIRMAN MICHELLE STONE**

Chairman Stone advised that the workshop was scheduled this morning to discuss the fiscal year (FY) 2024-2025 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; Commissioner Craig Curry, District 1; Commissioner Matthew McClain, District 3; and Commissioner Carl Zalak, III, District 4. Vice-Chairman Kathy Bryant, District 2, arrived shortly after the meeting commenced. 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.

Commissioner Bryant arrived at 9:07 a.m.

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

Budget Director Audrey Fowler presented a 5 page handout entitled, “Marion County Board of County Commissioners Budget Adjustments Tentative Budget Fiscal Year 2024-25, Adjustments through July 8, 2024”. She referred to the handout and advised that the notable changes are in the General Fund Reserve for Contingencies, noting staff added \$75,532.00 into the budget for the Code Enforcement revisions and \$58,581.00 for the Planning and Zoning bulk rate revisions. Ms. Fowler referred to page 2 and stated for the Municipal Service Taxing Units (MSTU) for Law Enforcement, there is a reduction in the ad valorem of 0.0400 of a mill (reduction of \$1,023,000.00). There is also a reduction in the Reserve for Contingencies of \$955,190.00 due to the 5% holdback. This does not affect the Cash Carry Forward for this budget.

Ms. Fowler advised that at yesterday's meeting Commissioner Curry questioned how Marion County ranked in regard to its millage rate, noting Marion County ranks 58 out of 67 Counties.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Fowler advised that in regard to the Code Enforcement revisions, staff recognized \$200,000.00 in revenue from a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) that was not currently in the General Fund Revenues that paid for a position that was already funded; however, there were operating costs of \$124,000.00 that were not included in the proposed budget. This allowed for a net gain in the General Fund in the amount of \$75,532.00.

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**OPENING REMARKS – Jim Couillard, Parks and Recreation Director**

Parks and Recreation Director Jim Couillard appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 360, Parks and Recreation (page 153); Cost Center 361, Other Recreation Programs (page 157); Cost Center 363, Belleview Sportsplex (page 159); Cost Center 362, Parks and Recreation Fees (page 322); Cost Center 370, Southeastern Livestock Pavilion (page 162); Cost Center 715, Parks and Recreation Capital (page 194); and Cost Center 415, Marion County Airport (page 274). He noted with him today are Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Kelsey Mears; Operations Manager Charles Ryan; Recreation Manager Jessica Majoros; Airport Manager Mike Grawe; Parks Designer Joey Amodo; Southeastern Livestock Pavilion (SELP) Manager Christen Milligan; and Administrative Services Coordinator Laura Cooper. Mr. Couillard stated this month is Parks and Recreation Month and expressed his appreciation to everyone for their participation in the Department's ongoing events. He introduced Parks & Recreation Advisory Council member Joe Reichel who is in the audience today.

Mr. Couillard commented on the County's Vision Statement, "Marion County is a safe and well-planned community with a thriving economy with a high quality of life where family matters", noting during the last Board meeting staff explained how the County's Vision would specifically plug into the Department's unified Vision. This year, the Department's budget reflects some of its early, initial steps in achieving specific goals as follows: 1) staff finds that operations and parks are safe; 2) plan improvements and where to put new parks based on demographics, population growth and make improvements, so parks are part of each community; and 3) operations at the SELP and X35 (airport) all contribute to the County's economic success. A good portion of the economic impact is through sports tourism and events held at park facilities. Property next to public parks results in higher property values. The more proximate the property is to a public park, the higher the property value with directly adjacent properties seeing increases close to 20%. People want to be close to parks as it increases their well-being, their physical fitness, and the overall sense of belonging to a community. In order to truly know how successful the Park Departments are, staff must first identify its strengths and weaknesses, establish goals to work towards, and then establish metrics and measures in order to track progress. A few examples include: 1) the number of days that sports fields are available for local, regional and national tournaments; 2) the number of acres burned each year through prescribed fires; 3) employee turnover rate (currently less than 8% with 74 full time employees (FTEs); and 4) customer satisfaction rate and customer referral rates. Staff has worked across all three major operational groups (Parks & Recreation, SELP, and Airport) to develop both departmental and strategic measures to help the Department improve across the board.

Mr. Couillard commented on the recently installed new customer-forward self-service station for refueling at the Airport. He expressed his appreciation to Information Technology (IT), Fleet, and Facilities for helping make this a success. It will extend the airport's ability to offer 24-hour refueling with modern hardware/software interfaces. The Aergility unmanned program continues to advance as the company obtains approval from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for operating their aircraft. Staff cut the ribbon on the SELP recreational vehicle (RV) campground and to date, sites are filling up. The Announcer's Tower is also complete and ready for the next phase, which is an overhaul of the audio system, as well as renovation of the restrooms inside the sales arena. There is a Groundbreaking Ceremony up at Heagy-Burry on July 25<sup>th</sup> and another Ribbon Cutting at Ocala Park Estates on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Two of the Park Operations team members

obtained their Certified Playground Safety Inspectors status so that all playgrounds throughout the County can be inspected and stay safe. None of these projects would happen without the support of the internal services departments, including Facilities Management, Public Relations, Fleet, IT, Procurement Services, and Human Resources (HR). The Department can only do this with the continued support of the County Administration team and most importantly, support and advocacy from the County Commission. Mr. Couillard stated he is truly grateful to work with such a great team of people, noting he is blown away at the talent and balance the Department has, not only leading Parks & Recreation, but also leading the Livestock Pavilion and the Airport. He noted all of the members of the team are outstanding, and he would hold them up against any team in the state.

Mr. Couillard appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget for Cost Center 360, Parks and Recreation (page 153). This is the Department's main cost center in the General Fund. As staff assessed and identified current workloads, it was determined the following positions, listed in the Operational Plan, as specific needs. First, there is a request for the addition of a Park Operations Supervisor. Currently within Parks & Recreation (excluding SELP and X35) 74% of Department staff work under the Park Operations Manager's supervision. Along with the large percentage of staff under his supervision, the Manager is also responsible for the management of over 3,000 acres of public land, facilitating the use of seven sports complexes, and is responsible for the operation of KP Hole, the strongest revenue generator in the Department. The Operations Supervisor position will take on a good percentage of this workload and help the Manager spend more time with field staff and become more integrated into the park's community. The overall salary impact of the Park Operations Supervisor is \$56,930.00. The second position being requested is the reclassification of the Administrative Staff Assistant to Fiscal Manager. As you know, Parks & Recreation manages nine different budget funds with a budget of \$23,000,000.00. He advised that there is one team member who handles all of the Departments fiscal workload, including budget preparation, requisitions, processing of receipts and operational billing. This Reclassification is a part of our current Operational Plan approved by the Board in 2024 and has a budget impact of \$9,485.00. Mr. Couillard addressed the reoccurring costs for this Fund. He referred to line item 534101, Contract Serv and Other Misc., which includes an increase of \$39,996.00 to account for Ansafo services for after hour calls and mowing contract increases for Shocker Park after the Animal Service's contract expires on October 1. Line item 541101, Communication Services, reflects an increase of \$22,489.00 to align staff cell phone allocations, new landline services at KP Hole, and lightning detection system data for Shocker Park. Line item 548101, Promotional Activities, reflects an increase of \$25,993.00 to account for additional marketing and promotions of rental venues to help drive up revenue.

Mr. Couillard appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget for Cost Center 361, Other Recreation Programs (page 157), noting this is also known as (aka) Mounir's favorite budget fund. He noted there is an overall reduction of 4.7% in Personnel and Operating Costs. This is funded through the Federal Secure Rural Schools Act and there are no significant changes in this budget.

Mr. Couillard appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget for Cost Center 363, Belleview Sportsplex (page 159). This fund is dedicated to the personnel, operating, and minor capital improvements for the Belleview Sportsplex. He noted there are no significant changes in this fund. The accrual of the annual payments

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from the City of Belleview will be used to help address deteriorating tennis courts, re-build the basketball courts, and potentially help with the cost of constructing four (4) new pickleball courts.

Commissioner Zalak questioned where the County is at in regard to the Master Plan for the Belleview Sportsplex, noting the Belleview City Council has reached out to him about this matter. Mr. Couillard stated there is funding in the budget for the Master Plan process in order to hire consultants to help with design and public meetings.

In response to Commissioner McClain, Mr. Couillard stated the original Parks Department 10-Year Master Plan was put together and adopted by the BCC in 2018, noting the development of the Master Plan for the Belleview Sportsplex was scheduled for the later years of that 10-Year Master Plan.

Commissioner Zalak opined that staff needs to do a better job when communicating with other municipalities, noting the City of Belleview was under the impression the Belleview Sportsplex Master Plan and projects are already funded. He stated the BCC may need to hold a joint workshop with the City of Belleview to address this matter. Chairman Stone concurred.

General discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Couillard advised that the Belleview Sportsplex is the most populated Park in Marion County in regard to leagues (baseball, football, soccer, and softball). It also has community amenities such as tennis courts, basketball courts and a couple of small playgrounds.

General discussion resumed.

Commissioner Bryant advised that she would like staff to review and determine if there is a possibility of funding from the Tourist Tax.

General discussion resumed.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Couillard advised that approximately 3.5 million people visit Marion County parks annually, noting that number is based only on the parks that are tracked. Commissioner Bryant opined that the County needs to develop a plan in order to fund these projects that will only improve the quality of life in Marion County.

Chairman Stone directed staff to schedule a workshop for the Board to discuss this matter and then schedule a joint workshop with the City of Belleview to address the Belleview Sportsplex prior to the BCC's Strategic Planning workshop.

General discussion resumed.

Mr. Couillard appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget for Cost Center 362, Parks and Recreation Fees (page 322), noting the Department is on pace to meet or exceed revenue projections in the Fund. He advised of an increase of \$150,000.00 in line item 531109, Professional Services, for an update to our Parks & Recreation Master Plan. There is an increase of \$5,012.00 for the Rainbow River Law Enforcement Details, which was included in the original budget proposals, yet with the recent requests to add Details on the river before the Labor Day holiday, the total increase of \$8,580.00 is just for the River Patrol. Line item 564101, Machinery & Equipment, budget has been reduced by \$7,621.00 as compared to the FY24 budget. The list for new machinery includes replacement vehicles (will receive from the Building Safety Department); additional vehicle for Operations Supervisor (from Building Safety Department); two replacement trucks (new); replacing one full size SUV with a new 15-passenger van; new Field Groomer; replacement 72" mower and replacement equipment trailer.

Mr. Couillard appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget for Cost Center 370, Southeastern Livestock Pavilion (page 162). He stated the RV Campground is open for business, and staff is expecting campers to start rolling in soon, noting that July is the slowest season at the SELP; however, there is a Rodeo and a major Barrel Race coming in August and September 2024.

Commissioner Bryant advised that the County redid its fee schedule for the SELP and questioned if staff notified those who have previously been "grandfathered in" at a specific rate for a very long time that they would no longer be "grandfathered in". Mr. Couillard stated there is one request from the Ocala Shrine Rodeo, noting he is working on this matter.

General discussion ensued.

Mr. Couillard stated the new Announcers/Scorekeeper Tower is completed, and expressed his appreciation to partner Departments for making these projects a success. Overall, the SELP budget is 2.3% above the FY 24 budget. Increases include personnel costs and an upgrade to the LED sign along CR 200A.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Couillard advised that the maximum capacity of the SELP auditorium is 300 (seated).

Mr. Couillard appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget for Cost Center 718, Southeastern Livestock Pavilion Capital (page 195). He advised that there are two main projects in this fund this year: 1) design for the Gate 2 Entry Enhancements; Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (FDACS) grant will fund the construction and 2) Dave Baillie, Jr. Arena Grandstands; safety items and repairs.

Mr. Couillard appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget for Cost Center 415, Marion County Airport (page 274). He advised of a substantial increase to the FY 24/25 budget at the Airport due to the projected total value of the Parallel Taxiway Project. Staff received hard bids on this project and the project cost is actually \$10,100,000.00. The FAA will be providing 90% funding while the FDOT will provide an additional 8% for the project. Marion County's match will be 2%, which will be just about \$200,000.00. Mr. Couillard stated there are 2 specific budget changes staff would like to make to help attain the match of \$200,000.00: 1) move one of its FY 2025 CIP projects out to FY 2026 (runway rehabilitation project) at a cost of \$275,000.00 (MAC2023201), and 2) remove \$44,952.00 from Cost Center 415 (vehicle replacement).

He advised that the Parallel Taxiway Project is a game-changer for the Airport, noting when complete, this will provide another 4,000 linear feet of prime frontage along the taxiway and open up another 450 acres of infield development space. This project will make the Airport a truly valuable space for investment and growth.

ACA Angel Roussel clarified that the project will be awarded this FY. Mr. Couillard concurred, noting there may be some minor budget amendments. He noted funding for the project is in the current budget to meet the 2% match (\$200,000.00). Mr. Couillard stated staff is expecting the project to begin construction by the beginning of FY 2025.

Ms. Fowler advised that she spoke with staff about this project, noting by moving the runway rehabilitation project out to FY 2026 and removing the request for the vehicle replacement, it will free-up some funding. She stated the County funding match was being funded with Carry Forward funds this FY.

Commissioner Curry questioned the timeline for repairing Ray Wayside Park. Mr. Couillard advised that it is an unfunded project. Commissioner Curry opined that the docks and launching areas are dangerous. He expressed concern with falling behind on

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maintaining the assets the County already has, much less moving forward with new projects.

Commissioner Curry questioned whether there was adequate money in the budget to maintain Veterans Park being opened for the Honor Guard and other Veterans to utilize. He advised that the Honor Guard would like to perform more funeral services and other ceremonial activities on the weekends, noting the Veteran Services Department does not have the staff or budget to provide those extra services. Mr. Couillard advised that there is a separate maintenance contractor for Veterans Park, noting one of the issues would be providing enough notice to allow time for staff to set up tables, chairs and the PA system. He stated there has been previous discussion about possibly giving the Honor Guard a key to the equipment trailer in order to allow them the ability to set up table and chairs; however, the PA system is an expensive and vulnerable piece of equipment.

General discussion ensued.

Mr. Couillard requested the BCC allow him to work with the IT and Facilities Departments to see what can be done about purchasing a portable PA system.

ACA Amanda Tart advised that the County already has a Facilities Use Agreement that is utilized for all activities on the McPherson Campus, which includes the Veteran's Park. She stated Mr. Couillard and Veterans Services Director Jeffrey Askew have been working on the usage of Veterans Park by veteran groups. Ms. Tart stated the Facilities Use Agreement form is available on the County's website. She noted a lot of the events at this park do not require staff to be in attendance.

Commissioner Bryant opined that in regard to the Honor Guard, the County may want to get together to participate in a fund raiser to help that organization purchase its own portable PA system.

General discussion ensued.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Couillard advised that in regard to Ray Wayside Park, staff has not formally deemed the boat ramp as unsafe and not to be utilized by the public. He stated there are some handicapped accessibility issues that need to be addressed. Mr. Couillard advised that there is some Florida Boating Improvement Program (FBIP) funding; however, those funds are spread across the State and are declining annually.

Commissioner Bryant suggested utilizing Tourist Development Council (TDC) funding for those repairs.

General discussion resumed.

In response to Chairman Stone, Commissioner Zalak advised that the loading dock at Ray Wayside Park is usable and not dangerous, noting it does not have floating docks like other parks, but is still being utilized. He agreed that it is not the most handicap accessible dock.

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

**NEW BUSINESS:** Ms. Fowler advised that she just received an electronic mail (email) from Guardian Ad Litem, noting their representative is unable to appear to present its budget tomorrow. She stated there is a substantial increase to that budget due to 13 new positions being added.

Commissioner Bryant requested something in writing informing the Board the need for this additional increase.

Mr. Bouyounes clarified that the State approved the request for the additional positions.

Ms. Fowler stated the increase in their budget relates to the need for computers, etc. for those positions. She noted most of the additional funding is one-time monies; however, there will be recurring costs for Communication Services.

Commissioner Curry out at 10:05 a.m.

Ms. Fowler advised that she would reach out to the Guardian Ad Litem and request they provide written information that she would present to the Board on behalf of their organization. It was the general consensus of the Board to concur.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Bouyounes advised that the 13 new positions are for Marion County only.

Ms. Fowler reiterated that some of the equipment being requested is for cell phones and laptops, which provide their staff the ability to work in both locations (work and home).

### **OPENING REMARKS – Lynn Nobles, Cooperative Extension Director**

Cooperative Extension Director Lynn Nobles, appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 372, Cooperative Extension Services (Page 165). Also present was Budget Administrative Coordinator Sarah Teeling.

Mr. Bouyounes noted Ms. Nobles will be retiring on November 30, 2024.

Commissioner Curry returned at 10:09 a.m.

Ms. Nobles advised that the Florida Cooperative Extension Service's mission is to partner with communities to provide quality, relevant education, and research-based expertise to foster healthy people, a healthy environment, and a healthy economy. The Department is the resource that helps educate residents to address issues related to agriculture, horticulture, natural resources, youth development, families, and communities. It is estimated that for every dollar invested in agriculture research and extension, there is a return of twenty dollars to the community. She expressed her appreciation for the Extension Department's remarkable partnership with the Marion County BCC and the University of Florida (UF), making research-based knowledge accessible to the community allows the Department to sustain and enhance the quality of human life. It fits perfectly with the County's strategic plan goal of "Empowering Marion for Success."

Ms. Nobles advised that in the first section of the budget, personnel are the most significant increase to the budget (line item 512101, Regular Salaries and Wages). The increase is due to the advancement of two agents to the Agent II rank. Additionally, the Department hired a Water Agent with more experience and, because of experience and education, started at the rank of Agent II. She provided a brief overview of the quality of agents within the Department, along with the recognition agents have received this past year. She recognized Ms. Rebecca Elliott who received 3 National recognitions through her professional organization.

Ms. Nobles advised that the Extension Department is continuing to improve its working environment, where team members collaborate and increase productivity. Staff have implemented strategies to advance customer service and bring awareness to available resources to improve residents' quality of life. According to the Five-Year Customer Service Survey conducted by UF on Marion County-specific clientele, ninety-seven percent (97%) of the residents who used the Extension Services were satisfied with the service provided in 2021 (survey performed every 5 years). She provided an overview of the number of client contacts, programs presented, educational materials developed, and volunteers utilized to serve Marion County residents. Ms. Nobles commented on the number of education programs offered by the Department, noting in FY 2021 there were 241, in FY 2022 there were 243, and in FY 2023 there were 1,009 provided to Marion

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County residents. She stated in FY 2021 there were 641 active 4-H Club members, in FY 2022 there were 838, and in FY 2023 there were 912.

Ms. Nobles advised that UF/Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (UF/IFAS) Extension has seven high-priority initiatives on which Marion County actively concentrates. The initiatives are: 1) increase sustainability, profitability, and competitiveness of agricultural and horticultural enterprises; 2) enhancing and protecting water quality, quantity, and supply; 3) enhancing and conserving Florida's natural resources and environmental quality; 4) creating sustainable urban and suburban communities; 5) empowering individuals and families to build healthy lives and achieve social and economic success; 6) strengthening urban and rural community resources and economic development; and 8) preparing youth to be responsible citizens and productive members of the workforce. With these goals in mind, once the personnel are secured, the operating expenses on page 165 are needed to help accomplish the Department's goals. There is an increase in the operational expenses request of just under \$1,000.00. The primary changes in the operating expense account occurred in line item 546101, Repairs and Maint Bldgs and Grounds, while expense requests are lower, staff is still working to replace perimeter fencing at the steer barn area. There is an increase in line item 548101, Promotional Activities, as the Department has increased the visibility of the Extension Office in the community and participated in the Day at the Capital for Marion County. Additionally, there is an increase of approximately \$2,000.00 in line item 551101, Office Supplies due to the increase in programs offered. Line item 552101, Gasoline Oil and Lubrication, has an increase due to the rise in usage for field consultations and programs in the community to meet the needs of the residents, and line item 552116, Operating Supplies Computer Hardware, is to replace outdated phones. An additional request in capital expense line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment, is to replace an unreliable truck with a newer model truck with high mileage from another Department. The final line item of the Extension budget is 582101, Aid to Private Organizations, funds used to support the Southeastern Youth Fair (SEYF) and the 4-H program/facilities. She noted approximately \$1,673,245.00 was spent by the community at the SEYF (purchasing livestock, hogs, goats, etc.). Ms. Nobles advised that the 4-H program brought home State champions in forestry, poultry, horticulture, shooting sports, meats, and livestock, competing in national-level competitions in the fall of 2024. Additionally, the community supported the 4-H program by helping the students travel to compete in National events and scholarships. The 4-H program continues to improve the utilization of the facilities for programs. Volunteers and agents have worked to enhance hog and steer facility fencing, maintain the Edible Garden Demonstration Plot, and are currently working on a lamb/goat barn for members to house their projects. Furthermore, the valuable resources the agents gain to support program development and delivery are worth mentioning. She commented on the value of the volunteers' hours, grants, research funding, and contributions provided by community businesses, organizations, and individuals trusting in the information provided by the Extension Department. According to the most recent data, Marion County, agricultural and related industries, generate 37,501 jobs, (24.5 % of the workforce). Agriculture and related industries contribute \$2,600,000,000.00 in gross regional product. Staff appreciates being part of the Marion County government and the opportunity to partner with the other Departments in cooperative activities such as Community Service as part of the first-time home buyers' program, Legislative Manager and Day at the Capital, HR, and nutrition education for County employees, Public Relations videos, educational presentations, marketing, and pictures. Extension



Department work falls into two areas: 1) response to customers' needs and 2) proactive efforts to prevent or lessen problems to promote a quality future.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Bouyounes noted the vehicle being requested will come from the Building Department.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Ms. Nobles stated there is a 10% fee currently in place on the revenue generated for the Master Gardner's events. She advised that ACA Roussel met with the one of UF's financial staff to address the fee and to take into consideration the County's contributions relating to facilities, infrastructure, etc. Ms. Nobles stated she was contacted by the University to take part in an audit to determine how much funds/in kind services the program (UF/IFAS) is supported by County IT, Facilities Department, etc.

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

**OPENING REMARKS – Jody Kirkman, Utilities Department Director**

Utilities Department Director Jody Kirkman appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budgets for Cost Center 440, Utilities Management (page 645); Cost Center 442, Utilities Water System (page 650); Cost Center 445, Utilities Wastewater System (page 655); and Cost Center 448, Utilities Capital Construction (page 659). Also present were Utilities Deputy Director Joshua Kramer and Utilities Fiscal Manager John Corneilson.

Commissioner McClain out at 10:23 a.m.

Mr. Kirkman advised that a final copy of the Revenue Sufficiency Analysis (RSA) has been provided to the Board for consideration. The RSA concludes that no rate increase is required for FY 2024-2025. Fund 4520 for Utilities begins on page 644 of the Proposed Budget report. Not including reserves (\$28,897,154.00), debt services (\$7,500,666.00), and Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) (\$25,317,750.00); the net operating budget has decreased by \$1,185,223.00. However, due to the recent emergency purchases of vehicles, the total decrease will be higher. As the budget is presented, there will be requests for additional personnel to support the growth of the Utilities operations. The overall results of these additions (with fringe benefit changes) are a requested increase of \$632,193.00. There are operating increases for insurance premiums, Tyler expenses, sodium hypochlorite, brass, and repairs to buildings and grounds and equipment. There is a significant reduction in one account. Total change in budget request for this category is a decrease of \$611,767.00. The Capital equipment request is less than the FY 2023-2024 request, as there are less vehicles aging out, which has reduced the amount required to be replaced. Total change in this category is a budget request decrease of \$1,205,649.00. This category will decrease by an additional \$347,326.00. In the CIP budget, there is one change to the information that was presented at the April 9, 2024 workshop. Because there were available funds from projects that were not needed, the Department completed the Ocala Tractor oversize watermain project in FY 2023/2024, and will not need those funds in the FY 2025 budget.

Commissioner McClain returned at 10:25 a.m.

Mr. Kirkman provided a brief overview of some of the Department's accomplishments during the previous 12 months including: 1) received \$3,760,000.00 grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to connect Irish Acres water mains to the Silver Springs Regional Water Plant (SSRWP). The project design is approaching 90% complete and should bid for construction later this summer; 2) received \$1,000,000.00 grant from FDEP to develop the test well facility at the Utopia site for the

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Lower Floridan alternative water supply project. Test well is under construction with a completion date in the Fall of 2024, the Department received a Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) grant for \$10,000,000.00 to support the construction of that facility; 3) received an additional \$6,000,000.00 grant from FDEP for Silver Springs Shores (SSS) Septic to Sewer construction; 4) \$3,500,000.00 FDEP grant for potable water lines to the Lowell area, including the State Fire College received in the Florida budget for FY 2025 (staff is preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for this project); 5) formalized the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to most effectively convert multiple subdivisions from septic to sewer, and extend water lines; 6) developed the guaranteed maximum prices (GMP) for construction associated with the ARPA Phase I and II for Septic to Sewer in the Shores with construction scheduled to begin in late summer 2024; 7) received ARPA funding for The Centers/SW 60<sup>th</sup> Project, which is under construction with completion scheduled for the last quarter of 2024 (ARPA funding project for Marion Oaks water mains is under construction); 8) installed water lines in Unit 16 in SSS Septic to Sewer; and 9) completed multiple projects to include new water mains, force mains, lift stations and improvements to the utilities system.

Mr. Kirkman appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-2025 budget for Cost Center 440, Utilities Management (page 645). He advised that there is a net decrease of \$723,849.00 or (8%) not including reserves, interfund transfers, and debt services. Mr. Kirkman stated notable changes by category include Personnel expenses (line items 512101 through 526101). In the budget presented, there is a request for one new Utilities Development Review Supervisor, and a request to move into this Fund the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Technician position, which was previously allocated to Cost Center 442. He noted the total of these additional positions, plus the budgeted general wage and benefit changes is an increase of \$398,685.00 or (9.38%). Mr. Kirkman addressed Operating Expenses (line items 531109 through 555501), noting there is an increase in operating expenses to include line item 545101, Insurance Premiums, and line item 552106, Computer Software, for the Tyler Munis program. He advised that there is a decrease in line item 531109, Professional Services, noting with the assistance of the Budget Department, those services specifically for Water Operations have been moved to Cost Center 442, and those specifically for Wastewater Operations have been moved to Cost Center 445. There is a significant reduction in line item 549990, Other Current Charges Misc Expenses, as two developers with reimbursement agreements have completed a large portion of the requirements for the agreed upon reimbursement. Total change in this category is a decrease of \$1,150,100.00 or (27.71%). He commented on Capital Expenses (line items 563101 through 564101), noting there is an increase in this category of \$27,566.00 or (22.15%) for vehicle replacement.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Kirkman advised that in regard to the SSS Septic to Sewer project there will only be enough ARPA funding to complete 2 of the 4 phases in that area; however, there is funding to complete the design for Phases 3 and 4. He stated the Department continues to seek grant opportunities for septic to sewer projects. In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Kirkman noted the Department requires video tapes for both pre and post construction to ensure that anything torn up during the project is fixed and put back where it belongs. There is a one year warranty period after construction completion.

Mr. Kirkman appeared to present Cost Center 442, Utilities Water Maintenance Operations (page 650). He advised that there is a net increase of \$795,254.00 or (9.06%). Notable changes by category include Personnel expenses (line items 512101 through

526101). The presented budget includes the move of the GIS Technician to Cost Center 440, and the requested addition of one additional Field Technician. Total of these changes and the budgeted wage increase, and fringe benefit changes is a net increase of \$21,087.00 or (0.54%). Mr. Kirkman commented on Operating Expenses (line items 531109 through 555501), noting a new line item 531109, Professional Services, had previously been charged to Cost Center 440. There is an increase in line item 546101, Repairs/Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds, to replace five air conditioning units and to replace roofs on two operations buildings. There is an increase to line item 546105, Repairs/Maintenance, for mains and lines to accommodate for increased costs of Permits, and in line item 552108, Operating Supplies, for increased costs of sodium hypochlorite, Aqua Mag, and brass. Overall increase for this category is \$424,390.00 or (10.48%). He addressed the increase to Capital (line items 563101 through 564101), noting the budget presented shows an increase in this category of \$349,777.00 or (41.84%), for the purchase of two 45 kilowatt portable generators, as well as the normal vehicle replacement schedule. The Department is requesting to reduce this category by \$69,050.00, as staff had to replace unit ST-10 due to the recent fire through an emergency purchase this FY.

Mr. Kirkman appeared to present Cost Center 445, Wastewater Maintenance Operations (page 655) There is a net overall decrease of \$1,256,628.00 or (16.07%). He advised that notable changes in this category include Personnel Expenses (line items 512101 through 526101), noting the increase to this budget includes the addition of two new Lift Station Technicians, and one new Field Technician. These changes, plus the budgeted general wage increase and other fringe benefit changes results in a total increase of \$212,421.00 or (7.49%). Mr. Kirkman addressed Operating Expenses (line items 531109 through 555501), noting the increases in this category are for line item 546301, Repairs and Maint Equipment, to replace aging diffuser nozzles, upgrades at the Stonecrest Wastewater Plant, as well as an increase to line item 552108, Operating Supplies, due to increases in the cost of sodium hypochlorite. There is also the new account, line item 531109, Professional Services, for expenses which in prior years were expensed in Cost Center 440. These increases are offset somewhat by a decrease in line item 534101, Contract Serv Other Misc, as less sludge will need to be removed due to the new Centrisys unit, and line item 544101, Rentals and Leases Equipment, as there will not be the need to rent a Centrisys unit again in FY 2024-2025. The overall total increase in this category is \$113,943.00 or (2.60%). He addressed the Capital (line items 563101 through 564101), noting there is a decrease of \$1,582,992.00 or (264.64%) mainly due to the purchase of a new VAC truck purchased in FY 2023-2024 and less vehicles aging out. Staff is requesting to decrease this category by an additional \$278,276.00, as the Department recently had to replace units UP-53 and UST-1 due to the recent fire through an emergency purchase this FY.

Mr. Kirkman appeared to present Cost Center 448, Utilities Capital Construction (page 659). He advised that the Utilities Capital Improvements proposed budget total \$25,317,750.00; however, staff is requesting to move \$500,000.00 budgeted for Ocala Tractor construction back into Reserves for Future Capital Outlay and to identify that the project was completed in FY 2023/2024. The CIP includes: water mains and fire hydrants in the amount of \$1,200,000.00; water line crew construction and contracts in the amount of \$800,000.00; utility relocations in the amount of \$200,000.00; Automated Meter Reading (AMR) and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) improvements in the amount of \$1,150,000.00; Water Treatment Plant improvements in the amount of

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\$4,300,000.00.; Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements in the amount of \$9,300,000.00; lift stations and sewer mains in the amount of \$1,485,000.00; east and west side maintenance building construction in the amount of \$2,382,750.00; NW 80<sup>th</sup> water and sewer mains in the amount of \$2,000,000.00; and the NW 49<sup>th</sup> to CR 225A water and sewer mains in the amount of \$2,000,000.00.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Kirkman addressed the water line crew construction and contracts, noting the original plan is to complete 10 miles of pipes annually. He stated this is the first year of implementation so it will take time to determine the maximum number of miles of pipes that can be laid annually.

Commissioner Bryant out at 10:39 a.m.

General discussion ensued.

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

(Ed. Note: The Deputy Clerk did not receive a copy of the Revenue Sufficiency Analysis.)

### **OPENING REMARKS – Mark Johnson, Solid Waste Director**

Solid Waste Director Mark Johnson appeared to review the Department's proposed budgets for FY 2024-25 for Cost Center 423, Solid Waste Disposal (page 631); Cost Center 425, Solid Waste Collection (page 635); Cost Center 427, Solid Waste Recycling (page 640). Also present was Solid Waste Fiscal Manager Kassi Pederson.

Commissioner Bryant returned at 10:41 a.m.

Mr. Johnson advised that the Department's Mission is to ensure the delivery of an integrated, cost-effective, and environmentally sound Solid Waste Management System, and to promote sustainable community programs and policies throughout Marion County. Solid Waste Fiscal Manager Kassi Pederson addressed Cost Center 423, Solid Waste Disposal (page 631), noting the Department is requesting 1 new full-time exempt position of Business Technologist with a salary of \$53,207.00. This position will improve customer service, optimize productivity and enhance performance tracking, improve technology implementation to reduce costs, and provide strategic planning assistance for future operations. She addressed operating costs associated with this Cost Center, noting there is an increase of \$247,000.00 to line item 531109, Professional Services, due to additional task orders for the Baseline Master Site Plan, as well as 2 new water quality monitoring wells at the Newton Landfill. Ms. Pederson referred to line item 534101, Contract Serv Other Misc, noting there is an increase of \$1,181,121.00 due to the increase of \$43,200.00 for the hazardous waste disposal contract, as well as the increase of \$604,500.00 for leachate management. She stated the current contract for this service is \$0.175 per gallon; however, the current market rate is now \$0.30 per gallon. Ms. Pederson advised that since submitting the Department's budget staff was able to renew this contract at the current contracted rate for one additional year, noting staff is now requesting a reduction of \$500,000.00 for this line item. Other significant impacts to the budget include an increase for yard waste services in the amount of \$332,482.00; an increase to line item 534140, Contract Serv Out of County Disposal, in the amount of \$348,220.00 (hauling services to the Heart of Florida Landfill); an increase to line item 543102, Utility Services Waste Disposal, in the amount of \$204,048.00; and an increase to line item 549910, Long Term Landfill Closure Cost, in the amount of \$2,492,126.00. Historically this has been an end of year adjustment by budget and finance; however, moving forward staff would like to include this proactively in the budget to help normalize costs at the front-end.

Ms. Pederson referred to page 632 and addressed the Capital costs associated with this Cost Center. She stated line item 564101, Machinery & Equipment includes the purchase of a brush cutter at a cost of \$15,000.00; purchase of an enclosed trailer at a cost of \$25,000.00; purchase of an excavator at a cost of \$400,000.00; and the purchase of additional IT support equipment at a cost of \$31,720.00.

Commissioner Bryant commented on previous discussions relating to utilizing gate tickets (technology) versus hand written tickets and questioned the status of that option. Mr. Johnson advised that staff is working on that item as part of the Solid Waste Master Plan, noting updated software would be needed in order to bring that item to fruition. He stated staff is budgeting for \$100,000.00 this FY and another \$100,000.00 the next FY to be able to fund that project.

General discussion ensued.

Mr. Johnson commented on the capital construction that goes with adding additional scale technology, which he opined could be done within the next year, and then the Department could phase in the dispatch routing technology.

General discussion resumed.

Mr. Johnson addressed new Capital projects in this Cost Center, which includes the Newton Groundwater Mitigation project. He stated the engineering firm that monitors and tests the groundwater recommended 2 additional monitoring wells be added to better delineate groundwater activities in the area. Mr. Johnson noted the engineering firm recommended the possibility of extending potable water. The second Capital project is a waste management software solution to improve the Department's operations. A comprehensive software will track productivity, asset management, customer service, scale house operations/billing, and database of active/assessment paying customers.

General discussion ensued.

Ms. Pederson addressed Cost Center 425, Solid Waste Collection (page 635). She referred to line item 512101, Regular Salaries and Wages, noting there is a request for 2 new part-time Litter Crew Leaders with salaries of \$23,380.00 each. This will help reduce the demand for weekend on-call positions, resolve staffing availability challenges, allow for consistency in the Department, and improve service.

Commissioner Zalak out at 10:58 a.m.

Ms. Pederson stated staff is also requesting reclassifications for 2 Solid Waste Collection Truck Drivers positions to Solid Waste Semi-Truck Driver positions (salary impact \$6,156.00 each). This is needed due to additional semi-tractor trailer assets the Department already has to haul larger boxes and provide additional coverage options. The positions are currently vacant and will be filled upon receipt of semi-tractor trailer trucks. The trucks will be utilized for additional direct hauls to the HOF. This request will reduce costs by eliminating the Department's double handling of waste and keeping low weight items out of the Transfer Station. Staff is requesting 2 lateral reclassifications from Litter Specialist to Litter Crew Leaders with no salary impact.

Commissioner Zalak returned at 11:00 a.m.

Ms. Pederson addressed operating increases relating to this Cost Center. She referred to line item 534101, Contract Serv Other Misc, noting there is an anticipated increase of \$43,650.00 for the contract for litter pickup ahead of mowing. Line item 552101, Gasoline Oil and Lubricants, reflects an increase of \$39,330.00 to cover costs of more direct hauls to HOF and the extra weight due to larger containers. She referred to line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment (page 639), noting staff is requesting 1 new grapple truck (\$380,000.00); 2 roll-off trucks (\$542,000.00); 1 new van to transport community service

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workers for litter activities (\$70,000.00) and 1 new semi-tractor trailer needed to haul larger boxes (\$300,000.00).

Ms. Pederson addressed Cost Center 427, Solid Waste Recycling (page 640). She advised of an increase to line item 534101, Contract Serv Other Misc, in the amount of \$182,006.00. Ms. Pederson referred to line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment, noting staff is requesting to replace 10% of stationary compactors annually at a cost of \$160,000.00 (this would equate to 8 compactors), as well as replace 10% of roll-off boxes each year in the amount of \$470,000.00 (this would equate to 21 containers).

Commissioner Zalak expressed his appreciation to Mr. Johnson and Ms. Pederson for their leadership, noting he is excited about the upcoming Master Plan.

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

### **OPENING REMARKS – Loretta Shaffer, Tourist Development Director**

Tourist Development Executive Director Loretta Shaffer appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 155, Visitors and Convention Bureau (page 316). Also present was Tourist Development Manager Sky Wheeler.

Tourist Development Executive Director Loretta Shaffer advised that the FY 2024/2025 budget was recommended for approval by the Tourist Development Council (TDC) at their regular meeting on April 25, 2024.

Ms. Shaffer stated the Tourist Development team continues to work to maintain an efficient and effective budget that expands on the successes of prior years and furthers the growth of Marion County's tourism economy, all while ensuring goals set forth in the Long-Range Tourism Plan and Department Operational Plan are met. With this in mind, staff were very strategic with the planning and budgeting for FY 2025 and have managed to have minimal increases in the proposed budget. As part of the Operational Plan execution and the implementation of the Long-Range Tourism Plan, staff evaluated the next steps necessary to propel Marion County's tourism industry forward and are proposing to add an Industry Community Relations Specialist to facilitate new initiatives such as community presentation development, travel trade communication, development and implementation of stakeholder messaging and engagement, new product development within niche audiences, tourism advocacy and much more. Staff is also proposing to add a Multimedia Digital Coordinator to develop and manage content for ocalamarion.com, the Ocala/Marion Travel Guide App, social media and segmented campaigns, as well as the Marion Insider's Guide, among other projects. These positions will provide the additional staff needed for the execution of marketing and communications initiatives to increase awareness and drive more overnight visitation to Ocala/Marion County. New lodging partners, sports and events facilities, attractions and experiences continue to expand the ability to market to potential visitors and capture leisure and group tourism. These new positions will be instrumental in creating deeper industry relationships to further capitalize on those efforts and meet the increased demand for services. Additionally, staff is proposing pay adjustments for the Department's Tourism Development Manager, Group Sales Supervisor, and Marketing and Communications Supervisor positions. The workload and responsibilities of these three positions have grown incrementally each year since the County-wide Compensation Study was conducted.

Ms. Shaffer advised that line item 531109, Professional Services, is a new line item for the budget that came into use mid fiscal year 2024, noting the Finance Department

determined that certain projects needed to be moved to that account in order to more appropriately reflect accounting standards. Notably, media planning and placement will now be paid from this line item. She referred to line item 543101, Contract Serv Other Misc, which reflects costs associated with utility services, electric, water and sewer, as well as the additional costs needed to connect and maintain power at the South Gateway feature. This line item also has funds for the electric accounts associated with each County Line Marker. Line item 547101, Printing & Binding, increased to address the cost associated with print runs of the Vacation Guide, which is typically a bi-annual expense. She stated line item 548101, Promotional Activities, shows a decrease, but one thing to note is that some projects were moved to other object lines in the budget under Finance's guidance. Additionally, funds are re-appropriated annually during the summer to move unexpended funds for unfinished projects to the following fiscal year. Typically, this will be related to items that have been committed, but will not be expended prior to October 1, 2024.

Ms. Shaffer advised that for the Capital portion of the budget, line item 536102, Improvements CIP, has additional funds in the amount of \$23,880.00 for the Gateway Signage 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Flyover Project. This increase in appropriation is not reflective of an increase in the already approved contract. Additionally, \$1,594,137.00 is being allocated to the Gateway Signage NW 49<sup>th</sup> Street project. This is different than what was originally published in the budget book. Due to the acceleration of the project schedule, a Budget Amendment Resolution (BAR) was presented and approved on June 18, 2024, for \$2,155,863.00 to ensure FDOT could bid the project for the interchange associated with the gateway. As the project evolves, costs will continue to be brought forward for approval prior to expenditure of funds.

Ms. Shaffer addressed the Non-Operating portion of the budget, noting line item 599417, Reserve for Tourism Initiatives, will be budgeted at \$563,844.00. This is where future projects are funded, such as the Tourist Development portion of the turf conversion project that will further enhance tourism opportunities at Rotary Sportsplex. She advised that although this presentation overview represents those line items with the larger changes in the FY 2024-2025 Tourist Development budget, staff is more than happy to address any additional input, feedback, or questions the Board may have. Ms. Shaffer expressed appreciation to the Board for its unwavering continued support, noting staff is looking forward to all the amazing things still to come for Marion County.

Chairman Stone questioned whether the Department had office space for the new positions being requested. Ms. Shaffer stated the Department is working on shoring up storage space to make room for the new positions.

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

Commissioner Curry out at 11:12 a.m.

#### **OPENING REMARKS – Mark Williams, Fleet Management Director**

Fleet Management Director Mark Williams appeared to review the proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 178, Fleet Management (page 66). Also present were Fleet Manager Clint Foley and Administrative Manager Karen Holgate.

Mr. Williams advised that the Fleet Department continues to support all other County Departments with their maintenance, new vehicle, and equipment purchase requirements. New vehicle availability has slightly improved over the last few years, some

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manufacturers are still limiting allocations on some make and models, and lead times are still longer than before Covid-19, but improving.

Commissioner Curry returned at 11:14 a.m.

Mr. Williams stated government contract pricing is not as lucrative as in the past; however, some manufacturers are predicting greater availability and price stabilization next year. In FY 2024 the Department ordered approximately 90 vehicles and pieces of equipment and at this time approximately 70 have been received, others with extended lead times are expected over the next few months. The spare parts market is starting to show signs of recovery; however, lead times are still long on some items and suppliers have seen price increases which are passed along to us, this seems to be across the board not just isolated to our industry. Fuel recently has been more stable in pricing, but still has a significant impact on the budget. With the information available from the Energy Information Administration, staff make the most informed decision on fuel pricing that it can, this allows Departments to budget for their fuel costs. Next year's fuel costs indicate a slight decline, which is reflected in the budget. In FY 2023 the Department dispensed over 1,250,000 gallons of fuel. This year, with the Boards approval, the Department will help reassign four Building Department Vehicles, one to Parks, one to Extension Services, and two to Municipal Service Taxing Units (MSTU), allowing the County to extend the life of those Building vehicles. Fleet staff have had a productive year, with an excess of 10,000 repair and maintenance tasks completed.

Mr. Williams stated the Departments Personnel budget has increased by \$257,202.00 to a total of \$2,668,723.00. Staff is requesting two new positions to help maintain and improve customer service from Fleet. The first one is the Fleet Management Specialist, a much-needed addition to Fleet. Some of the duties this position will help with is to assist with completing the additional work required with Tyler software system, creating reports to better monitor workload, inventory tracking, being a back-up for the Fleet Manager and Service Writer in their absence, liaise between Fleet and IT on Tyler issues, and to give more opportunity for succession planning. He advised that the second position is the Fleet Technicians Assistant, noting this position will assist with non-technical tasks, and/or do some of the menial tasks that are currently done by the Technicians such as prepping new vehicles, stripping obsolete vehicles, picking up or dropping off vehicles for repairs or service, helping keep work areas clean, and dispose of scrap. This will allow Technicians to focus more on productive work. Mr. Williams stated with the limited space at the current facility, staff are always looking for ways to improve customer service and by adding these two positions he feels that staff can do more of what they are meant to be doing. Line item 546101, Repairs and Maint Buildings and Grounds has increased by \$26,760.00 for purchase and installation of fuel level monitors for remote fuel sites, to more closely monitor daily fuel tank levels, and also for cleaning and painting of above ground fuel tanks and the landfill. Line item 546305, Repairs and Maint Vehicle and Equipment, has an increase of \$123,270.00. This is in relation to the FY 2024 adopted budget to cover the increased cost of repairs. He advised that the FY 2024 amended budget shows the \$650,000.00 BAR that was done to cover the additional payments taken from this account to cover the General Fund invoices, noting the General Fund Departments historically did not pay Fleet for maintenance or repairs; however, Tyler now requires that there is a payment received for this work. Mr. Williams stated the Finance Department takes those payments from this account and deposits it into a new revenue account, and therefore Fleet is required to do a BAR to move the funds paid from line item 546305 (for General Fund Repairs and Maintenance) back into line item 546305. He



noted staff have asked to look into automating this process. Line item 552101, Gas, Oil and Lubricants, has decreased by \$367,360.00. This reduction is due to the expected decrease in the cost of fuel as predicted by the US Energy Information Administration and County Department's recent usage history. Line item 552108, Operating Supplies, has increased by \$12,395.00 to a total of \$43,980.00. Due to replacement of oil change label printer, and some shop equipment that does not meet capital limits. (4 heavy duty truck air jack stands & 2 heavy duty transmission jacks). Line item 552257, Parts Vehicles and Equipment has increased by \$31,194.00 to cover the expected inflation price increase of approximately 2.30%. Mr. Williams advised that line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment, is a total of \$177,390.00, noting this year Fleet is replacing some older and obsolete equipment to make some fleet tasks more efficient or safer. He provided an overview of the equipment being replaced in FY 2025. Mr. Williams stated the Fleet Personnel and Operating budgets this year have increased by approx. 0.79% from the FY 2024 adopted budget.

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

#### **OPENING REMARKS – Kyra Lynch, Animal Services Deputy Director**

Animal Services Director Kyra Lynch appeared to review the Department's proposed FY 2024-25 budget for Cost Center 315, Animal Services Department (page 132). Also present were Deputy Director Stephanie Kash and Administrative Manager Rene Pierce. Ms. Lynch expressed her appreciation to the BCC, community partner's, volunteers, and employees from the Marion County Animal Services (MCAS) Department. She provided a brief overview of some of the Department's achievements from October 1, 2023 to June 1, 2024 as follows: the Department is currently at a 91.6% live release rate; impounded or taken in 7,097 animals; Spay Neuter Release (SNR) program has returned 1,893 cats back into the community; and volunteer hours are already 20% above the previous year. In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Lynch stated those volunteer hours would equate to approximately 4.3 FTEs or \$171,500.00. Commissioner Bryant noted she would like to recognize those volunteers who go above and beyond.

Ms. Lynch advised that the Department has transferred 539 animals to rescue partners and adopted out 2,300 animals into their forever homes, noting Animal Control has responded 17,846 activities and cases this year. She stated there are 189 dogs, 93 cats, and a rabbit at the shelter, as well as 49 dogs and 338 cats in foster homes at this time.

Ms. Lynch advised that Personnel Services has an increase of 17.96%; Operating expenses has a 16.67% increase; and Capital Machinery & Equipment has a 61.71% decrease for an overall total increase 10.37%. She referred to page 135 of the proposed budget book, which provides a list and salary breakdown of the eight FTE and two part-time positions that are being requested by the Department to improve programs and enhance services provided to the community. Ms. Lynch provided an overview of the job responsibilities of the proposed positions, including an additional Animal Center Veterinarian and two support staff who would help to achieve the goal of providing spay and neuter services on Saturday's as well (current services only available Monday through Friday). She provided a brief overview of the salary adjustments being requested including Animal Center Veterinarians (two existing positions) from pay grade 119 to 120 (total salary impact of \$6,884).

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Commissioner Bryant questioned whether the salary for the new Veterinarian position is enough to attract a Veterinarian in the current competitive market. Ms. Lynch stated the base salary being proposed is on the low end of current market value.

General discussion ensued.

Ms. Lynch noted the Department is also requesting an additional full-time Dispatcher (salary of \$35,464.00) due to the increase in call volume, especially for Animal Control. The final two positions being requested are part-time kennel technicians. She referred to the recommendations by the University of Davis, noting it was their opinion that for the number of animals the shelter has, there should be a minimum of 21 to 29 cleaning staff members on a daily basis, noting the Department currently has 8 FTE Animal Care Technicians.

Ms. Lynch advised that the total increase to the Operating budget is \$222,698.00 or 16.67% with the majority of this increase being directly related to the new positions requested, and takes into consideration costs associated with technology, uniforms, personal protective equipment (PPE), supplies, and other equipment. Noteworthy changes to the budget include line item 541101, Communication Services, with a \$21,546.00 increase; line item 548101, Promotional Activities, with a \$3,000.00 increase; and line item 549990, Other Current Charges Misc. Expenses, with a \$5,000.00 increase (change in credit card processors for web licensing).

Chairman Stone commented on the County having so many different online payment processing platforms and questioned if staff should review the option of having just one platform for all Departments. IT Director Tom Northey advised that staff is working on consolidating as many of the payment providers as possible to go under Tyler payments. He stated there are some vendors that do not work with Tyler (i.e., airport fueling vendor) so there will be some exceptions. Mr. Northey advised that the majority of the convenience fee is passed on to the consumer; however, there is an exception for Fire/Rescue due to Medicaid rules.

General discussion ensued.

Ms. Lynch stated there are also increases to line item 552103, Medical Supplies, with a \$126,211.00 increase (to cover inflation costs for medication and supplies); line item 552106, Computer Software, with a \$13,890.00 increase (new personnel and Licensing Program); line item 552107, Clothing & Wearing Apparel, with a \$5,940.00 increase; line item 552108, Operating Supplies, with a \$3,660.00 increase; line item 552116, Computer Hardware, with a \$56,115.00 increase (IT recommended replacements and new personnel); and line item 552119, Operating Supplies PPE, with a \$5,000.00 increase (new personnel).

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Bouyounes stated staff will be providing an update to the Board relating to the 3 community partners who have helped with spay/neuter services in regard to the costs associated with their services, the number of animals, etc. General discussion ensued.

Ms. Lynch referred to page 133 relating to Capital costs associated with the Department, noting line item 564101, Capital Machinery & Equipment, reflects a decrease of \$367,831.00 or 61.71%. Based on Fleet recommendations, staff is requesting replacement of a 2007 cargo van used primarily by the shelter team (\$64,000.00); and two 2015 animal control vehicles (\$82,128.00 each) for a total of \$228,256.00.

In response to Commissioner Byrant, Ms. Lynch stated it is her hope that the new licensing portal will be up and running within the next couple of months.

General discussion ensued.

Commissioner Bryant commented on some of the animals coming into the shelter that have behavioral issues and questioned the possibility of having some funding available for rescue partners to provide specialized training and care. She suggested the possibility of a pilot program to address this issue, as well as putting a little more funding into the budget so that the Department can work with its partners on services.

General discussion ensued relating to the benefits provided by rescue and fostering partners and the possibility of providing some funding to those partners.

Commissioner Bryant requested staff to bring back more information in regard to possible funding options for foster/rescue partners.

Commissioner Bryant commented on the possibility of chip readers at fire stations. Ms. Lynch stated she has seen that program be very successful in other communities, not only at fire stations but at other pet related businesses. Commissioner Bryant advised that the purpose of the program is to allow someone who finds a stray dog to utilize the chip reader to contact the animal's owner to retrieve the pet, which would eliminate the need to bring the lost animal to the shelter.

Commissioner Curry commented on the breeding kennels that come before the Board for approval, noting there is a concept that the BCC would have some control/oversight over those facilities. He stated he has spoken to some of the County's rescue partners who feel that allowing for more dogs is adding to the problem.

Ms. Lynch stated very rarely does a Marion County bred animal wind up at the shelter, noting when they do, the breeder is usually willing to take the pet back. She opined that if there was a moratorium, she did not think the County would see a decrease in animals at the shelter, noting the vast majority of the pet overpopulation are accidental litters. Ms. Lynch advised that having a large volume of breeders with really cute puppies does encourage people to buy a puppy instead of coming to the shelter, so it could be taking away from some of the adoptions.

Ms. Lynch stated staff, along with Chief Assistant County Attorney Dana Olesky, are working on amending the Animal Ordinance including the kennel licensing section of that Ordinance.

General discussion ensued relating to "puppies for sale" signs located on the side of the roads throughout the County.

Ms. Lynch noted that issue would also be addressed in the Ordinance.

Ms. Lynch expressed her appreciation to the Board for its support.

Commissioner Bryant questioned whether there is a consensus from the Board to allow Ms. Lynch to move forward with advertising for request for additional personnel, including another Veterinarian. It was the general consensus of the Board to concur.

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

There was a recess at 12:13 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 1:35 p.m. with all members present, except Commissioner Bryant.

#### **OPENING REMARKS – Chad Wicker, MSTU Director**

MSTU Director Chad Wicker appeared to review the Department's proposed budgets for FY 2024-25 for Cost Center 410, MSTU Assessments (page 177); Cost Center 510, Marion Oaks Recreation (page 430); Cost Center 512, Marion Oaks MSTU for General Services (page 436); Cost Center 520, Silver Springs Shores (page 446); and Cost

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Center 530, Hills of Ocala Recreation (page 456). Also present was MSTU Administrative Services Coordinator Cara Cline. Mr. Wicker presented a 2 page handout containing his talking points.

Mr. Wicker addressed Cost Center 410, MSTU Assessments (pages 177-179), and provided a brief overview of the Department's accomplishments, which include: completion of six (6) road construction projects totaling 31.74 miles of roadway; three (3) road grading projects consisting of 44.24 miles of roadway; five (5) petition-based road assessments consisting of 4.72 miles of roadway; and three (3) Pavement Condition Index (PCI) projects consisting of 11.37 miles of roadway.

Mr. Wicker noted this proposed budget has a \$171,982.00 (22.7%) increase over last year's proposed budget. He stated this year the Department is proposing an additional Assessment Specialist I. This position has a loaded cost of \$52,401.00 annually. The purpose of this position is to allow the Department to facilitate cross-training initiatives within the Department and to address the additional workload more efficiently and effectively. Mr. Wicker advised that Operating costs increased a total of \$16,358.00, of which \$3,120.00 is a one-time increase associated with the new proposed position. He addressed changes in line item 544101, Rentals and Leases, noting equipment increased by \$4,400.00 to cover the cost of the new postage meter machine to bring the Department into compliance with the United States Postal Service meter regulations. Mr. Wicker addressed line item 552101, Gas, Oil & Lubricants, which increased by \$5,365.00 to accommodate two (2) new vehicles for the Project Supervisor and the Community Center Manager. He commented on line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment, noting the Department would like to change from purchasing two new SUVs for an increase of \$73,592 to purchasing two used mid-sized extended cab trucks (P-342 and P-336) from Building Safety for a total \$23,770 (\$12,105 for P-342 and \$11,665 for P-336). These two vehicles are for the Project Supervisor and Community Center Manager. If this change can be made there will be a \$49,000.00 savings.

It was the general consensus of the Board to agree to the change to Machinery and Equipment.

Mr. Wicker stated it was previously mentioned that the Department would like to present a proposed name change for the MSTU Department from Municipal Service Taxing Unit to just Municipal Services. In partnership with the Public Relations Department staff would also work on marketing materials and educational videos to help citizens better relate to the services provided by the Department.

It was the general consensus of the Board to allow the MSTU Department to change its name.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Wicker advised that the Department has spoken to the postmaster and has been advised that the United States Postal Service (USPS) is working on the matter and does not anticipate issues relating to the delivery of certified mail. He clarified that the contact information the Department utilizes is obtained from the Property Appraiser's website. Mr. Wicker noted the Department would research other methods of reaching out to impacted property owners.

ACA Tart advised that the Public Relations Department presented a plan to implement a public engagement software, which will also help with MSTU. IT is working on vetting the software, PublicInput, and the County has plans to implement that software in the upcoming FY.

Mr. Wicker addressed Cost Center 510, Marion Oaks Recreation, (pages 428-433). Also present were Community Center Supervisor David Pierce and Chairman Kathy Martin.

He commented on accomplishments including the Community Center Annex building now has over 1,600 registered members and Year-to-date (YTD) has received more than \$100,000.00 in rental revenue with most rooms being booked out every weekend for the remainder of the year. There is work currently underway to establish a new dog park, completion is expected within the next couple of weeks. Marion Oaks Recreation is an ad-valorem tax. There is a \$168,362.00 increase in this proposed budget, with the major proposed changes related to Operating, found in line item 543101, Utility Services Electric Water Sewer. There is a \$5,000.00 increase due to an escalation in energy costs. Line item 544101, Rentals and Leases Equipment, increased by \$2,600.00 due to an increase in the copier lease. Mr. Wicker stated line item 552111, Operating Supplies Programs Youth Center, increased by \$6,000.00 to include additional excursions and supplies. Line item 555501, Training and Education, increased by \$4,000.00 due to training for new employees including the certified pool and spa operator that is required for the splash pad at that location. Mr. Wicker addressed Capital account line item, 653101, Improvements Other than Buildings, noting there is \$170,000.00 slated for re-paving of the walking trail, renovating the Annex courtyard and an outdoor physical obstacle course. In line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment, there is \$57,000.00 to replace the Annex exercise equipment, to purchase outdoor exercise equipment and to purchase a compact utility trailer with a backhoe to assist with various projects.

Mr. Wicker addressed Cost Center 512, Marion Oaks MSTU for General Services (page 434-439). Also present were General Services Maintenance Supervisor Sherry Sloan and Chairman Henry Muñoz. He stated major accomplishments for Marion Oaks General Services are the continual maintenance of approximately 380 miles of right-of-way (ROW) including litter pick up and grass mowing. Mr. Wicker noted flowers are planted bi-annually at the waterfall, there is mulching, trimming bushes and additional upkeep and pressure washing of the waterfall. There is an overall increase of \$429,848.00 in this proposed budget. He stated there is a \$295,960.00 increase in the operating costs with major changes including line item 534101, Contract Services Other Miscellaneous. Changes to this line item include contracting 2 part-time Resource personnel to address the litter issues in the community. Line item 543201, Utility Services Street Lighting, has increased by \$166,910.00 due to the increased cost of streetlight operations (including the installation of up to 10 streetlights that were approved by the Advisory Board and will complete the lighting of the Marion Oaks Boulevard. Mr. Wicker advised that line item 546101, Repairs and Maintenance Buildings and Grounds, has an increase of \$31,403.00 due to the needed waterfall and facilities maintenance. Line item 552101, Gas Oil and Lubricants, increased by \$5,000.00 to accommodate for increased gas prices and line item 552106, Computer Software increased by \$2,300.00 for the Kronos, Microsoft 365 and TargetSolutions licenses required by County IT. Mr. Wicker addressed the Department's Capital account, noting line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment, increased by \$89,000.00 due to the proposed purchase of 1 tractor, 2 small mowers and 1 Gator Utility Vehicle to replace older equipment.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Muñoz advised that some of the litter is resulting from the new construction in the area, as well as individuals dumping in Marion Oaks rather than at the recycling centers. He stated his recommendation would require an Ordinance change that would require proof that the materials were properly disposed of prior to issuing a certificate of occupancy (CO).

Commissioner Zalak advised that another mechanism could be required, similar to a portable toilet being onsite prior to being allowed a building permit. He commented on

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changes that can be made at the local level.

Ms. Sloan stated mowing is being impacted by the dumping activities in the area and questioned if a receipt could be required showing where the debris was taken.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Sloan stated some of the lots are being cleared, but many are leaving debris along the sides of the roads, especially Unit 9.

Ms. Straub advised that Ms. Sloan should be turning the matter into the Road Department, noting if the debris is in the ROW staff can deal with the issue.

Commissioner Zalak questioned if Mr. Muñoz is more focused on the land clearing or the trash from the construction sites. Mr. Muñoz stated the larger issue is dumping.

General discussion ensued relating to dumping deterrents.

Commissioner Zalak questioned if permits are pulled at the time an entity clears land. Ms. Straub stated permits are not pulled for individual lots.

Ms. Sloan commented on debris being unloaded in alleyways, which do not have street numbers and are a low priority.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Muñoz advised that the Marion Oaks Civic Association Inc. (MOCA), does some neighborhood monitoring to an extent, but they are limited by their resources.

Commissioner Curry commented on individuals capturing tag numbers or videotaping other actions.

Mr. Muñoz stated citizens have been encouraged to document any littering and report violators.

Commissioner McClain questioned if there have been issues with the waterfall not functioning properly. Ms. Sloan advised that the waterfall is working well and there is a company that performs maintenance and checks the waterfall quarterly.

Commissioner Curry commented on the possibility of a meeting with residents and staff to identify a plan relating to dumping and litter.

Mr. Muñoz stated a meeting may help; however, there is not a location large enough to host the residents.

Ms. Straub commented on a recent clean up, noting there has been good coordination with the Solid Waste team.

Ms. Sloan advised that weekend volunteers collected truckloads of debris but were turned away from the recycling centers because of the volume. There is now a 20 ton container that has been placed inside the shop where trash can be deposited. Solid Waste will pick up that container.

In response to Chairman Stone, Ms. Sloan stated there are a few signs in the area relating to litter collection/control efforts.

Chairman Stone commented on making individuals aware that the area is being policed.

Ms. Sloan stated Code Enforcement has been working with her relating to litter and dumping issues.

Ms. Straub commented on Florida Building Code requirements relating to the containment of garbage. She advised that she needs to work with Building Safety and the Legal Department to see if the County can institute additional guidelines.

Commissioner Zalak opined that the County could pass an Ordinance to mandate whatever mechanism is chosen relating to this matter.

Mr. Muñoz opined that it would be helpful to have Rubbish the Litter Campaign mascot at the Winn Dixie one afternoon, evening or Saturday to educate/inform neighbors as they enter and leave.

Mr. Wicker addressed Cost Center 520, Silver Springs Shores (pages 444-449). Also

present were Community Center Supervisor Danny Smith and Chairman Stan St. Louis. He advised that accomplishments include a designation from Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network (FYCCN) as an outstanding partner for outdoor recreation programming and education. The pools have been completely renovated and several of the rooms within the community center and are in the process of completing a new outdoor volleyball and pickleball court.

Mr. Wicker advised of an increase of \$52,000.00 in this proposed budget, noting a request to reclassify the Staff Assistant II Position to a Staff Assistant III with a budget impact of \$2,954.00. He addressed line item 543201, Utility Services Street Light, increased by \$12,000.00 due to increased rates and energy costs. Line item 546121, Repairs and Maintenance Pools Community Center, has a decrease of \$110,000.00 now that the pools have been renovated and are completed. There is an increase in line item 552108, Operating, in the amount of \$12,000.00 for additional excursions and supplies.

Mr. Wicker commented on changes to the Capital account, noting line item 564101, Machinery and Equipment has an increase of \$91,000.00 for a proposed new tractor, floor scrubbing machine, replacement of the multi-use gym system, a new gazebo, and purchase of a 2WD pickup truck to replace an existing 2007 work truck.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Ms. Tart advised that the new library in the Silver Springs Shores (SSS) Recreation Center is anticipated to open in spring of 2025.

Commissioner Zalak commented on long-term options relating to this Cost Center, noting the possibility of expanding the boundary.

Ms. Fowler stated she has no immediate concerns; however, it is necessary to ensure the recurring expenditures and recurring revenues are staying in tune with the existing revenue source.

Mr. Wicker addressed Cost Center 530, Hills of Ocala Recreation (pages 454-457). He advised that the Chairman recently resigned as of last Wednesday, noting the position will be advertised. This budget remains flat and continues to build funds for future projects. Mr. Wicker stated the Department is trying to build up funds to assist with work needed on the clubhouse as well as at the park around the pond.

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

### **OPENING REMARKS – Steven Cohoon, County Engineer**

County Engineer Steven Cohoon, appeared to review the Office of the County Engineer (OCE) Department's proposed FY 2024-25 budgets for Cost Center 412, Property Engineering Services (page 180); Cost Center 433, Water Resources (page 182); Cost Center 400, Transportation (page 234); Cost Center 403, Road Construction 20% Gas Tax (page 255) and Cost Center 430, Stormwater Program (page 355) and presented a 5 page handout of his talking points. Also present were Budget Administrative Coordinator Zach Roundtree, Deputy County Engineer Doug Hinton, and Assistant County Engineer for Roads Jared Peltz. He advised that the Department is nearing 2,800 centerline miles of roadway, noting he expects this figure to increase as the County gets more capacity. Mr. Cohoon stated infrastructure assets were valued at \$1,451,988,740.00 per the 2023 Marion County Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), a \$29,071,393.00 increase from 2022 (\$1,422,917,347.00).

Mr. Cohoon addressed Cost Center 412, Property Engineering Services (page 180), noting this team manages leases, surplus sales, plat vacates, road closings, and other property transactions Countywide. He stated there is only one General Fund position

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funded in this account, noting other staff on this team are funded as part of the OCE group. He stated the proposed budget for FY 2025 is approximately \$96,646.00 (7% increase over last year).

Mr. Cohoon addressed Cost Center 433, Water Resources (page 182), noting this program funds long term water supply planning and aquifer protection Countywide. He stated this is the other General Fund account housed within OCE and includes 1 employee. Mr. Cohoon commented on a grant match through Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority (WRWSA) that were utilized for billboards, educational opportunities and provide incentives to the community to try to reduce water usage. He noted the proposed budget is \$279,489.00 (6% increase over last year).

Mr. Cohoon addressed Cost Center 400, Transportation Maintenance (page 232), noting this is the operation and maintenance side of the Transportation network and is primarily funded through the Gas Tax. He stated there are 179.04 positions, noting 8 of these employees are ResourceGov.

Commissioner Bryant arrived at 2:16 pm.

Mr. Cohoon advised that there is an increase relating to overtime pay. He commented on the possibility of implementing 2 crews to perform rehabilitation work on County maintained roads (1 crew on Monday and 1 crew on Friday).

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Cohoon stated he has not yet coordinated this program with Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Director Rob Balmes, but if approved he would work with Mr. Balmes to identify crash-prone areas and assess them to see if there are true drop offs in those areas.

Mr. Cohoon advised that the proposed budget is consistent with the 2024/25 - 2028/29 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Over the next 5 years, it is estimated there will be approximately 43.88 miles of resurfacing with a cumulative budget of \$26,200,000.00, in addition to miscellaneous and annually reoccurring maintenance projects with a cumulative budget of \$23,900,000.00. He stated the proposed budget is \$22,347,569.00, noting with following changes, the revised budget would be \$22,364,547.00 (3% decrease from last year). Mr. Cohoon advised of 3 items he was requesting to modify: 1.) to move \$200,000.00 from line item 552257, Parts Vehicle and Equipment to line item 546257, Repairs and Maintenance Fleet Management to avoid future budget adjustments; 2.) reclassify a Budget Administrative Coordinator to an OCE Fiscal Manager; and 3.) reclassification of 1 Administrative Staff Assistant to an Administrative Logistics Manager.

It was the general consensus of the Board to approve the changes requested by Mr. Cohoon.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Cohoon clarified that the largest portion of the increase in line item 552108 Operating Supplies, relates to Wi-Fi that has to be installed at OCE.

Mr. Cohoon addressed Cost Center 403, Road Construction 20% Gas Tax (page 255), noting this account is utilized by the Department to buy materials for road crews.

Mr. Cohoon addressed Cost Center 430, Stormwater Program (page 355), noting this Fund was founded in 2002 and is assessment based. He advised that this is in response to Federal and State mandates to address water quality associated with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), and Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs). Mr. Cohoon stated this Fund has 13.02 positions with a proposed budget of \$4,017,219.00 (8% decrease from previous years). He advised of \$60,100.00 relating to line item 531109, Professional



Services, for a comprehensive Stormwater asset inventory assessment. This budget is consistent with the 2024/25 - 2028/29 Stormwater Implementation Program (SIP).

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

Commissioner Curry expressed appreciation towards OCE staff.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Assistant County Engineer for Roads Jared Peltz advised that the Department is working with County IT relating to the work order system.

Ms. Straub commented on the gaps Mr. Cohoon was able to come in and identify within the work the Department has been doing.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Cohoon stated removing or replacing the culverts between Lake Weir and south of Little Lake Weir should be at 100%, noting there was a hold up with the permitting agency. He advised that the permits are forthcoming and once received, the Department is ready to advertise (prior to the end of this FY).

Ms. Straub clarified that the project relates to the culverts on Big Lake Weir between the mainland and Timucuan.

### **OPENING REMARKS – Robert Balmes, TPO Director**

Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Director Robert Balmes appeared to review the proposed FY 2024–25 budgets for Cost Center 407, TPO Federal Highway Administration (page 262); Cost Center 408, TPO Federal Transit Administration (page 264); and Cost Center 409, TPO Transportation Disadvantaged (page 266).

TPO Director Robert Balmes advised that he works closely with Clerk of Court staff annually to extract a portion of the TPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and place that into this budget. He stated the proposed budget is derived from 2 primary sources of funding. For Cost Center 407 there is a Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) that combines the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Grant into one grant (\$1,800,000.00).

Mr. Balmes addressed Cost Center 409. He advised that there is a TPO Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) Grant, noting the TPO has a 1 year contract in the amount of \$30,735.00. Cost Center 408 has been created the Budget Department as a place holder for Reserves for any non-reimbursable cost to the TPO.

Mr. Balmes stated for the upcoming fiscal year the focus will be on the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). He advised that approximately \$275,000.00 is allocated for the consultant team (Kimley-Horn and Associates (KHA)) to work on the LRTP. They will be working on the LRTP through next October/November.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Balmes stated a position was deleted to ensure the budget was aligned with the UPWP. He advised that currently there are 4 funded positions over the next 2 fiscal years, which is tied to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) authorization. There are 2 years left of the federal authorization, and reauthorization is anticipated in the next 2 to 3 years. Mr. Balmes stated the Department will work closely with County staff and the City of Ocala relating to socioeconomic projections and growth scenario planning.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Balmes advised that relating to the LRTP, it makes sense to prioritize where there is the most growth and the biggest need.

Mr. Bouyounes commented on the process, noting it is not done that way.

Commissioner Bryant opined that TPO should be able to look at growth and need rather than jurisdictions.

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Mr. Bouyounes advised that the previous meeting he attended with Mr. Balmes was to talk with the consultant to determine how to dive down into smaller parts of the County where the growth is and try to analyze the area further as was done with West Marion County.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Balmes stated there is a Steering Committee comprised of staff from planning, engineering, all 4 jurisdictions, Ocala Metro Chamber and Economic Partnership (CEP), Marion County Public Schools (MCPS) and others. General Discussion ensued relating to the Steering Committee and the LRTP priorities. Commissioner Bryant opined that the matter should be discussed at the next TPO meeting with the entire TPO Board discussing how to determine the priorities.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Bouyounes advised that since the Board is assembled in a Sunshine Meeting, it can request the matter be included in the next TPO meeting Agenda in August.

Ms. Straub stated the consultant is William Roll with KHA, the Steering Committee last had a full committee meeting in March and includes Transportation Planner Sara Brown, Transportation Planner Ken Odom, Tourist Development Director Loretta Shaffer, Parks and Recreation Director Jim Couillard, County Engineer Cohoon, Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin, a representative from Dunnellon, Growth Management Director Jeff Shrum, City of Ocala, Senior Transportation Project Administrator Eric Smith, City of Ocala, Transportation Engineer Noel Cooper, City of Ocala, representatives from the CEP, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC), Public Works Director Bob Titterington, City of Belleview, and other representatives from the various municipalities.

Mr. Balmes advised that it may be more appropriate to have the discussion during the September TPO meeting, noting District Secretary John Tyler, FDOT, will be in attendance at the August meeting and would likely want to allow time for questions after his presentation.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Balmes stated the next meeting has not yet been scheduled, but he anticipates it will be in September or October.

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

#### **OPENING REMARKS – Lisa Cahill, Public Safety Communications Director**

Public Safety Communications (PSC) Director Lisa Cahill appeared to review the proposed FY 2023-24 budgets for Cost Center 310, Public Safety Radio (page 125) and Cost Center 311, Public Safety Communications (page 127). Also present were Radio Systems Coordinator Patrick Kirkowski and Administrative Manager Shari Chinevere. Ms. Cahill addressed Cost Center 310, Public Safety Radio Fund, which can be found on page 125. She stated the Department is requesting a 1.10% increase relating to line item 540101, Travel and Per Diem. This is an increase to accommodate additional personnel for training on the radio system including reports and identification of emergency activations. Line item 541101, Communication Services, is increasing by \$7,986.00 due to vendor cost increases relating to the new circuits required for the addition of the Marion Oaks, Salt Springs and Newton towers that were delayed until this year. Ms. Cahill advised that line item 546301, Repairs and Maintenance Equipment, reflects an increase of \$26,435.00 for radio maintenance of the new radios for Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO), Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR), MCPS and includes all County users (OCE, Solid Waste, Animal Services, Code Enforcement, Utilities, and Facilities

Management). She stated the Department is requesting a decrease of \$40,787.00 in line item 552106, Computer Software, noting the Department is not integrating with Mcmtech at this time (asset management tool), and there is no increase to the Motorola contract. Line item 555501, Training and Education, has an increase of \$6,355.00 to accommodate cross-training of existing staff to assist with support of the radio system.

Cost Center 311, Public Safety Communications Fund, can be found on page 127. Ms. Cahill advised of an increase to line item 552106, Computer Software, for ProQA, CentralSquare and Granicus. This is an increase of \$31,244.00. She stated there is a request to increase line item 552108, Operating Supplies, relating to Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT) expenses, which should be included in this line item per Procurement (\$3,500.00); replacement of gym equipment (\$13,500.00); and 30 chairs for Communication Center emergency essential personnel (\$47,500.00). Ms. Cahill advised that line item 555501, Training and Education, includes an increase in registration fees and will provide cross training for leadership members through webinars and conference training. This will be an increase to the budget of \$8,727.00.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Ms. Cahill stated the MCPS purchased radios, which operate off the PSC system. MCPS is fully operational on the system and staff is working with the Marion County School Board (MCSB) to conduct radio training at the end of August.

Radio Systems Coordinator Patrick Kirkowski stated the MCSB purchased 462 radios that are on the Project 25 (P25) system and are being tracked.

Chairman Stone commented on a recent debriefing where it was stated the hospitals could use some additional equipment. Ms. Cahill advised that the Department has requested meetings with HCA Healthcare and AdventHealth to discuss potential radio options for them, noting the rescue and medic units have the ability to communicate with the Department via the radio.

Fire Chief James Banta, MCFR, stated 1 of the hospital systems has direct access via their own radio system and 1 does not. He advised that meetings are planned to streamline the process with those entities. Chief Banta stated the Department would like to have those parties completely on the Department's radio system and preferably get them into the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system.

In response to Chairman Stone, Ms. Cahill advised that the Department could review the possibility of a monitor in the call center showing wait times at some of the hospital locations. She stated the Department is considering the possibility of a video wall in the future that will display various metrics, noting staff can look at including data relating to hospital wait times.

Commissioner Curry questioned what the Department's main issues are at this point. Ms. Cahill advised that tower expansion is in progress with some towers being upgraded and 2 new towers being added. There is an upgrade to the radio system that is scheduled for next week.

Mr. Kirkowski stated the MCSO has already deployed their new radios with the long term evolution (LTE) and wifi options allowing them to function in areas where the towers have not come online yet. Those radios will be deployed for MCFR in the near future.

Chief Banta advised that the Department has been testing the radios, noting Battalion Chiefs have been taking them to specific areas that historically do not have good communications, and they are working phenomenally. He stated once the towers are built out and all of the radios are deployed in the field the communication abilities will improve drastically.

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It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to Public Safety Communications.

**OPENING REMARKS – James Banta, Fire Chief**

Fire Chief James Banta, MCFR, appeared to review the proposed FY 2024–25 budgets for Cost Center 132, Medical Examiner (page 327); Cost Center 305, Emergency Medical Services (page 116); and Cost Center 300, Fire Rescue Services (page 336). Also present were Deputy Chief of Operations Robert Graff, MCFR; Division Chief Drew Rogers, MCFR; Deputy Chief Robert Kruger, EMS; and Administrative Financial Services Manager Cassandra Li. Chief Banta presented a 37 slide handout entitled, “Marion County Fire Rescue Proposed Budget July 2024” to follow along with the PowerPoint presentation.

Cost Center 132, Medical Examiner, can be found on pages 325 through 328. Administrative Financial Services Manager Cassandra Li, MCFR, provided a brief overview of the services provided by the Medical Examiner’s Office as shown on slides 3 through 6. She advised that one of the services provided by the Medical Examiner is autopsies, noting autopsies are performed in office and include a full external/internal exam, imaging, toxicology and microbiology studies. Ms. Li stated the Department is responsible for invoices for the Medical Examiner, including Federal and State inmates. She addressed cremation authorizations which are approvals provided by the Medical Examiner regarding the cause of death. Ms. Li advised that the Department is responsible for sending the invoices to the appropriate funeral homes, noting this will appear in the revenue line items for the Medical Examiner’s Office. Line item 534403, Contract Services Medical Examiner, increased by \$1,073,853.00 due to the need for a new pathologist, a morgue tech lead, an investigator and 2 office support staff (totaling 5 new positions); increasing the starting wage of morgue technicians to \$18.00 for competitive rates; 2 vehicle purchases to replace older vehicles; increased toxicology and operational costs; in addition to a maximum of 5% raises for staff. This increased the Medical Examiner’s administrative fee by \$56,832.00 from last fiscal year. The contractual County shares for the Medical Examiner’s budget are broken down based on population estimates from the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR). Sumter County had a small increase in population, while other Counties had a small decrease. District 5 (Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion and Sumter Counties) increased 0.58% in population year over year, while District 24 (Seminole County) decreased 0.58%. Ms. Li provided an overview relating to increases in specific line items for the Department.

Chairman Stone commented on serving on the Medical Examiner’s Board, noting a lot of the Department’s work comes from Marion County.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Medical Examiner’s Budget.

Chief Banta thanked the BCC on behalf of MCFR for all their support over the past year, noting their unwavering support has enabled the Department to address first responder’s workload, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

Chief Banta addressed the community response to the migrant bus crash that occurred on west highway 40, noting the relationships with public safety agencies (Ocala Police Department (OPD), the Marion County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO), Florida Highway Patrol (FHP)) lay a solid foundation for the protection and health of the County’s citizens and visitors. He stated hospital partners at HCA Florida Ocala Hospital and AdventHealth Ocala provided immeasurable support relating to patient transport and running 9-1-1 calls

during the event. Chief Banta recognized the Facilities Management team for managing the many construction projects going on within MCFR. There is a facilities strike team dedicated to the Department that is responsible for making countless improvements to fire stations across Marion County. He stated the Department was able to participate in the Blue Sky Project, which is centered on how to develop resiliency in firefighters. Since participating in the program, the Department has put together a Strategic Plan based on the recommended initiatives. The Department's Behavioral Health Access Program has been recognized as the gold standard for Fire Rescue Department's across the State to emulate. Chief Banta advised that as of yesterday, the MCFRStrong website has gone live, offering 24/7 access to our Peer Support Team and clinicians across Marion County. He commented on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm Project, noting it was the Coral Springs Fire Department who initiated that process years ago. MCFR was awarded State funding to expand the Community Paramedicine program in coordination with local partners for the Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) program. Later in the presentation, staff will talk about their requests to provide resources for addressing the overdose epidemic.

Chief Banta referred to a slide that provides a breakdown of EMS revenue projections, noting in addition to ambulance fees there is a Special Events Revenue line item that is estimated to collect \$340,000.00 next FY. The Community Paramedicine and Core programs are budgeted at \$190,000.00 in revenue. This fiscal year, the Department anticipates receiving \$125,000.00 from the Public Emergency Medical Transport (PEMT) Program. The Department is participating in the Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO) Supplemental Payment program and anticipates it will bring in revenues of approximately \$3,200,000.00. In total, the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) fund is anticipated to collect \$31,385,392.00.

Chief Banta addressed Cost Center 300, Fire Rescue Services (page 336). He referred to a slide showing a breakdown of Fire Rescue revenue projections, noting the estimated revenues for non-ad valorem assessments are \$36,915,354.00; property taxes (millage rate) are \$28,883,693.00; and Interim Assessments are budgeted at \$800,000.00 to remain conservative with predictions on next year's market.

Chief Banta commented on FY 2023-24 service demands, year to date (YTD), there have been 71,467 total calls, which is a 0.88% reduction from last year's period to date (PTD). He stated the reduction in call volume is directly related to the programs the Department has been working on including Community Paramedicine and Interfacility Transport with partners. The total number of calls last fiscal year was 95,886 and 55,270 of those were transports.

Chief Banta provided a brief overview of the combined overtime analysis for EMS and Fire Rescue. He stated the chart illustrates the effect of vacant positions in the industry and the impact on the Department.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Chief Banta advised that the Department has 22 vacant fire positions and 22 vacant EMS positions, for a total of 44 vacancies.

Chief Banta stated as part of the budget process the Department uses the data driven and science-based methodology to determine the staffing required to provide service in a cost-efficient manner.

Deputy Chief Robert Graff, MCFR, provided an overview of minimum staffing and relief factors. He advised that this year the Department analyzed the relief factor from years past in comparison to the Department's turnover and ability to hire. Last year staff discussed the practice of including the turnover rates as part of the relief factor to stabilize the fluctuation of vacancies in operations. This would allow for vacancies to be kept in the

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training division as opposed to the Department's daily operations. Deputy Chief Graff stated this was applied to the EMS fund this year with a relief factor of 1.25 instead of the 1.18 the Department has used in the past, noting as the Department is closer to being staffed on the EMS side. He advised that this allows the Department to manage those vacancies in training versus (vs.) operations. Deputy Chief Graff stated there is a request to start with the EMS side of the house in this year's budget. He stated the Department's additional position requests are outlined in the Department's respective budget presentations, noting there are currently 38 dual-certified vacancies and 6 single-certified vacancies totaling 44.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Deputy Chief Graff advised that those are hard openings. He stated 33 employees are in some phase of training.

Division Chief Drew Rogers, MCFR, commented on upcoming training classes and the related time frames.

Commissioner Bryant requested data from around the State relating to vacancies. Chief Banta advised that the Florida Fire Chiefs performed a Statewide study approximately a year ago, noting it looked at the number of positions needed in Florida to meet the demand Statewide. The study showed that the need was outpacing the ability to train individuals. He stated it is necessary to be specific and resourceful relating to employee retention and recruiting.

Chairman Stone questioned the time frame from hiring and training until individuals are ready to go into a station to work. Division Chief Rogers provided a breakdown of training time relating to non-certified, single-certified and dual-certified individuals.

Commissioner Curry out at 3:15 p.m.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Chief Banta stated there were not many positions added last year as the hiring focus was on administrative and support staff.

Cost Center 305, Emergency Medical Services, is found on page 116. Deputy Chief Robert Kruger, EMS, commented on the Department's unit hour utilization charts, noting this metric has tracked how the Department is performing in the field with its resources over time.

Commissioner Curry returned at 3:16 p.m.

Deputy Chief Kruger stated the Board's previous decision's have allowed the Department to put extra resources on the road to assist while ensuring the Department's teams are not overworked in such a strong capacity. He commented on the workload for May 2022, noting the Department ran just over 6,000 interfacility transports during FY 2021/22. That number decreased to 2,400 calls in 2022/23 and currently for period to date (PTD) 2023/24 the Department is at 493 interfacility transports. Deputy Chief Kruger advised that there is some leveling out as time goes on due to call volume and population increases.

Deputy Chief Kruger stated EMS revenue for 2022/23 was just over \$16,000,000.00. For 2023/24 there has been \$15,000,000.00 in revenue collected, noting some of that \$1,000,000.00 decrease is related to the interfacility transports. Change Healthcare had a data breach this year, which has slowed down the amount of revenue billing has been able to collect. The parent company is United Healthcare, who has assured everybody they are working hard to get payments processed and moving forward. He advised that the Community Paramedicine program has contributed to the decrease by addressing the high system utilizers (people that have called 9-1-1 multiple times).

Chief Banta commented on the initial talks relating to interfacility transports, noting the Department was asking for 4 additional transport units. That cost would have been

roughly \$4,500,000.00 today. He stated there has been a loss of revenue due to giving up at least 7,000 transports. Chief Banta advised that this model is more financially feasible vs. adding additional units.

Deputy Chief Kruger provided a comparison of transports from FY 2022/23 and FY 2023/24, noting there is a decrease attributed to community paramedicine and interfacility transports. He stated the Community Paramedicine program serviced 100 patients with 302 total encounters for those patients from October 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024 (36.96% decrease in 911 calls from those individuals). During the same time frame in 23/24, the program served 91 patients with 612 total encounters (decreasing the 911 calls from those individuals by 52.63%). Deputy Chief Kruger provided an overview of EMS budget highlights, noting the Department's proposed personnel costs total \$33,244,686.00. He stated the request includes: 6 Paramedics (Loaded Salary of \$68,442.00, totaling: \$410,652.00); 5 Community Paramedics (Loaded Salary of \$68,442.00; totaling \$342,210.00); and 4 EMTs (Loaded Salary of \$57,302.00; totaling \$229,208.00). The Department is requesting salary changes relating to the Medical Billing Manager and Medical Billing Specialist Supervisor positions. The total loaded costs for the proposed requests are \$1,187,497.00.

Chairman Stone requested clarification relating to the current open positions vs. those being requested today. Deputy Chief Graff advised that there are just 6 vacancies on the EMS side and the Department has individuals that want those positions, there are 10 additional positions being requested for the relief factor, and 5 Community Paramedicine positions.

Commissioner Stone stated she spoke to Budget Director Audrey Fowler yesterday and is requesting assurance the Department is not over budgeting for staffing that will most likely not be filled.

Deputy Chief Graff advised that the Department was not able to hire single-certified EMTs because there were no EMT vacancies, noting there were only a few paramedic vacancies. There were EMTs that had been to paramedic school, transferring into those paramedic positions. He stated there were people in the queue that wanted to be hired but there was no position for them.

Chairman Stone advised that she would be in favor of the Department coming back before the Board with a request anytime during the year when there is that type of situation.

Deputy Chief Graff commented on the timeframe involved, including sending individuals to school.

Deputy Chief Kruger stated there is a 15.6% increase to Operating, noting the largest expense relates to computer software. The Medical Director contract increases by a certain percentage until next year.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Division Chief Rogers advised that the Department did reopen EMT once positions became vacant, noting he expects onboarding to occur in the next class around the September timeframe. He provided an overview relating to the onboarding process for single-certified EMTs.

Commissioner Bryant questioned if the Department is planning to pull from its 2 programs relating to the additional requested positions. Deputy Chief Graff stated those positions would be opened for EMTs and paramedics to apply.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Division Chief Rogers advised that once the EMT positions are open through Human Resources (HR) and individuals are able to apply, those positions are fairly easy to fill.

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Chief Banta commented on supply, relating to single-certification EMTs and paramedics, noting as Departments around the State and Country transition to fire-based EMS and away from private EMS it leaves people in a position where they have to become firefighters or find another place to work.

Chairman Stone stated there is a 3 week process for onboarding relating to those positions.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Deputy Chief Graff provided a breakdown of the requested positions.

General discussion ensued relating to the timeline for filling the requested positions.

Commissioner Zalak questioned if the County is being reimbursed for any of the Community Paramedicine program. Chief Banta advised that the Department is looking at alternative ways of funding, including partnerships. He stated there was an initial meeting with Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS)/BlueOptions of Florida to explore options for becoming in network relating to transport services. There were discussions relating to billing for treatment in place and options to bill for Community Paramedicine. Chief Banta advised that the Department is always exploring grants and partnerships. He commented on partnerships with area hospitals, noting it is necessary to ensure the Department's mission and vision is aligned with that of the hospitals. Chief Banta advised that the Department's goal is to reduce 9-1-1 calls, and the hospitals' goal could be to reduce readmissions.

Commissioner Bryant stated individuals that do not call 9-1-1 and are not transported to the hospitals saves the hospitals a substantial amount of dollars.

Chief Banta advised that if the hospital is contributing to the Community Paramedicine program and is expecting the Department to perform a certain number of patient encounters, and the Department cannot focus on high system utilizers, that is where the visions and missions start to separate. He stated the hospitals are starting to implement some of their own programs. Chief Banta advised that there is an agreement with AdventHealth and there has been talk of an agreement with HCA Healthcare.

Mr. Bouyounes stated some of the work performed under the Community Paramedicine program may qualify for reimbursement from the opioid settlement funds. Any reimbursements will be subject to Board approval as they are brought forward for action. In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Bouyounes advised that the regional dollars will go before Opioid Settlement Committee for approval, but the County funds will come directly to the Board.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Emergency Medical Services Budget.

Deputy Chief Graff addressed Cost Center 300, Fire Rescue Services as found on page 334. He referred to a slide, as seen on the overhead screens, noting the proposed personnel costs in the amount of \$50,460,908.00. Deputy Chief Graff stated this figure includes the budget positions requested for this year in addition to salary changes for the Administrative and Financial Services Manager (\$8,498.00). He advised of an approximate 24% increase to the Department's Operating budget over last year's budget. In response to Commissioner Bryant, Deputy Chief Graff stated the increase to line item 552107, Clothing and Wearing Apparel, in the amount of \$446,165.00 relates to the increased cost of bunker gear and rental gear. He stated the Department is at 65% to 70% with its people all having 2 sets of gear and he expects to reach 90% by the end of this proposed budget. The remaining 10% would account for new hires that are in training



or individuals that will be retiring soon. He advised that the supply chain is better than it was previously, and the Department will place an order once the request is approved.

Commissioner Bryant opined that staff should submit a Budget Amendment Resolution (BAR) and allow the Department to place an order now.

Commissioner Zalak stated the same should be done for trucks.

In response to Mr. Bouyounes, Deputy Chief Graff advised that the cost of the equipment is usually split between the Fire and EMS budgets.

Ms. Fowler stated for FY 2024 Fire Rescue and EMS will need to submit a BAR in order to encumber the funds needed for the purchase of the equipment. There will be no need for a re-appropriation of the funds to FY 2025 as they are already in the proposed budget.

Commissioner Zalak requested the Department push back on vendors increasing their costs, noting prices are coming down in some instances.

Commissioner McClain commented on the 22 open positions relating to Fire Rescue and questioned the point of adding 10 more positions. Chief Banta stated if the Department plans to add resources, it must have positions for those resources. He advised of the need for an additional engine company, noting the requested positions will facilitate putting that additional engine in service.

Chairman Stone stated the Department should ensure needed positions are in the budget. She advised that requesting positions while there are vacancies can give the appearance that staff are padding the budget, which impacts the millage rate.

In response to Chairman Stone, Deputy Chief Graff stated there is a non-certified hiring class now consisting of 20 positions, in 3 months it will occur again because it will take 6 months for them to get into the field. He advised that 51 individuals have resigned in 2024, noting to stay ahead of the curve the Department has to be able to hire 6 months ahead of time. There is a large group that is coming up on retirement in the next 5 years.

Commissioner Bryant stated Fire Rescue comes from an assessment and not millage.

It was the general consensus of the Board that there are no further questions in regard to the Fire Rescue Services Budget.

#### **BOARD DISCUSSION AND CLOSING COMMENTS:**

Ms. Fowler provided a recap of changes from today's Budget workshop.

Chairman Stone questioned the timeframe for information relating to the Sales Tax adjustments. Ms. Fowler commented on the Half Cent Sales Tax and the State Shared Revenue, noting the State website indicated their estimate will be provided around the end of July or beginning of August. She advised that she utilized a conservative approach when entering the State figure into the budget.

In response to Mr. Bouyounes, Ms. Fowler stated she captured the changes relating to the OCE budget. She advised that there will be a new schedule provided tomorrow morning.

Chairman Stone stated by the end of tomorrow's workshop, the Board can possibly have some discussion relating to where the Board feels the budget will be, millage rates, etc.

Commissioner Bryant opined that if the Board was going to make any cuts, they should have already been discussing those matters. She advised that at this point she does not see an opportunity to do anything different relating to the millage rate.

Ms. Fowler stated any reductions to millage, particularly in the General Fund, would require recurring cuts.

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In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Bouyounes stated he has no proposed reductions, noting he requested the Board consider adding 3 other positions if there is capacity. All 3 positions are in the General Fund.

Ms. Fowler advised that she has worked with Mr. Bouyounes since early March, and he has made a lot of adjustments to the various Department's proposed budgets. She stated a lot of work was done on the front end by Mr. Bouyounes, the ACAs and Department Directors.

Commissioner McClain commented on growth in the County and the need for appropriate staffing.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that relating to the BCC Departments in the General Fund, after additional revenues are considered, the growth is only approximately 3%.

Commissioner Curry stated he is accustomed to multiple reviews/cuts of the budget, noting if approved today the Board will not be able to make changes going forward.

Commissioner Zalak advised that there are 2 more public hearings and Mr. Bouyounes has made multiple cuts to his budget.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Commissioner Bryant stated her point is that the Board has sat through the presentations from all BCC Departments and any requests for cuts should have been made at that time. She advised that the Board did not provide any direction relating to changes or cuts to those budgets.

Commissioner McClain stated it was his understanding that staff would present their budgets and then the Board would have time to review and discuss the information. He advised that he did not expect that a decision would have to be made today.

Mr. Bouyounes stated there are 3 days of budget workshops planned, a meeting in late July to approve the maximum millage rate, and then the final public hearings in September.

Ms. Fowler advised that the Board has the ability to schedule a workshop in August, noting the maximum millage can go down.

Commissioner Bryant stated the maximum millage cannot go up. Ms. Fowler concurred.

Mr. Bouyounes commented on the process he goes through with the ACAs relating to the BCC Departments' budgets prior to the workshops.

Commissioner Curry requested an opportunity to see the final figures and millage rate after all adjustments have been made, then he will decide on any cuts.

Ms. Fowler noted that except for the MSTU for Law Enforcement all millage rates are the same as the adopted FY 2024 budget. She advised that the MSTU for Law Enforcement was proposed at 3.82 mills and was reduced by 0.04 mill yesterday and it is now at 3.78 mills. Ms. Fowler stated unless Sheriff William "Billy" Woods provides a certified letter advising he wants to reduce his budget, the 3.78 mills will be brought before the Board on Tuesday. She advised that the reduction is just the certified value. She stated one of the things that hurt the County the most was Medicaid in the General Fund, noting it took away recurring revenue.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that the County has no control over the Medicaid portion.

In response to Chairman Stone, Ms. Fowler stated the MSTU for Law Enforcement millage for FY 2024 is 3.72 mills and based on the adjustment it will go to 3.78 mills. She clarified that Sheriff Woods provides his expenditure budget and she performs the projections and estimates on property value and calculates that figure. Ms. Fowler stated the figure was 0.01 of a mill relating to the estimated value and the certified value allowed her to bring that figure down closer to the original.

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

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Michelle Stone, Chairman

Attest:

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Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk

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