

## GLADES COUNTY COMMISSION – MARCH 12, 2019 REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES OF THE GLADES COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING ON TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2019 AT 9:00 A.M. IN THE COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM, GLADES COUNTY COURTHOUSE, MOORE  
HAVEN, FLORIDA

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The Glades County Board of County Commissioners met on Tuesday, March 12, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. with the following Commissioners present:

Tim Stanley, Chairman  
Weston Pryor, Vice Chairman  
Donna Storter Long  
Donald Strenth  
John Ahern

Others present:

Julie Mann Braddock, Administrative Secretary  
Richard Pringle, County Attorney  
Martin Murphy, County Manager  
Bob Jones, Public Safety Director  
Angie Snow-Colegrove, Emergency Management Director  
Susan BuChans, Community Development Director  
David Hardin, Glades County Sheriff  
Archie Branch, Public Works Director  
Gabrielle Ibietatorremendia, Human Resources Director  
Cindy Ricker, SHIP Coordinator  
Paul Mcgahee, TDC and Glades Electric Cooperative  
Matthew Howard, AIM Engineering  
22 citizens

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Stanley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

### **PRAYER**

Commissioner Storter Long gave the invocation.

### **PLEDGE**

Commissioner Ahern led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

Note: Unanimous Board Action is required to amend agenda for official vote.

County Manager Murphy stated Items 5, 6, 7 & 8 under the Business Agenda had been advertised as public hearings and requested that they be moved under Public Hearings on the agenda. He also requested that Item 13 – Reappointment of Planning Commission members be added to the Business Agenda.

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ON MOTION of Commissioner Storter Long seconded by Vice Chairman Pryor the Board amended the agenda as proposed.

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

**PRESENTATIONS / AWARDS**

There were none.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**5. Glades County Ordinance No. 2019- Extension of Road Impact Fees suspension**

Susan BuChans, Community Development Director, stated the Board had previously adopted a Road Impact Fee in 2006 with Ordinance No. 2006-8 and Ordinance No. 2008-35. She stated the fees had been suspended throughout the years. She stated impact fees that would have been collected under the fee schedule established in 2008 between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018 for road capacity would have amounted to \$337,825.28. She stated this extension would go through March 12, 2020. She stated the extension would take effect beginning February 14, 2019. She stated since February 14, 2019 there had been 3 site built homes that had been permitted by the Planning Department.

Attorney Pringle explained that if the Board decided to not extend the suspension of collection of the impact fees it would need to have another study done to update the impact fee rates.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Ahern seconded by Commissioner Strenth the Board approved the Board adopted Glades County Ordinance No. 2019-3, extending the suspension of the collection of Road Impact Fees for a time certain; providing for scrivener's errors; providing for conflicts; providing for liberal construction; providing for severability; and providing an effective date of 2/14/2019 thru 3/12/2020.

Chairman Stanley called for public comment. There was none.

Chairman Stanley called a roll call vote:

Commissioner Storter Long – Yes  
Commissioner Strenth – Yes  
Commissioner Ahern – Yes  
Vice Chairman Pryor – Yes  
Chairman Stanley – Yes

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

**6. Glades County Ordinance No. 2019- Extension of Park Impact Fees suspension**

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Mrs. BuChans stated this item had been properly noticed as a public hearing. She stated this request was for the suspension of Park Impact Fees. She stated the budget impact from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018 would have been \$17,588.25.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Storter Long seconded by Vice Chairman Pryor the Board adopted Glades County Ordinance No. 2019- 4, extending the suspension of the collection of Park Impact Fees for a time certain; providing for scrivener's errors; providing for conflicts; providing for liberal construction; providing for severability; and providing an effective date of 2/14/2019 thru 3/12/2020.

Chairman Stanley called for public comment.

Steve Hein, resident of Muse, stated the economy was about as good as it was going to get and the Board should start looking at collecting money from the new people coming into Glades County.

Chairman Stanley called a roll call vote:

Commissioner Storter Long – Yes

Vice Chairman Pryor – Yes

Commissioner Strenth – Yes

Commissioner Ahern – Yes

Chairman Stanley – Yes

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

### **7. Glades County Ordinance No. 2019- Extension of Emergency Medical Services Impact Fees suspension**

Mrs. BuChans stated this item had been properly noticed for the suspension of Emergency Medical Services Impact Fees. She stated the impact fees that would have been collected from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018 totaled \$6,195.36.

ON MOTION of Vice Chairman Pryor seconded by Commissioner Ahern the Board adopted Glades County Ordinance No. 2019- 5, extending the suspension of the collection of Emergency Medical Services Impact Fees for a time certain; providing for scrivener's errors; providing for conflicts; providing for liberal construction; providing for severability; and providing an effective date of 2/14/2019 thru 3/12/2020.

Chairman Stanley called for public input.

Connie Lyle, resident of Muse, asked if these fees were collected from new Glades County residents only.

Chairman Stanley stated this was correct.

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Mrs. Lyle stated that when she moved into the County she did not even realize that she had saved money on impact fees. She stated people moving into the County would expect to pay these fees. She stated this was a lot of money that could have gone to paving roads within the County. She suggested that the Board consider implementing the fees again in the future.

Commissioner Storter Long clarified that these fees were collected only when a building permit was issued. She stated people moving into the County who were purchasing an existing home did not pay these fees.

Chairman Stanley called a roll call vote:

Commissioner Storter Long – Yes  
Vice Chairman Pryor – Yes  
Commissioner Ahern – Yes  
Commissioner Strenth – Yes  
Chairman Stanley – Yes

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

**8. Glades County Ordinance No. 2019- Extension of Public Educational Impact Fees suspension**

Mrs. BuChans stated this item had been properly noticed for the suspension of Public Educational Impact Fees. She stated the impact fees that would have been collected from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018 totaled \$191,925.00.

Commissioner Storter Long asked if the collection amount was for one or two years.

Mrs. BuChans stated these fees were for a one year period.

Chairman Stanley called for public comment. There was none.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Storter Long seconded by Vice Chairman Pryor the Board adopted Glades County Ordinance No. 2019- 6, extending the suspension of the collection of Public Educational Impact Fees for a time certain; providing for scrivener's errors; providing for conflicts; providing for liberal construction; providing for severability; and providing an effective date 2/14/2019 thru 3/12/2020.

Chairman Stanley called a roll call vote:

Commissioner Storter Long – Yes  
Vice Chairman Pryor – Yes  
Commissioner Strenth – Yes  
Commissioner Ahern – Yes  
Chairman Stanley – Yes

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Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **Approved payment of County Warrants. (Exhibit A)**  
**General Fund: 85185 – 85270**  
**ACH Payments: 111 -116**  
**SHIP: 1794**  
**E911 Maintenance Grant: 128**  
**Intergovernmental Radio: 10376**  
**Tourism Development Council: 1065 - 1072**
2. **Approved the minutes of the January 28, 2019 Regular Meeting**
3. **Approved the minutes of the February 12, 2019 Regular Meeting**
4. **Approved the minutes of the February 25, 2019 Regular Meeting**

ON MOTION of Commissioner Storter Long seconded by Vice Chairman Pryor the Board approved the Consent Agenda items.

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

### **PUBLIC INPUT ON BUSINESS AGENDA ITEMS**

Anyone wishing to provide public comment on an Agenda Item please fill out a comment card on the table at the entrance to the Commission Chambers.

Attorney Pringle stated there were 2 citizens signed up to speak to Business Agenda items.

Chairman Stanley stated these 2 individuals would be called up to speak when that item was heard.

### **BUSINESS AGENDA**

9. **Glades County Resolution No. 2019- State Housing Assistance Plan Program Overview and Glades County Local Housing Assistance Plan – FY 2019-2020, FY 2020-2021, FY 2021-2022**

Susan BuChans, Community Development Director, stated she would present an overview of the State Housing Assistance Plan Program and provide an update to the Local Housing Assistance Plan. She stated approval of this plan would be done through a resolution, which had been provided to the Commission. She stated a local government was required to receive and approve its Local Housing Plan and any amendments to be eligible for SHIP funding for a state fiscal year. She stated the plan and/or amendments was required to be adopted by resolution and the local government must provide a copy to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation's review committee within 21 days after adoption by its local board. She stated Cindy Ricker, SHIP Coordinator, would present a power point presentation on the State Housing Assistance Program and several proposed changes to the Glades County Local Housing Assistance Plan for FY 2019-2020, FY 2020-2021, and FY 2021-2022. She stated staff was recommending approval of the resolution. She read the title of the resolution into the record. She stated she Ms. Ricker had already submitted the proposed changes to the State for conditional review. She stated the State was in agreement with the proposed changes.

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Cindy Ricker, SHIP Coordinator, presented a power point presentation on the State Housing Partnership Program. She stated this program assisted with emergency repairs, new construction, down payment assistance, etc. She stated this program also helped people to be able to remain in their homes. She stated the program helped people ranging from very low income to moderate income. She stated the minimum allocation from the State was \$350,000.00 per fiscal year and was based on population. She stated the Local Housing Assistance Plan was reviewed every 3 years. She stated a lot of the communities had chosen not to have manufactured homes in their LHAP. She stated Glades County did not allow for manufactured homes. She stated the maximum price for new construction was 90% of the local median, which for Glades County was \$204,000.00. She stated Glades County provided deferred payment loans which were forgiven at the end of the term. She stated if the homeowner defaulted they could be foreclosed on. She gave an overview of some of the strategies available in the plan. She stated she had changed the name of Down Payment Assistance. She stated she had changed the amounts and terms on some of the strategies.

Commissioner Storter Long stated 15 years seemed a long time for a term.

Ms. Ricker explained that these homeowners had received more funds than others. She stated she had included a new strategy in the plan. She stated Emergency Repair in an amount up to \$8,000.00 was now available, if approved by the Board. She stated this amount was below the \$10,000.00 that required bids versus estimates. She stated these types of repairs could be turned around fairly quickly. She stated the Acquisition/Rehabilitation strategy had been added to the plan. She explained that a foreclosed home could be purchased and rehabilitated using SHIP funds and then used for a home for a SHIP applicant. She stated the home that the individual was previously residing in could be demolished and the land sold and used as SHIP income. She stated those funds could be used to assist someone else. She stated this would give her numerous options with the program. She stated the cap on this strategy was set at \$100,000.00. She stated the Disaster Mitigation strategy funding had been lowered from \$40,000.00 to \$35,000.00. She stated the term had been increased to 15 years. She stated this compared with other strategies, amounts, and terms. She explained that the language within the plan had been changed to clarify that an applicant who had applied and had been awarded funds in a previous fiscal year could not come back years later after the funding amounts had increased and get the difference in funding. She stated she had also added language that stated if the applicant had an open mortgage with Glades County SHIP they could not get another SHIP mortgage.

Commissioner Storter Long questioned rentals and affordable housing.

Ms. Ricker stated Glades County did not have any rental strategies. She showed a recap of the projects that were pending and an estimated due date for each (Exhibit ).

County Manager Murphy stated the County had a little less than \$200,000.00 expended for the FY 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. He stated several projects had been identified that

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could be used to reach the \$350,000.00 threshold. He stated once the full \$350,000.00 was expended, the County would be eligible to receive its \$350,000.00 annual allocation for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Ricker stated there were 2 houses on the track sheet when she began. She stated these had been placed on the list by Michael Chaney from Florida Housing Finance in 2016. She stated the LHAP had to be approved first and all funds expended for the prior years before funding for the next fiscal year could be received.

Commissioner Storter Long questioned the funding for 2016-2017 being zero.

Ms. Ricker stated the County had not yet received the funding for FY 2016-2017. She stated once the funds for FY 2014-2015 and FY 2015-2016 were fully expended and the reports had been approved, the County would receive 3 years of funding.

County Manager Murphy asked for direction from the Board on the proposed revisions to the LHAP.

Attorney Pringle stated in recent years he had worked with staff to get all of the SHIP Department's documentation in agreement with the rest of the documentation. He stated in each of the strategies in the terms provision there was reference to the mortgage and loan agreement being forgiven at a certain time in the future. He suggested that this language be revised to read "the mortgage and the loan agreement would be forgiven at the end of the loan term". He stated this language would cover all ranges in terms for all strategies.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Ahern seconded by Commissioner Stroter Long the Board adopted Glades County Resolution No. 2019-4, approving the Local Housing Assistance Plan as required by the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program Act, Subsections 420.907 – 420.9079, Florida Statutes; and Rule Chapter 67-37, Florida Administrative Code; authorizing and directing the Chairman to execute any necessary documentation and certifications needed by the State; authorizing the submission of the Local Housing Assistance Plan for review and approval by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation; providing an effective date; and inserting language as suggested by Attorney Pringle.

Commissioner Ahern stated Ms. Ricker, Mrs. BuChans, and County Manager Murphy had spent a lot of time working on this. He stated he appreciated the effort they had put into this presentation.

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

### **10. Code Compliance – Chapter 54 Nuisances**

Susan BuChans, Community Development Director, stated the Code Enforcement Department had several nuisance cases that required the Board's direction. She stated there were currently several properties with yards that exceeded 18" in height and one

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mobile home that had been declared unfit for human habitation. She stated all of these nuisances had been properly noticed according to Chapter 54 in the Code of Ordinances. She stated there were also 2 other structures awaiting a determination by the Building Official as to whether or not they were inhabitable. She stated the Code Enforcement Department did not currently have the resources for removal of these nuisances. She stated the County could direct staff to remove and dispose of the nuisance or advertise a Request for Bids. She stated Chapter 54 did provide for a lien process. She stated a lien would remain in place against the property until the costs of removal of the nuisance plus administrative, clerical, and legal expenses were paid. She stated the lien would be recorded with the Clerk and Chapter 54 did provide for a foreclosure process. She stated she had contacted the Public Works Department to inquire about their costs if they were to perform the demolition of the non-inhabitable structure and the mowing. She stated she had provided all of this information in the packets.

Archie Branch, Public Works Director, stated he could demo the mobile home and absorb the costs; however, he did not have the staffing to maintain the mowing of the lots.

Commissioner Storter asked if a lien had already been recorded in the Clerk's Office.

Mrs. BuChans stated nothing had been to court yet. She stated she was simply seeking direction from the Board.

Commissioner Storter Long stated she would not want to move forward with anything until the court declared a lien. She stated once the County started mowing the lots the additional costs would need to be added to the lien. She cautioned the Board against getting into the maintenance business.

County Manager Murphy stated this was part of the issue. He stated in order to correct some of these nuisances, the County would either have to pay a private contractor or rely on the Road Department. He stated either way expenses would be incurred.

Commissioner Storter Long asked if the County was mandated to correct these nuisances.

County Manager Murphy stated the County was not necessarily mandated to correct them. He stated once the County cited the property owner, the responsibility was theirs. He stated in these incidents the property owner had not taken the responsibility.

Attorney Pringle explained that these cases would be taken before the County Court Judge for enforcement. He stated it was not mandatory for the County to correct these nuisances. He stated that typically the case would go before the County Court Judge and a Final Judgment would be signed, that would act as a lien. He stated at this point the County could decide what it wanted to do to correct the violation.

Chairman Stanley expressed concern with mowing yards to correct these nuisances. He stated there were a lot of vacant lots in undeveloped neighborhoods that were in need of



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mowing. He stated if one person complained he did not want to see the County having to mow them all.

County Manager Murphy stated the Code Enforcement Department would be looking at properties that had been maintained at some point and were no longer being maintained versus properties that had never been maintained.

Attorney Pringle stated other counties and jurisdictions had a separate “mowing” ordinance. He stated these had separate triggers and authorities. He stated this was something the Board could consider implementing, but did not have in place at this time.

Commissioner Ahern stated the City of Moore Haven did have a separate ordinance and most of the nuisances were complaint driven.

Commissioner Strenth stated he believed staff was supposed to be revising the current ordinance to put some more enforcement provisions in it.

County Manager Murphy stated Judge Lundy had indicated that the enforcement language was already in the current ordinance; however, the Code Enforcement Department needed to make sure the properly certified staff was appearing before the Judge after taking all of the appropriate actions. He added that if the County did implement a separate mowing ordinance it should serve as a deterrent. He stated administrative fees, labor fees, equipment fees, etc. would be added in if the County had to correct the nuisance.

Commissioner Ahern stated the City did not want to have to mow anyone’s lot(s), but if they did, they would be very well paid for doing so.

Commissioner Storter Long asked if Mrs. BuChans should become Code Enforcement certified so that she could appear in court.

County Manager Murphy stated Mrs. BuChans was not certified; however, they had discussed having all of her staff certified. He stated April Hartseil had recently joined the County’s team as the newly hired Code Enforcement Officer. He stated Ms. Hartseil had 18 years of experience and was certified by the Florida Association of Code Enforcement in Levels 1, 2, & 3.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Storter Long seconded by Commissioner Ahern the Board directed the Community Services Director to move forward in the process with executing all of the steps of the code violation for the mobile home that had been declared unfit for human habitation; and at that point, for the County Manager to direct the Public Works Director to work with the Code Enforcement Division to take the necessary steps for removal of the mobile home that had been declared unfit for human habitation.

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

**11. Muse Fire Station Change Order**

Bob Jones, Public Safety Director, requested a change order in the amount of \$6,825.87 for the Muse Fire Station. He stated there had been only one down pour every 12' and current code called for one down pour every 4'. He requested that these funds be taken from the one cent funds. He stated the building should be completed by the end of April.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Storter Long seconded by Commissioner Strenth the Board approved a change order in the amount of \$6,825.87 from one cent sales tax funds and authorized the County Manager to sign on behalf of the Board.

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

**12. Fire Assessment Discussion**

Commissioner Storter Long stated she had requested that this item be placed on the agenda so that the Board could review all that had been done so far regarding this issue. She stated Josh Rimes, Fire Inspector/Hendry County Fire Chief and Neal Chapman, retired Fire Fighter/Instructor, were present to discuss this matter with the Board. She stated she had asked Mr. Jones to contact GSG to see what it would cost the Board to have the old study updated.

Neal Chapman, retired Fire Fighter/Instructor, handed out an overview of his career achievements (Exhibit B). He stated the Board really needed to start looking into implementing a fire assessment. He stated more firemen would make a difference in response times. He stated it would take 1 minute for a fireman to get to the station versus 20 minutes. He talked about life, limb, and property. He discussed the importance of stabilizing individuals before transport arrived on scene and the ability to contain a fire before other fire fighters could arrive. He stated there was a misconception that fire fighters did nothing but play cards, sleep, or watch television on their 24 hour shifts. He explained that the fire fighter had a 10 hour day and would make sure every piece of equipment was ready to go, performed station duties, and numerous other things between calls. He stated if Glades County could hire more fire fighters they would be able to go out into the communities and hand out flyers for in-house hazard checks and make sure buildings were safe and fire compliant. He stated everyone, including people just traveling through, would benefit from this tax and having more fire fighters. He stated regardless of whether or not a person had paid the tax, they would receive the same care and service.

Commissioner Storter Long stated she had heard some discussion regarding the fact that Glades County paid Okeechobee County approximately \$100,000.00 for medical services in the Buckhead Ridge area. She asked what the fire services situation would be like in Buckhead Ridge if this tax was imposed.

Chairman Stanley stated the funds only paid for Emergency Medical Services, not fire services.

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Commissioner Storter Long commented on having firemen that could render aid until an ambulance arrived. She asked how many calls there were per year in that area.

Mr. Jones stated there were approximately 170 EMS calls per year to the Buckhead Ridge area.

Commissioner Storter Long asked how many fire calls were made on average in a year.

Mr. Jones stated there had been 15 structure fire calls in the last year. He stated this figure did not include brush fires and car accidents.

Commissioner Storter Long asked if fire services were dispatched to all roadway accidents.

Mr. Chapman stated there would be dual response to these types of calls. He stated the more firemen Glades County had on call, the better the response time would be and lives would be saved. He stated the costs of these services was nothing in comparison to saving one life.

Commissioner Storter Long commented on recruiting volunteers that would be available all of the time.

Mr. Chapman stated the Fire Department had tried to recruit volunteers. He stated they had offered the training and done a lot of advertising; however, there were not enough people within the County that wanted to volunteer.

Commissioner Storter Long stated there were 37 volunteers within Glades County. She asked how any volunteer firemen Hendry County had.

Josh Rimes, Fire Inspector/Hendry County Fire Chief, stated the City of LaBelle had 28 volunteers. He stated these volunteers were paid \$25.00 per call. He stated they had an Officer core that allowed for an Officer to be on call 24/7. He stated they could respond from their home and did take a rescue vehicle home with them. He stated Monday through Friday they had 2 stipend positions which were paid \$10.00/hour on 8 hour shifts. He stated these shifts were on a rotation basis and the volunteers had to be fully certified. He stated there were 10 – 8 hour shifts per week. He stated these volunteers were certified Fire Fighter II. He stated the rest of the County was manned strictly by volunteers and they were paid \$25.00 per call and \$10.00 per meeting. He stated there was a Senate Bill (SB 426) that was a cancer presumption bill. He stated that in order to receive presumptive coverage under this bill the fire fighter could not volunteer or work anywhere else for an industry that was known to cause cancer. He stated LaBelle was looking at losing 9 people if this bill passed. He stated the LaBelle Fire Department responded to Glades County fire/rescue all of the time. He stated there were no volunteers on the Western side of Glades County. He stated getting at least 2 people at 4 stations that would be manned full time would be a huge step for Glades County. He gave some examples of Hendry County responding to Glades County calls and being able to respond timely and saving lives. He stated once a department went full time they would be held

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to a one minute turn out time which was a national standard. He commented on waiting 20 minutes for a fireman to turn out and then another 20 minutes for him to get on scene. He stated they were in the business of saving lives and every minute counted. He stated unfortunately the volunteer fire service was dying in Florida. He stated there were a lot of standards that had to be followed and getting people to do that was difficult. He stated he was a full time fire fighter and had been for 27 years. He stated he had a degree in Fire Science with a concentration in Fire Administration. He stated he worked full time for RSW (South West Florida International Airport) as the Battalion Chief. He stated he managed training as well as the fire prevention program. He stated he had looked Mr. Jones's plan over extensively and having a minimum of 4 manned stations was a good start. He stated the County would eventually have to expand this service. He stated the County really needed this. He urged the Board to vote to proceed with a fire assessment.

Chairman Stanley asked if these 4 stations would have 2 paramedics/fire fighters full time.

Mr. Rimes stated the plan was to have at least 1 paramedic and 1 fire fighter on an engine.

Chairman Stanley stated the Muse Fire Station could be a dual station and house 1 paramedic and 1 fire fighter.

Mr. Rimes stated this would cover the fire services only and that you would want a medic unit out there as well.

There was a discussion regarding what personnel should be at the stations throughout the County.

Chairman Stanley stated this was why a study needed to be done. He asked how many times there would there be 5 calls out at one time in Glades County. He stated the best thing to do was to look at what the people in the community could afford. He stated there were a lot of people calling him that were definitely against the fire assessment. He stated there needed to be some facts to back up the tax.

Commissioner Storter Long commented on the prior study done by GSG. She stated there did not seem to be a significant change in the number of calls. She stated the tax roll had increased. She stated 4 units would cost each household \$258.00 per year. She stated the County could not fund EMS services with the funds generated by the fire assessment. She asked how the salaries would be separated.

Mr. Rimes stated the County would have to have a complete combination department.

Mr. Jones stated the MSBU would not cover paramedic services.

Chairman Stanley stated he would not vote to put a \$400.00 per year tax on the citizens when they were telling him that they did not want it. He stated he would love to see a fire station in every community; however, the County residents could not afford it.

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Commissioner Storter Long asked for a copy of the study that showed the assessment at \$258.00 per year.

Chairman Stanley stated that study had nothing to do with needs or assessment. He stated it showed how much money could be raised with certain assessments. He questioned being able to tax the City of Moore Haven. He stated the City already paid the County a certain amount per year for fire services.

Commissioner Ahern stated he believed if there was an assessment created the City of Moore Haven would have to be taxed.

There was a discussion regarding the previous study and the need for a needs/assessment study so that the citizens would be fairly and equitably taxed.

Mr. Jones stated the County could not shut down its transport EMS services. He explained the reason for putting a paramedic on the fire truck. He stated this would get ALS care to the scene quicker. He commented on the situation in the Buckhead Ridge area. He stated he had asked GSG what the assessment would be to raise \$1.5 Million. He stated they had indicated that it would be \$258.00 per household; \$.05 for non-residential/commercial properties; and a land use assessment of \$18.00. He stated there would be government buy downs that would have to be figured in. He stated any agricultural exemptions would also have to be bought down. He stated this figure was unknown. He stated the budget he was looking at was \$1.4 Million to \$1.8 Million. He stated these figures were based on the old figures from the previous study that was done.

Vice Chairman Pryor stated he had the Property Appraiser put together a list of what different households paid in ranges of taxes. He stated Mr. Jones had indicated a previous meeting that for 5 stations the assessment would be \$440.00 per household. He stated this figure was the bare minimum. He stated 2016 households in Glades County today paid an average of \$400.00 - \$500.00 in yearly taxes. He stated this meant that 2016 households in the County would see a 100% increase in their taxes. He stated he could not see doing this.

Commissioner Storter Long stated some of these households would be determined exempt from the additional assessment.

Vice Chairman Pryor stated if these households were declared exempt the tax would increase and he certainly would not support that.

Mr. Jones stated all exemptions would have to be bought back from the General Fund.

Vice Chairman Pryor stated he would support the Fire Department 100% but there was a price that these people could pay.

Commissioner Strenth stated these people would be the first to complain if something happened to them or a family member and no one showed up.

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Commissioner Storter Long stated GSG had indicated that they would not be updating the study but refiguring the rates scenario. She stated GSG could do this for approximately \$9,500.00; however, if they could do everything via internet and email, they could do it for \$7,500.00.

Commissioner Ahern stated Sandra H. Brown, Clerk of Court, had looked at various counties throughout the State with populations similar to Glades County (under 20,000). He stated there was a lot of information in the study she had prepared. He stated he was not sure how they were able to recruit and keep volunteers. He stated he believed the Board would need several more workshops before a decision could be made.

Chairman Stanley stated some of these counties were charging an additional ½ cents sales tax to fund their fire services. He stated a fire/EMS station would be built in Muse if the grant funding was approved. He stated someone would have to man this station. He stated he believed staff could update the rates scenario cheaper than GSG could do it. He stated if not, then he felt the Board should go out for bid on a needs/assessment study.

Mr. Rimes stated the \$258.00 per household was for brick and mortar only. He stated the assessment for an RV was \$.05 per square foot with a maximum of 191 square feet (or approximately \$10.10 per year). He stated the mobile homes in RV Parks would be assessed at \$.05 square foot with a maximum of 720 square feet (or approximately \$36.00 per year).

Mr. Jones stated the GSG study would be defensible in court. He stated the study would also be thorough and detailed. He stated the trim notices would be a big issue and he felt the Board would want GSG to do the first mailing. He stated he knew what the response times were, where the calls were, etc. He stated these services did not make a difference to a soul until it was you that needed them. He stated he was passionate about this issue.

Chairman Stanley stated he understood this; however, if the Board didn't have the support of the community there was not much that could be done.

Mr. Jones stated what was presented at the 4 station level would cover the County and solve the issue in Buckhead Ridge.

Commissioner Storter Long stated she was willing to spend the \$7,500.00 to find out what the assessment would be.

Chairman Stanley stated he would like to know what kind of service the County could get for a \$50.00 yearly assessment for every household. He stated this was about all people were willing to spend on the tax.

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Mr. Jones stated 1 station would cost roughly \$660,000.00. He stated the question would then be where to put that 1 station.

Chairman Stanley commented on funding the station and personnel over the future years. He stated each year the employees would want a 3% raise and the tax would have to be increased.

Mr. Jones commented on the Safer Grant and the reserves that would be available over the years.

Vice Chairman Pryor stated he believed that Mr. Jones could put the numbers together (including all station, equipment, & personnel costs) to determine what it would cost the residents of this County. He stated he did not believe money should be spent on a new rate scenario.

Mr. Jones stated this had already been done.

Chairman Stanley stated he would rather see the issue go to referendum.

Mr. Jones stated the only ways to reduce the assessment would be to reduce the number of stations or reduce the level of service.

Attorney Pringle stated GSG would provide the defense of the actual rate that they set in their study. He stated the rate would become defensible in court based upon their benefit analysis. He stated GSG could not defend the County in terms of placement of the stations or in terms of the placement of personnel. He stated GSG's analysis would spread the cost out among all of the parcels within the County. He stated the County's cost year to year would probably be 80% - 90% personnel cost. He stated the station, construction, or purchase of equipment would not be the majority of the cost. He stated there is a great deal of discussion about the distinction between the EMS services that a paramedic could provide and the level of services an EMT could provide. He stated since Glades County had issues with wait times, paramedics would be more favorable.

Commissioner Strenth stated this Board was not elected to push the vote off to someone else. He disagreed with going out for referendum. He stated he had promised to do the best job he could do for the County. He stated when this Board made a decision on this matter the Commissioners did not need to be worried about it costing them votes. He stated the Board could not make everyone happy. He stated the first ones to gripe would be the ones that did not want to pay the money. He stated a decision needed to be made that would be for the overall good of the County, not just one area or another. He expressed concern with trying to set up fire districts. He commented on the various areas not being able to afford it. He stated areas such as Palmdale would always suffer from long response times unless a station was located there.

Mr. Jones stated the response time from Station 3 to Palmdale was 8 minutes.

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Commissioner Strenth stated this was better than 15 – 20 minutes. He stated the Board needed to figure out where they could place the stations and get the most benefit from them.

Linda Cisneros, Glades County resident, asked who would qualify for the exemptions.

Commissioner Storter Long stated it would be a Board decision and would be based on household income.

Attorney Pringle stated the assessments would be based upon benefit and would have to be connected to the benefit received by each parcel of property. He stated the demand based assessment was defensible based upon the argument that a particular property received a certain benefit and therefore paid a certain assessment related to that benefit.

Chairman Stanley stated he really felt this matter needed to be looked at in detail prior to making a final decision.

Mrs. Cisneros expressed concern with the households that weren't exempt paying more of the assessment.

Attorney Pringle stated the Board could not fund the loss of revenue from the exemptions by raising the assessment on the other property owners. He stated the difference would have to be funded through the general ad valorem tax revenue.

Mrs. Cisneros asked if the households within the City limits would pay the same rates as those outside the City limits.

Chairman Stanley stated the rates should be the same.

Commissioner Ahern stated the City would have to vote to be included in the assessment.

Mrs. Cisneros stated she agreed that more fire services were needed; however, the reality was could the people afford it.

Commissioner Storter Long stated she would like to spend \$7,500.00 to find out what the assessment would be.

Mr. Rimes asked if the exemptions would have to be in place prior to having the rate scenario refigured.

Commissioner Storter Long stated she did not believe so.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Ahern seconded by Vice Chairman Pryor the Board moved to defer this discussion to a workshop with the date to be determined by the Chairman.



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Commissioner Storter Long asked if the Commissioners would consider meeting individually with GSG staff regarding this issue instead of holding a workshop.

Attorney Pringle stated the Board could also consider holding a special meeting so that action could be taken, if needed.

Commissioner Ahern stated there was still a lot of work that needed to be done on this matter.

Chairman Stanley stated the needs should be determined first.

Diane Cianfrani, resident of Muse, referred to the listing Ms. Brown had put together regarding counties with populations under 20,000 and how their fire departments were funded. She stated there had to be a formula somewhere that met the criteria for RV's, commercial properties, residential properties, etc. She asked if Mrs. Ward had any information such as this regarding the demographics and population of the County.

Commissioner Ahern stated Mrs. Ward had already gathered this information.

Vice Chairman Pryor called for the question.

Motion carried by 4 – 1 vote.

Commissioner Storter Long opposed the vote on the floor.

Vice Chairman Pryor left the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

### **13. Re-appointment of Planning Commission members**

Susan BuChans, Community Development Director, clarified that this item was not a resolution. She stated this was instead a motion for reappointment. She stated the Planning Commission was requesting that the Board reappoint 4 Planning Commission Members whose terms would expire March 31, 2019. She stated those members were: Ellen Beers, Steve Dobbs, Carl Perry, and Jack Wilson. She stated each member has indicated that they are willing to be reappointed.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Ahern seconded by Commissioner Storter Long the Board reappointed Ellen Beers, Steve Dobbs, Carl Perry, and Jack Wilson to the Planning Commission.

Motion carried by 4 – 0 vote.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS**

There was no discussion.

### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

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Attorney Pringle stated the County had recently been sued and the case had been referred to the County's insurance carrier. He stated the case was in Federal Court and was related to religious rights and freedoms of Muslims.

Chairman Stanley commented on a letter that had been received from Mr. Harvey regarding skipping Phase I of the Harvey Estates project. He stated Attorney Pringle would be working on this matter. He stated the County had already indicated to Water Management District (WMD) that it was willing to accept the road. He stated he was not sure what was holding the process up. He suggested that County Manager Murphy contact WMD again to inquire on the progress.

County Manager Murphy stated that in the last communication he had with WMD they had requested the contact information for Attorney Pringle so their attorney could begin transmitting the documentation back and forth. He stated he had provided the requested information but to his knowledge they had not reached out to Attorney Pringle yet. He stated he would follow up with them.

Chairman Stanley commented on the WMD requesting that the Board send a letter in support of the reservoir in Buckhead Ridge. He stated he did not believe a letter should be sent. He stated he was not sure why WMD was trying to link the road in the Harvey Estates project to the reservoir.

Attorney Pringle stated he would be meeting today with Mrs. BuChans regarding this matter. He stated he believed both the applicant and County staff would prefer that things continued as they were going. He stated doing something different would be an alternative to address the fact that the WMD had not done what the County believed was needed and the applicant was possibly going to lose an opportunity for some funding for the sewer package plant for the residential development if he was not able to make application for some grants very soon.

### **COUNTY MANAGER**

County Manager Murphy stated Stewart Materials had submitted a special exemption application for an 842 acre parcel owned by Lykes Brothers. He stated the site was located on US Hwy 27 about 3.5 miles north of the intersection of SR 78. He stated they were working with the Florida Department of Transportation for a southbound left turn lane at the median opening and a northbound turn lane for a new driveway access. He stated he, Commissioner Ahern, and Mayor Whiddon, had participated in a conference with the Army Corps last week to discuss the status of the County's permit extension request for the Moore Haven Canal dredging permit. He stated it appeared that everything was order and the County had complied with all of their requests. He stated the first extension would be a 2 year extension.

Commissioner Ahern stated the 2 year extension would be followed by a 5 year extension.

County Manager Murphy stated he had only received a confirmation regarding the 2 year extension. He stated the County would be required to do monitoring for at least 5

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consecutive years. He stated the first 3 years would require semi-annual monitoring. He stated engineering costs would be incurred. He stated the County's landscaping firm was struggling to maintain the lawn at the courthouse despite fertilization and limited chemical applications. He stated some patching may be required to save the lawn. He stated the County would be purchasing a scanner that would automatically scan and examine documents for ADA website compliance. He stated this would eliminate the need for manual examination and would hopefully speed up the review process.

### **PUBLIC INPUT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

There was none.

### **COMMISSIONERS ITEMS AND COMMENTS**

Commissioner Storter Long stated the Ortona Community Association was planning a Spaghetti Dinner on March 16<sup>th</sup> from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. She stated dinners would be \$8.00 for all you could eat. She stated the Muse Honey Festival was scheduled for March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. She invited everyone to attend. She stated she and Mr. Branch would be making a trip through her district to look at the roads on Thursday. She invited County Manager Murphy to join them.

Commissioner Strenth invited everyone to attend the Lakeport Community Association this evening. He stated Mr. Chapman would be the guest speaker and would be discussing the need for fire protection.

Commissioner Ahern stated he and County Manager Murphy had recently met with Tony Cortez regarding the hotel project. He stated Mr. Cortez was seeking financing through FHA/USDA. He stated they did not like the lease as proposed. He stated Mr. Cortez was now proposing that the County approve the agreement so that he could apply and receive the building permit. He stated there would be a reverter clause, as well as, Mr. Cortez would be required to post a bond. He stated the building would be built prior to the closing on the property.

Chairman Stanley stated he would be going to Tallahassee. He stated Mr. Milita and Mrs. Vanassche were asking for names of who the Commissioners wished to meet with while there. He stated he would be talking to everyone he possibly could regarding lowering the Lake level to 10.5 feet.

Commissioner Ahern questioned the resolution that was going to be signed regarding the Lake levels.

Chairman Stanley stated he would make sure the resolution was placed on the next meeting's agenda for consideration.

County Manager Murphy stated Hendry County's Manager was trying to coordinate a meeting with all of the counties surrounding the Lake regarding this issue. He stated the following dates had been offered: April 22<sup>nd</sup>, April 26<sup>th</sup>, April 29<sup>th</sup>, May 1<sup>st</sup>, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, and May 7<sup>th</sup>. He asked that each Commissioner get back with him as soon as possible with

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the date(s) that were good for them. He stated they were looking at holding the meeting in Okeechobee.

**ADJOURN**

ON MOTION of Commissioner Ahern seconded by Commissioner Strenth the Board adjourned the meeting.

Motion carried by 4 – 0 vote.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Stanley adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

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Tim Stanley, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Sandra H. Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court

Approved: May 14, 2019

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT A VERBATIM RECORD. TAPES ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN LISTENING TO THE ENTIRE MEETING.