

**WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON MARCH 26, 2013
IN THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING ROOM
ROOM 103, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
ARCADIA, FLORIDA**

The Board of County Commissioners held a Workshop on March 26, 2013 with the following persons present:

Commissioner, Buddy Mansfield, Dist#1
Chairman, Jim Selph, Dist#2
Commissioner, Gabriel Quave, Dist#3
Commissioner, Elton Langford, Dist#4
Commissioner Bob Miller, Dist#5
County Administrator, Guy Maxcy
County Attorney, Don Conn
Utilities Director, Eddie Miller
Sheriff Will Wise
Transportation Director, Shawn Edwards
Engineer, Mike Giardullo
Office Manager, Lauri Jones

Transcribing Secretary, Jill Thompson
Fire Chief, Glenn Prescott
Fire Dept. Capt. Dan Collins
Facilities Director, Richard Metzger
Purchasing Manager, Cindy Talamantez
Admin. Services Director, Linda Nipper
County Coordinator, Mandy Hines
Staff Accountant, Debra Goodson

CALL TO ORDER

INTRODUCTION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS – Sheriff Will Wise, Councilwoman Alice Friarson AND Bob Allen.

Mr. Maxcy requested that all who were present on behalf of Public Safety to introduce themselves. Captain Harvey Sweeting, Captain William Walker, Chief Glenn Prescott, Captain Dan Collins, Staff Accountant Debra Goodson, Administrative Services Director Linda Nipper.

Mr. Maxcy stated the workshop is at the request of the Board to discuss Fire Station 1 and the Sheriff's Complex.

Mr. Maxcy commented that there has been no discussion with the City regarding trade of the Cypress Street property. The City has commented the alley could be eliminated. Chief Prescott stated additional staff would not be necessary immediately but would be a possibility in the future. Mr. Maxcy commented on the possibility of rebuilding Fire Station 1. He stated that engineered plans will be necessary and will cost approximately \$75,000.00. Mr. Maxcy stated the cost of 1.5 million will only pay for a new fire station and does not include an Administration Department.

Linda Nipper presented recommendations from the Finance Department as well as staff. The estimated payments on 1.5 million dollars would be \$182,642.00 annually. The need for a new fire station has been established. Photos of the existing fire station were shown. Ms. Nipper stated the property within the City was obtained in the 2006 Consolidation Agreement. Currently over \$80,000.00 has been paid on the City property. There is a balance of \$33,360.00 that will be paid in full on April 1, 2015.

Ms. Nipper stated that from a financial standpoint; she recommends using the property in the City limits. Options for financing would be to borrow the money. Funds to pay the loan would be collected by increasing MSBUs. Other options include raising residential rates, increasing hotel/motel and campsite rates. Increase agricultural and lot assessment rates or expand acreage assessments. Ms.

Nipper requested the Board to allow a revamping of the MSBU schedule to find the \$713,000.00 then take back to the Board in a Workshop or Public Hearing. This will not only allow financing of a new fire station but will allow Public Safety to invest in a capital future. It will also help invest in personnel such as a step plan. Ms. Nipper commented that the increase in MSBUs will eliminate, on the fire side, our general fund transfer to Fire and Rescue each year. The MSTU for emergency medical services is currently .4514 throughout the county. If the City agrees, the County is proposing to combine incorporated and unincorporated areas; raise the millage rate to .9028 and this would give the County an additional \$713,236.00 per year. Public Safety would be special revenue that stands on its own.

Commissioner Mansfield questioned Ms. Nipper on the amount of money that would be saved by not taking money from the General Fund and transferring to EMS. Ms. Nipper replied that in total it would be almost \$1 million. The plan would be for both City and County to pay the same rates. Ms. Nipper suggested at a later date presenting to the Board different scenarios in which would be the fairest and most equitable.

Mr. Maxcy suggested if the County does not work on making things fair now, there will be problems in the future. He also read to the Board a letter from Trudy Super commending the professional care she received from DeSoto County EMS.

Captain Dan Collins commented a new Fire Station is needed and Fire Station 1 is non-repairable. Captain William Walker agreed with Captain Collins and suggested taking into consideration growth of the County in the future. Growth will require more equipment and more space.

Chairman Selph feels Fire Station 1 is non-repairable. Commissioner Langford feels the money is well spent on the Public Safety Department. He also commented that while Fire Station 1 has many problems, there are also repairs that should have been completed as they arose. Commissioner Langford feels Fire Station 1 should be rebuilt if the cost is less than building new.

Commissioner Miller agrees with Commissioner Langford in that all options should be reviewed. He also feels it is the Board's responsibility to run every department as efficiently as possible without additional burden on the taxpayers.

Commissioner Quave thanked our EMS workers. He also studied Fire Station 1 and does not want to burden the citizens with a new station but does not feel Station 1 can be rebuilt.

Commissioner Mansfield feels the safety and welfare of all involved is important. He does not feel it is necessary to spend excess money to assess the condition of the existing Fire Station. He feels a supervisor or leader is responsible for providing the means to fulfill the task.

Mr. Maxcy stated he would like direction from the Board to move forward. He feels rebuilding is cheaper than new construction.

Chairman Selph suggested looking at the two options, report the findings to the Board and then set another date.

Commissioner Langford would like to see numbers discussed regarding MSBUs.

Mr. Maxcy suggested a Workshop on May 14, 2013 at 1:00pm. The Board agreed.

Recess – 10 minutes

Mr. Maxcy extended an invitation to anyone in the public to take a tour of the current DeSoto County Sheriff's Office and Jail.

Captain Vitali, Major Sam Williamson, Captain Ray Kugler and Sheriff Will Wise were in attendance representing the Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff Wise stated from 2009-2013 costs totaled \$432,307.99 for maintenance. That cost does not include labor.

Mr. Maxcy commented that the amount of personnel will depend on the type of jail built.

Sheriff Wise commented on a central hub with surrounding cells and may require an increase in

personnel due to an increase in the number of beds.

Mr. Maxcy suggested utilizing the old jail facility as a storage unit. He feels the first step is to choose a site. Mr. Maxcy introduced Mr. Bill Rutherford to give his opinion on new jail construction. Mr. Rutherford suggested having utilities close. Regarding material to build the jail, he suggested modular concrete or modular steel. The modular steel or concrete would last 50 years. Mr. Rutherford suggested having a full time maintenance person, a central control room where the inmates are not able to see the officers, build cells 3-4 feet from the back wall. He also recommended using metal (Butler Building) for the exterior due to the fact that it would be virtually maintenance free. Mr. Rutherford commented that the cost to build a new facility today may be less than 3 years ago when the last study was prepared. There was discussion regarding material that the cells could be built with and the benefits.

Sheriff Wise stated the Sheriff's Department is seen by the general public, not only inmates. He also stated more space is needed for all DCSO employees as well as inmates. Captain Kugler stated that the difference between a jail and a prison is the average stay time, medical issues and could save money with the addition of an infirmary. There was further discussion by the Board.

Mr. Maxcy stated the complex has been discussed for about 12 years and direction is needed from the Board. He feels it is his duty as County Administrator to put forth a schedule to have a decision made. Mr. Maxcy suggested obtaining property by fiscal year 2013-2014, obtain the design of a facility by fiscal year 2014-2015 and obtain financing.

Linda Nipper commented revenue would need to be established so financing could be obtained. Other financing avenues to consider would be USDA, grants and/or loans and bonds. There was further discussion regarding bonds.

Commissioner Langford requested staff to report back to the Board with the properties being considered to move forward.

Commissioner Quave agreed with Commissioner Langford and suggested isolating the property and begin negotiations.

Commissioner Miller questioned if there was a committee to make suggestions on this matter other than the Board. The Sheriff commented that there was a committee that made recommendations and that Mr. Maxcy has the information. Commissioner Miller questioned if there was an urgency to purchase the property before the facility. Mr. Maxcy stated it was necessary to know the size of the property in order to start the design of the complex. Further discussion followed regarding the funding of the facility.

Chairman Selph confirmed that all agreed to follow steps 1-3. Mr. Maxcy suggested educating the public through Rotary or the Chamber of Commerce.

Penny Moody and Tim Gibson with the DLR Group as well as Art Rostley, Architect was present for the workshop.

Mr. Ed Johnson commented that he was concerned with the code issues cited in a draft report. He referred to the Florida Accessibility Code. Mr. Johnson feels there is a limit as to what the residents can afford and cannot continue to ask the taxpayers to pay more taxes.

ADJOURNMENT


There being no further business, Chairman Selph adjourned the workshop at 11:21 AM.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSION
DESOLO COUNTY, FLORIDA



C. GUY MAXCY
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR



JAMES F. SELPH
CHAIRMAN