

# **Brevard County Board of County Commissioners**

*2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way  
Viera, FL 32940*



## **Minutes**

**Wednesday, June 28, 2023**

**1:00 PM**

**Special Meeting**

**Commission Chambers**

## **A. CALL TO ORDER 1:01 PM**

**Present:** Commissioner District 1 Rita Pritchett, Commissioner District 2 Tom Goodson, Commissioner District 3 John Tobia, and Commissioner District 4 Rob Feltner

## **B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Feltner led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Richard Heffelfinger stated he would like to thank Boris Soudakoff, Budget Administrative Assistant, because after the Board's last scary meeting talking about busting the can maybe and these 200 and 500 percent increases, he fulfilled his public records request, and it came in under budget; he wanted to remind the Board that it needs to do that, too; and since this is the second Special meeting he was hoping to have a speaker's card for all the budgets that are going to be talked about, but he is only allowed one. He stated there is a three percent cap and there is Consumer Price Index (CPI); he does not know what the CPI is for 2023 because he has 80 files that he received at the beginning of the week and he is still poring through that; he asked if someone could help him with that because he thinks maybe he panicked, but with all of the growth in Brevard maybe that is going to compensate for all these increases in budgets; and he asked if Frank Abbate, County Manager, could help give an idea of the growth, what the increased revenues are, and how much of an increase can be covered, because of all the houses going in near him they should have lots of money. He asked the Board to give some ideas on that and he thinks it put out some guidance and some growth so he would like to hear from the County Manager about that, there was special picking on the Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, and the Supervisor of Elections about showing the Board a line item budget according to the letters; he stated there was a 124 percent increase asked by the Property Appraiser, but when he looked at his public records request he only saw a 6.73 percent increase from last year; he does not know where that number came from or who generated that number, and no documents were entered to allow for him to calculate that number; and he would like someone to talk about that. He stated the Tax Collector has a 226 percent increase; he does not know where that 226 number came from; but the Tax Collector's budget is not due yet, and the 226 percent was used last year. He advised he only got a 19.4 percent increase for the Supervisor of Elections that is not super great, but if one was to read its budget proposal there is a lot going on in 2024 with a couple of elections; there are some unfunded mandates from the State; he does not see the 19.4 percent, but with all the growth maybe it would just cover that; he does not know where the 546 percent number came from; and he thought all the other budgets looked fine to.

## **C. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICE BUDGETS**

Commissioner Tobia stated before any of the presenters go he has a couple of brief comments; he thanked the Property Appraiser for requesting the meeting and the Chair for fulfilling that; he apologized for the Board's lack of detailed oversight over certain constitutional offices, quite frankly, they should have looked at these budgets a long time ago; to be clear, this is the fault of the Board, and certainly not the fault of any of the constitutional offices, or the County staff; and with a budget that is approaching \$2 billion, they took their eye off a small portion of the budget, and largely focused on the Sheriff, who has been a great partner and provided a detailed line item budget with description worksheets. He understands that certain constitutional officers may feel that this is intrusive; but as an elected official, he is responsible to be a good steward of taxpayer money. He stated he looks forward to collaborating and a good meeting, which provides financial transparency and leads to a conservative budget; in

short, this was his fault as an elected official for not doing this before; and he certainly takes responsibility for that.

### **Brevard County Clerk of Courts**

Rachel M. Sadoff, Clerk of Court, stated she has brought forward with her Mike Salvatore, Clerk Finance Supervisor; sitting in the back of the room is Jason Arthur, Chief Deputy, and Linda Moros, Inspector General; the budget had been prepared and submitted; they are present for any questions the Board may have for them; and if they are not prepared to answer questions, they will get those to the Board as soon as possible because they really do not know what questions are going to be asked today.

Chair Pritchett stated she does not have any questions; she thanked her for all the data sent; and she thanked her for always taking her calls when she does have questions.

Commissioner Tobia thanked Clerk Sadoff for coming in with a conservative budget, it falls below that cap of three percent; that is certainly very helpful for crafting the budget; this comes with the same pressures of House Bill 7024; he knows even more weight was put on her shoulders and yet, coming in at that three percent; and he thanked her for leaving the lines of communication open and for making their job easier by presenting that budget. Chair Pritchett asked what percent the Clerk's office came in at, for an increase.

Clerk Sadoff responded overall three percent.

Chair Pritchett inquired exactly three percent.

Clerk Sadoff replied affirmatively.

### **State Attorney 18th Judicial Circuit Court**

Phil Archer, State Attorney of 18th Judicial Circuit Court of Brevard and Seminole Counties, stated the Board may not be aware of them being the largest law firm in Brevard and Seminole Counties; there are approximately 115 attorneys, 70 of those are in Brevard County; the Board can see from his budget that a small amount is for highly intensive technology, which is where their needs are in technology; there is a massive increase in their technology needs in the last couple of years; and he thinks his budget reflects that, but it is basically a flat lined budget. He stated they have not had an increase over many, many years; this is a 3.6 percent increase, he thinks that is largely from the two employees who were taken over from the County; and there is a five percent State raise this year for those employees, which puts them over.

Chair Pritchett stated she certainly appreciates the information, that will help a lot; she thanked him for all that he does; he is such an asset to the community; and she appreciates all he does.

### **Brevard County Sheriff**

Doug Waller, Chief Deputy of Brevard County Sheriff Office, stated he is present with Brett Carman, Chief Financial Officer (CFO); he appreciates the invite and he will answer any questions the Board has; there is no presentation provided; and he will give a brief description of how their budget process works. He mentioned on October 1, they closeout the old budget, start preparing for an external audit, then by December he has an idea of what the horizon is going to look like, after working with CFO; they wait for the pieces to start falling into place; the Sheriff keeps the Board and the County Manager updated on the concern they may see, which is usually the Legislative session, because there are a lot of unknowns that pop up during that time period on unfunded mandates; by the time May comes around, they receive a call from Frank Abbate, County Manager, asking for a meeting in June to sit down and discuss

their budget, which they are always prepared to do; in July, they started meeting with the Board, respectively and go over their budget proposal; August and September happens; and then it all begins all over again. He mentioned they presented their budget in June; he believes they presented a budget that fell statutorily in place, it was reasonable and necessary, and he thinks they identified all of the outliers that needed to be identified that will better help the Board make the difficult decisions it needs to make.

Chair Pritchett thanked Deputy Waller for giving a very detailed budget; and she stated she usually does not get to talk with him, because the Brevard County Sheriff, Wayne Ivey, usually calls.

Commissioner Tobia expressed his thanks; he stated during Deputy Waller's tenure the detail of his budget has increased significantly; he counted the pages of the budget and it is 76 pages because they do not number the pages; not only is it line itemed, they have provided description worksheets that clearly identify details and reasoning behind decisions for who attends conferences and all that stuff; he greatly appreciates the effort on that; transparency certainly is important; and he also appreciates the emailed copy to be able to ask questions of the budget. He inquired if Florida Statute 30.49 requires supplying the Board with a detailed line item budget with justification worksheets.

Mr. Waller responded yes; he believes they go well beyond what the statutory requirements are; and it does ask that they provide a reasonable and necessary budget to the Board, with the different breakdowns of categories that they have for general law enforcement, jail court services, contractual service, and animal services as well.

Commissioner Tobia asked if comparisons from Orange, Polk, Volusia, Seminole, and Osceola, the surrounding counties, are included in their budget.

Mr. Waller replied yes, they are.

Commissioner Tobia asked if the projections for the next three years has been given, for the Board to have the opportunity to review ahead of time.

Mr. Waller responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia inquired if a breakdown of travel costs consisting of events, locations, and what personnel attends, and from what funding source it comes from are included.

Mr. Waller replied not in his narrative; but he stated in the details afterwards those are broken down and provided.

Commissioner Tobia inquired impact has on the State mandates of House Bill 7024, as well as the increases in employee compensation, had on the budget of being high risk.

Mr. Waller responded it was significant. He advised he does not want to say it was a blindside, they knew it was coming; but at the last second, there were some maneuvers that prevented a more significant impact.

Mr. Carman advised the increase to Florida Retirement System (FRS) itself was over 20 percent; the majority of their budget is compensation and benefits; and along with compensation and benefits, that constitutes over 78 percent of the entire Sheriff's budget, and that also made up over 70 percent of the increase for the year.

Mr. Waller mentioned there is one impact they recognize that most others do not, they have special risks, fire department, and law enforcement that was roughly 24 percent alone in the FRS numbers, not counting health and workers compensation; and there were some significant outliers this year that really are impacting them.

Commissioner Tobia inquired if Greg Pelham was his CFO for about six years between the years of 2013 and 2019.

Mr. Waller responded yes; and he advised prior to Mr. Carman, Bill Spinelli was the CFO.

Commissioner Feltner stated his question was answered about FRS; he knew that it was going to be a significant increase with the Legislature contemplating in this session; he was able to take a good tour of the jail and in looking at the population of jail in Brevard County, he knows there is a public safety group that is meeting now to deal with jailhouse population; and he inquired what are the big ticket items coming as Brevard County grows, specifically with the jail.

Mr. Waller replied two of their largest impacts are jail medical and jail food services; they are charged by the Commission to manage and run the County jail; there are significant issues relating to personnel being able to maintain, hire, recruit, and keep them employed there; last year, they were hit in August where they wanted to increase the rates for the two service contracts, which are food and medical; the budget had already been certified when they hit them with an increase in excess of 20 percent; Consumer Price Index (CPI) is calculated at three percent, but in reality when they are talking about medical care providers, pharmaceuticals, and food service for 1,400 to 1,500 inmates on any given day, it is a large impact; it is difficult to do multi-year contracts anymore because they want to come in and hit them up for mid years for the emergency increases that are occurring and the County is incurring as well; and the biggest things seen on the horizon for the jail, or to be prepared for, is the outlying contract service providing contracts.

Commissioner Feltner inquired if another tent is anticipated in the next few years.

Mr. Waller responded as of right now they do not have any intention on building another tent; he stated they have some structural issues that have to be addressed within; but he does not believe they are going to have to do a jail expansion.

Commissioner Feltner advised they are talking about courthouse expansion at Viera, they will see how that plan develops; he knows inmates are taken to the circuit criminal judge in Titusville, it might move to Viera maybe with the expansion; and they are not taking inmates to Melbourne anymore. He inquired what consolidating does for the Sheriff's office in Viera or do they continue taking folks to Titusville.

Mr. Waller replied in reality if talking about just resource allocation, if there was one centralized location where they could keep the Clerk's office and the Sheriff's office all in one spot, in reality that would be best case scenario; that may not be the best case scenario for the citizens who have to travel farther distances, if closing down a Titusville, or Melbourne courthouse; but he has not researched that, so he cannot answer those questions, but he can say it impacts them a lot to have resources there, to provide security and resources, and to provide transportation to and from daily with the inmates.

Commissioner Feltner stated he thinks some of the thinking is with Melbourne, if they had hearing officers there and doing family, maybe there is not as much need for the Brevard County Sheriff Office (BCSO) to be there; but he is not lobbying for closing any courthouse.

Mr. Waller clarified he is not either, he is just speaking to the question; looking at if resource allocation would be easier to provide a service if he knew exactly what the service was and he could have resources allocated there; and they have to transport and that is a lot of resources involved to move inmates back and forth securely and safely.

Commissioner Feltner inquired when someone is taken to the State and they are on appeal do they have to transport them back.

Mr. Waller responded yes; he stated they move them from other jails for extradition; it is very costly because they are charged with picking up inmates from across the country, so it could be another law enforcement agency that they are providing that service for; it is their actual charge; once they are wanted there is an extradition order; and they are charged to transport that person from that location to Brevard.

Chair Pritchett mentioned there was a large need a while ago with BCSO needing to hire more deputies; and she inquired how that is going and if they are able to catch up a little compared to the population of Brevard County, it was very low on law enforcement, and compared to what he had tried to police.

Mr. Waller replied he can say that is a nationwide crisis, but it is very critical in Brevard; Brevard is the one and only County that has a charter cap provision, and in the surrounding counties they are all exceeding that by wide margins; it is very difficult for them to compete with the salaries on two sides of a river; they have Blue Origin and SpaceX, that are paying much more than they pay for their deputies; on the other side of the river there is Orange, Osceola, University of Central Florida (UCF), and he could keep going on who all pays more; this once was a profession, now it is a job when talking about a 20 to 22 year old kid who has an opportunity to make \$10 more an hour, which means a lot to them; but it is difficult to maintain the level of service when they are 50 to 100 deputies short, when hiring five they lose three, when hiring three they lose eight, and it is a daily basis that he is signing off on resignations to seek employment elsewhere. He mentioned recently losing a CFO and a finance director who sought employment elsewhere, for opportunities; and it is a difficult process when trying to compete with one arm tied behind his back.

Chair Pritchett stated they have a big job and she thanked him for all that he does; she loves that they have the Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) and she supported giving him more at the time; and anytime he has a separate line item like that, they can give just to the BCSO because they know where it is going, and she always feels really good about that.

Mr. Waller advised a lot of people do not understand that the Sheriff is responsible for the entire jurisdiction of Brevard County; the cities have their own municipalities and they do not go in there and provide direct law enforcement services, but they do in some capacities; they provide aviation for the entire County, they provide Animal Services for the entire County; they have impacts that a lot of the cities do not incur; they support those by providing crime scene, jail transport, and homicide investigations; and jail transport for the City of Melbourne, they make an arrest and they have to drive them to Sharpes to book them, drive back, and they are gone half of a shift. He added the jail transport is only covered partially by a State fund; and the rest of it comes out of their budget.

Commissioner Goodson asked if in any of the counties surrounding Brevard County that might have near the population, how is criminal activity ranked, as far as criminal activity that keeps all safe; and he asked if there is a ranking.

Mr. Waller responded he could only go by their Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) numbers and since Sheriff Ivey has been in office the UCR reportable crimes rates have dropped by 51

percent since 2012.

Commissioner Goodson inquired if with less money.

Mr. Waller replied with less money.

Commissioner Goodson stated there is roughly 700,000 people in Brevard.

Mr. Waller advised not counting all the visitors that show up here.

Commissioner Goodson asked where would a county around Brevard County that would be near to that number, Orange county would be half, and maybe Volusia county.

Mr. Waller replied he would say Seminole is probably the closest to Brevard County.

Commissioner Goodson asked where their crime rate is.

Mr. Waller responded he did not run their UCR.

Commissioner Goodson stated he thinks Mr. Waller is doing a wonderful job; and he asked per capita of Brevard County, Mr. Waller is requesting how much of an increase.

Mr. Waller responded 6.46 percent.

Commissioner Goodson inquired what their budget is now.

Mr. Carman replied \$178 million.

Commissioner Goodson mentioned for 700,000 that is a small amount to pay to be safe; he thanked them for everything that they do; and he is glad they were present to answer his questions.

### **Brevard County Property Appraiser**

Dana Blickley, Property Appraiser, stated she appreciates the Board allowing her to be present today, even though she had to request the Board to schedule this meeting; she appreciates the Board letting the Sheriff's Office talk for more than 15 minutes; it is very, very hard to talk about a constitutional office, the merits, and the changes in their demand for services all in 15 minutes.

Chair Pritchett advised she is going to pause the timer for her, she will just have it on her own, and then when she is done they will answer questions; and she will have plenty of time.

Ms. Blickley remarked that would be wonderful and she appreciates it; and she asked if she may approach the Board to provide them with a couple of handouts. She stated the first thing she wants to bring up is the charter cap, because that is very confusing for folks; they do not understand what that means when they hear there is a three percent charter cap, they just think there is a three percent limitation on what can be done; to be more clear, she pulled a budget summary from the County's budget where it lists sources of revenues; and she asked to correct her if she misspeaks. She pointed out the portion of the revenues of the \$1.008 billion being projected for 2023, the portion that is actually under the three percent cap is some number under \$376 million, because only ad valorem tax revenues are subject to a three percent cap; they know there is some new construction revenues and some things in that \$376 million that may take that somewhere around \$300 million; and she is doing a real good guess

estimate. She asked if that is correct. She went on to say about 30 percent of the total revenues that are brought in to operate are actually subject to the three percent cap of the charter cap; and she asked if that would be factually accurate, somewhat.

Chair Pritchett replied she believes so; and she advised if she would just finish, she would have them come back in.

Ms. Blickley stated okay, she just does not want to misspeak.

Chair Pritchett stated she does not want to take up her time; she is sure they will get to her at the end; and she trusts her knowledge.

Ms. Blickley went on to say she tried to make sure that she interpreted that correctly; they have a copy of the actual charter cap; the other thing that she thinks is very, very important to discuss here is their separation of powers; the Florida constitution is very, very explicit about the folks that set tax rates, they get to decide how much a person pays as property owners in property taxes, and is absolutely to have no undue influence over her office; so much so that the budget workshop book that all property appraisers use when they are putting their budgets together has a paragraph in there; and she read aloud, "The budget process also serves as an important separation of power in local governments so the entities which set the millage rates (the County government/taxing authorities) do not have financial or budgetary influence over the entities that set the tax base by assessing property (the property appraisers)." She added that is really, really important because they do not appraise property, simply to make sure that the County can cover all of its priorities; they do not get to do projections, like Commissioner Tobia mentioned the Brevard County Sheriff Office (BCSO) does with projections; they cannot do projections because they do not get to determine how much values go up or what the demand for services are; they also do not get to decide in order to meet the Board's cap on the operating revenues that are subject to the cap, she cannot independently decide, she is only going to do three percent more work than she did last year; but she can say, and to answer the gentleman's question, there was a 21 percent increase in new construction revenues and about a 13 percent increase in reappraisal change in market value from last year to this year; and she does not think this Board, nor any other taxing authority wants her to only pick up three percent more new construction than she did last year, because that is all they have the resources for, or she is only going to send people out to three percent more properties than last year no matter how many permits they have, or she is only going to take three percent more exemption applications than she did last year. She asked the Board if it understands where she is going. She stated no more than the Supervisor of Elections could say it is only going to conduct two elections this year, not what the statutes mandate, but can decide so it can stay within the three percent cap; that does not apply to constitutional officers and they cannot dictate what the demand for services are; they have to follow the Constitution and complete their duties to the best of their ability; hopefully, at the least cost to taxpayers; and that is what their job is. She stated they are here today because she asked to be, because at some time in 2016 2017 or 2017 2018 this body, either in conjunction with the previous County Manager, she does not know, but somebody decided that there were not going to be public budget workshops anymore; she reiterated they are here today because she asked to be here, and because they have allowed her to be present which she appreciates; secondly, they are here today because she received a letter; not all constitutional officer, just three if she understands correctly, indicating the Board had a Special meeting to increase transparency over the annual budget of her office; a budget that the Board does not approve, it does not come to the Board for approval, and it can only appeal it; she knows the County Attorney can give the Board some direction over that if it is needed; this is for the benefit of the citizens of Brevard County, because they want to act and encourage honesty and accountability; she wants the Board to think about that, they are only here because she asked to be; and in order to act as a honest and unified government, she cannot be too unified with



the Board, because she is independently elected and the constitution expects her to be independent. She went on to say where she is unified is how informal her office is when any of the Board members call and ask for information; and she does not think anybody here has had to serve the Property Appraiser's Office with a public records request to get information. She asked if she was correct; and she stated not so far. She advised she would like to go over a chronology so they can really see how they got to today; she asked to be corrected if any of these dates are wrong; she did her best to build this based on the information that she received for their offices; on May 30 she presented the Board a copy of her budget, her budget is first, it always comes first; she kicks off the budget process when she starts giving the Board estimates so it knows what portion of the 30 percent of revenues the Board has to work with; the Board has had in its possession, her budget in the Budget Office since May 30; on June 5 Commissioner Tobia contacted the Chair and requested a Special meeting; and the Special meeting was to discuss three of five constitutional budgets. She asked if she was correct.

Chair Pritchett replied no, not that she knows of.

Ms. Blickley remarked well, they would get to that.

Chair Pritchett remarked okay.

Ms. Blickley stated on June 6 they scheduled the meeting and an agenda was published, but the agenda said the purpose of the meeting was to provide the County Manager with direction as he drafts the budget for FY 2023 2024; that is pretty generic and Commissioner Pritchett is right, it does not say anything about any of the constitutionals; it never did, a person would have to dive into the attachments to find out that the Special meeting was really only to discuss the budgets of three of the five; what she finds really, really interesting, and Commissioner Tobia apologized about it earlier, which she appreciated, was on June 7 Commissioner Tobia actually asked the County Manager for a copy of her budget, and on June 8 Commissioner Tobia actually received it; and a Special meeting was requested by him to the Board before he had even read her budget. She reiterated he does not approve her budget, he can only appeal, but had no idea what was in there. She went on to say on June 12 the Special meeting was held to discuss the budgets, only to discuss three of the five constitutional officers, because the Sheriff's budget who Commissioner Tobia addressed saying it is A Okay and they do not need any additional information from the Sheriff, they had received a 70 page submission, and the Board has no questions about his budget; when he looked at his ranking per capita, it looked great, and he got all the information he needed; and she is not questioning the Sheriff's budget, he is independently elected and she has to trust in his ability to properly fund and has enough resources to keep everyone safe. She continued by saying on June 12 the letter was sent and in the letter, the Board indicated it would like for her to fill out a questionnaire, and if she refused to do that they would have the County Attorney send her a public records request under 119; on June 14 Commissioner Feltner asked for her budget and received it; on June 15 Commissioner Pritchett asked for her budget and received it; and other than Commissioner Tobia, no one had even bothered to ask for the Property Appraiser's budget, nor look at or see it prior to agreeing that they should probably have a Special meeting. She mentioned looking at what the Board had actually done, as far as she can tell to increase transparency openly and honestly; first thing is they are cancelling these public workshops, that was done years ago, and she is not saying the Board did it as a collective body, whoever decided, she could not pinpoint it; she asked the Budget Office when they stopped having public budget meetings; she does not know and she came up with maybe 2016 2017 or 2017 2018; they can correct her, but that is the last time her office was asked to come in a public setting like this one, not a setting where she comes to the County Manager's office with her budget officer giving her budget, and ask if there are any questions; she is talking about public budget meetings, because everything indicated that it is for the citizens of Brevard County; they should have the right to have access to this information and ask questions for the Property

Appraiser on how the office is doing, what the office does, what is done, and why it needs the resources it has; and those are absolutely fair questions. She reminded the Board, it had a copy of her budget since the 30th; they did not ask her any questions, not a single email; she is still trying to go through the list of emails for Commissioner Tobia to find out if there is a single one that asked a question about her budget; she is happy to be wrong about that; if someone did ask a question and her office did not respond, is not the way they operate, and she is still looking through those; and most of the emails she has are about Facebook, and she did not realize they were receiving those. She remarked the next thing the County did was publish an Agenda, but it did not say anything about the fact that it was going to be asking three of the five constitutional officers for information about their budgets, one has to go into the attachments for that; the next thing the County did, whether it intended to do it or not, is it strategically insured with good probability that she was not going to be present, right, she had not been invited to the meeting, and unless one scoured the attachments, a person would not even know that the meeting was subject to him or her, right; it is the County's budget process that is getting ready to kickoff; she knows that because she just sent in the estimates; they did not ask her to provide any information, did not send a questionnaire to her office saying it realized it does not approve her budget, has very limited authority over her, and it would like for her to answer these questions; and she thinks the answers to these questions would really help give the County Manager funding priorities. She recapped at a meeting she was not asked to attend, regarding a budget that she submitted on the 30th, in which no questions were asked, no additional information was requested regarding a budget questionnaire reportedly only developed by Commissioner Tobia, that had not been sent to her, and if she counted correctly, Chair Pritchett admonished three of the five constitutional officers at least seven times in the public record for not attending and answering some of these questions; and she stated it sure would have been nice if the public would have had access to that information. She mentioned the gentleman before her talked about the statistics and this was the best quote she could find, because she is a statistics girl, and that is how she gets her roll approved; it is a very, very thorough statistical analysis, one has to know a lot of stuff about statistics, and it is not sexy stuff; statistics are used much like a drunk uses a lamp post for support, not illumination; so she asked why the County chose to use 124.33 percent above the three percent cap, instead of saying the Property Appraiser is requesting a budget that is 6.73 percent over last year's budget; she asked why not that number; she thinks that number was to stupefy people; one of the County's own asked the Budget Office how much did these budgets go up; she thinks that number confused him; and she thinks it was meant to. She indicated then there was Commissioner Tobia's personal article in Florida TODAY on June 11, the day before the meeting; she did not get a call to get quoted in that article, but he had many quotes in it; "Our goal is to provide the County Manager with as much direction as possible on the budget."; that was a quote; "The first step is to see whether we're interested in meeting those constitutional officer's request."; "Then we'd have to look at services. We need all the pieces puzzle [sic] and Monday's meeting is coming up with a plan to arrange them."; and she asked what does that mean to people, and answered maybe the County would have to cut services if it has to figure out how to cover the Property Appraiser's budget. She advised she does not know if *Florida TODAY* got his quote right, who knows; and she asked if she might continue.

Chair Pritchett responded no; but she stated she thinks Commissioner Tobia has a question.

Ms. Blickley inquired if she is not going to let her continue.

Chair Pritchett explained not right now, everybody has 15 minutes, but they will finish with questions and she is going to have plenty of time to give many responses.

Ms. Blickley asked if she could go to one screen and talk about her budget.

Chair Pritchett replied she wished she had done that. She added she has a feeling they are

about to talk about her budget a whole bunch right now; and this is how the whole meeting is set up.

Ms. Blickley stated she is going to go ahead and go to that screen, and the Board can go ahead and shoot.

Chair Pritchett clarified by saying she does not think there is going to be any shooting, but she does want to respond to a couple things. She explained she read the newspaper article; she thought everybody knew about it; she received a call from Sheriff Ivey, so she thought everybody was just going to come and answer questions; she did not have a problem with Ms. Blickley's budget prior; she did see it in the County Manager's office, although she did not have a hard copy yet; after all this noise started blowing up afterwards she is going to look at it to find out why it is blowing up so big; her response with that is she kind of considered it had already been out; and she thought everybody knew. She indicated she never meant to insult her or any of the constitutional officers; if that went out that way, it was never her intent, and she always has the greatest respect; as a Commissioner up here when there are questions, they just ask questions, they are usually answered, and they move along; she is never going to stop anyone from wanting to ask questions; typically, they ask them and Ms. Blickley would answer them, and they are just off and running and it is all good that way; and as far as Commissioner Tobia having questions, she does not have problems with it; as far as them thinking she was admonishing them, it was never her intent to do that, she just thought they would be here to just talk about it, and be done. She continued by saying the place that this has gone to is a little bit interesting; she does not know all of this; she does not know if they are going to have other things come up; but as far as Ms. Blickley's budget and a few others, she probably did not have any thoughts with it. She stated as far as cancelling the budget workshop, she thinks they have been through every line item so many times; if that was Ms. Blickley's opportunity to speak, they should have found another way to do it; she thinks by the end of this, the Board is going to have an idea of how to start doing something different so that the constitutionals are able to come out to meetings, and do that; if Commissioner Tobia had a question, they are all really hard on themselves with meeting the cap, he maybe had a question with the area getting out of the cap, the Board is just going to listen, that is what they do have conversations and talk, because it is what they do; and the Board is not sovereign and it has to go through all the Board members to figure out what it is they are doing, and they can get an education that way. She added this is just the way the Board has its groove going.

Commissioner Tobia advised he has a number of questions; he thanked Ms. Blickley for being here; and it was she who made the request to be here, as he pointed that out at the beginning. He appreciates it and her passion; however, he is going to keep this as statistically based as possible; he thinks they all are better if they talk about the numbers instead of passion; he wanted to begin by thanking her for being a good partner with the County; and he thinks the relationship has gone both ways. He mentioned her coming to his office about one year ago and probably went to other folks, asking for \$1.866 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for updating Geographic Information System (GIS) map, and a few folks on the Board voted for that; it was going to help the rest of the County; she was the one who requested that; and the Board met that need. He stated she typically has maintained a conservative budget requests, aside from the last few years; 2021 2022 was 5.15; 2022 2023 was 5.13; 2023 2024 was 6.73; those are the numbers they are dealing with; he appreciates the timeline, he does not know that, that was the best use of her 15 minutes; he is not arguing with any of those numbers or dates, but he will tell her that he did ask the Budget Office what the increase was prior to receiving that; and he did not see the budget of what is in the County Manager's office, but when he heard multiple ones, that is when the request came. He advised he thought it was unfair to request the budget for at least the Chair to see that; if she were to add that to a timeline, he probably heard about that a couple days before; he did not see it; and he thanked her office, she has been helpful, and someone in her office forwarded something to

him, so here it is.

Ms. Blickley remarked that is how they roll, Commissioner Tobia.

Commissioner Tobia thanked her; and he provided the Board and Ms. Blickley a handout of some stuff he is going to reference, so it is fair.

Ms. Blickley pointed out very fair; and she stated this whole process has been very fair.

Commissioner Tobia stated she asked for the meeting and he appreciates it; on June 13 she referenced an email about the passage of Senate Bill 7024, resulting in an increase of insurance premiums, health care, Florida Retirement System (FRS) rates, and workers compensation as being a large portion of the increase needed; and this is something that property appraisers across the State are dealing with.

Ms. Blickley stated right.

Commissioner Tobia stated according to the Department of Revenue (DOR) the average budget request increase for all 67 counties is 4.6 percent; Ms. Blickley's request is 46 percent more than the average Florida property appraiser; according to the documents her office so kindly provided, eight counties are showing a decrease in their budget, and 11 counties are showing budgets below the three percent; and he inquired why her increase is 46 percent higher according to DOR than her peers who are dealing with the same mandates that she referenced.

Ms. Blickley responded she is assuming he has eliminated all of the fiscally constrained counties out of the 67 that receive sometimes up to a \$2 million transfer from the State, because they are fiscally constrained, so their budgets are augmented and supplemented with these figures. She asked if he has that because she pointed them to the DOR to get that.

Chair Pritchett asked Ms. Blickley to hold on just a minute; and she asked staff to turn on the overhead so Ms. Blickley can lay out her data there for everyone to see.

Ms. Blickley stated she wants the Board to know that she is going to go through this exercise in the spirit of transparency openly and honestly; when she asked Frank Abbate, County Manager, for the analysis that obviously she was going to have to defend today, she was told that Commissioner Tobia said she could do a public records request; and she asked if that is correct.

Commissioner Tobia responded the document that he is referencing is the one that her office provided him.

Ms. Blickley clarified by saying no, she provided him a link to all of the analyzes and every statistic that the DOR published. She asked if he did his own analysis like his public records request to her peers who indicated he was doing.

Commissioner Tobia replied he pulled the document that she provided me.

Ms. Blickley remarked okay, fair, and she just wants to know out of all of those counties did he exclude the fiscally constrained counties that receive money.

Chair Pritchett inquired if she sent the Board some Excel sheets.

Ms. Blickley replied yes, what was published by DOR.

Commissioner Tobia clarified by saying it was that singular document; he stated he did look over the multiple documents, but it was that singular document; he did not do any tabulations that he used for the 46 percent; and the question still stands.

Ms. Blickley inquired if he is asking her if she can give him specificities of every budget that came in below hers and every budget that came in above hers, or is he asking her why she falls above an average; and she stated to let her tell him why she cannot answer that.

Commissioner Tobia stated sure and he will repeat the questions.

Ms. Blickley pointed out she is trying to answer the question.

Commissioner Tobia stated he would ask again, why her increase is 46 percent higher, according to DOR, and documents that she provided to his office, and her peers who are dealing with the same mandates that she mentioned in an email.

Ms. Blickley replied they have the same mandates, they operated under the same constitution, but they certainly do not have all of the same appraisal assignments. She advised she will provide the Board with an example, as the tenth largest county in the State of Florida, both in value and in size, and in population she thinks Brevard is around eleventh; there are some very difficult appraisal assignments; she will give the Board for instance, combined cycle power plants, natural gas, and turbine combined cycle; she asked if anyone ever appraised one of those puppies, that is a hard assignment; a Spaceport, the largest Port, leasehold interests, and a County that is 80 miles long; and a County in which is not fiscally constrained where it does not receive monies outside of the fee collections that she collects. She added what she can tell the Board is one of those counties above Brevard, not the 46 percent, hers is at 6.73, and the average is four point whatever; one of those counties is Orange, that is way above hers and is sitting at 11 percent increase this year, they are going through a \$3 million conversion; she does not have that this year; she does not know what her other peers have; she does know that she submitted her budget to the DOR and if it does not meet the standards to make sure that she is adequately doing her job at a price per parcel, at a price for Full Time Equivalents (FTE), and at a price per capita they will let her know; and she noted that she cannot answer his question, not without knowing what all of her peers are doing in each of their jurisdictions.

Commissioner Tobia stated it is almost as if Ms. Blickley looked at his notes because his next question is dealing with efficiencies and price per FTE. He mentioned her citing office efficiency numerous times and that is good. He stated of the 18 counties that have a population above 350,000 people, her office is the second least efficient as defined by FTE per population; in Brevard County the FTE per capita is 1:5,756; similar counties like Pasco with ratio of 1:9,548, that is 166 percent more efficient; Lake is 1:9,600, Seminole is mentioned being very similar that is 1:10,000 or 175 percent more efficient, Hillsborough has 800 and it has more than doubled to 892,000 more people than Brevard has, yet only 16 more employees than her office; and in addition, according to the budget per capita for counties with more than 350,000 people, a metric used by the DOR, Brevard County Appraiser Office is in the bottom half. He questioned why her office is so much less efficient compared to other property appraiser offices.

Ms. Blickley responded she does not know exactly what he is reading from because his notes are in front of his eyes; she stated she did try, attempt in her 15 minutes, to give some of the comparisons that are actually on the DOR website, the one that she sent him; and based upon the comparison her office ranks eleventh in total budget, tenth in population, tenth in total FTEs and total parcels, and 55th out of 67 counties on the budget per capita which is the one he quoted in the Sheriff's budget when he said he was at eleventh lowest, and she is 55th out of 67. She went on to say those are some of the statistics that she pulled off the same website

that he is getting his statistics at; if he would like to submit his analysis to her, she is happy to take a look at it; honestly, it matters none to her; but what matters to her is that DOR ensures they are doing an efficient job with the number of dollars that she requests, with the size of the County, with the number of employees that she has, and with the appraisal assignment she has to the best of her ability.

Commissioner Tobia stated it is a great segue and he appreciates that; transparency does matter to him and he imagines it matters to many constituents; looking at her 2023 2024 budget for vehicles and code level 4452 shows a sizeable increase of 47.01 percent; according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers data on leased cars and trucks from June 2022 to May 2023 leased vehicle rates increased by 11 percent; and he asked why the increase for her office was four times that above the CPI.

Greg Pelham, Senior Director of Finance and Administration, responded that is the new contract rate with Enterprise Fleet that they have for the 17 vehicles that they operate.

Commissioner Tobia stated he appreciates that; questions were sent to their office two weeks ago, they have not been answered; maybe had this stuff been there he could have gone thought it and got a few things correct; her proposed budget only has one line item for vehicle expenditures; that is \$122,670; the first question was answered with how many vehicles, which is 17; and he asked what the make, model, and years are through that contract.

Mr. Pelham replied 2019, 2020, and 2021 Nissan Rogues; and one 2022 Nissan Titan for agriculture.

Ms. Blickley inquired what the total budget he shows for her fleet is.

Commissioner Tobia responded \$122,670; and he asked if her vehicles were procured through a State contract.

Mr. Pelham replied no; and he explained they are leased vehicles through the lease agreement on the State contract with Enterprise Fleet.

Commissioner Tobia apologized; and he asked if that is a yes or no.

Ms. Blickley remarked she does not own any vehicles, they are leased.

Mr. Pelham reiterated they are leased through a State contract.

Commissioner Tobia stated there is one line item, and that is not in their budget, 4452, it has a number, and has an increase; and he asked if her office uses any of these approved vehicles as take home vehicles.

Mr. Blickley replied affirmatively; she explained it is for the two investigators who do Homestead investigations for folks who might be committing fraud; they had two this year, two last year, and two the year before; and she is not sure where he is going to find some funding priorities out of that, but there is two.

Commissioner Tobia mentioned over the last four years her office has budgeted \$164,995 in travel; this is exceedingly high compared to the records that were received from other public record requests from other property appraiser submissions; and outside of travel required by Florida Statute 112.061, he asked what conferences had she or her office attended at taxpayer expense.

Ms. Blickley expressed her thanks for him asking these questions today. She remarked she would appreciate finishing her presentation when they are done. She responded \$31,292 is the total travel budget; she mentioned maybe Commissioner Tobia could find some funding priorities for the County Manager; she provided the Board with the questionnaire; the \$164,000 was over four years; and she asked if that is what he did for four to five years.

Commissioner Tobia pointed out as he said and she can watch the tape, it says over the past four years her office is budgeted \$164,995 for travel.

Ms. Blickley inquired if over four years that is her number; she stated that is pretty good; and she provided the Board with a handout of the questionnaire with travel. She asked if she could go back and answer the question about which conferences.

Commissioner Tobia replied if the travel is provided, that is sufficient; and he stated this is the first time the Board will be seeing that, and they will get to that in a minute.

Ms. Blickley pointed out it is the first time in a decade that it has been ask for.

Commissioner Tobia stated he appreciates her pointing that out. He mentioned contracted employees has a line item.

Ms. Blickley interrupted by saying she does not have any.

Commissioner Tobia asked if she allocated any additional legal resources for the Town of Malabar Sanctuary Value Adjustment Board issue.

Ms. Blickley answered by saying almost \$35,000 that she is going to be asking the Board to return to her, because she still believes that the County is not a bona fide commercial timber operator; and she stated yes, she spent \$35,000, keeping Commissioner Tobia from being plaintiff, judge, and jury in a process.

Commissioner Tobia noted the question has been answered.

Chair Pritchett announced they are going to keep this professional; and she does not want this to get personal.

Ms. Blickley indicated she is answering the question.

Chair Pritchett stated hold on.

Ms. Blickley stated he asked her if she expended any revenues.

Chair Pritchett advised she is going to finish her sentence; she does not want to hear about who is with their wife or what, they are just going to stay on the topic; she is just not going to get into all this drama; Ms. Blickley is doing good answering the questions; it is all good with her; but she is just not doing that today, she is too old.

Commissioner Tobia inquired if she was statutorily mandated to do that.

Ms. Blickley replied absolutely not.

Commissioner Tobia inquired if she put that contract out for the legal services, whether it was extra and above, or whether it was retained out for a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a Request for Qualification (RFQ).

Ms. Blickley responded she did not; she explained she absorbs those in the legal budget that she has on an annual basis for handling all legal issues for the property appraiser, valuation cases, exemption cases, personnel issues, and dealing with the Town of Malabar Scrub Jay debacle.

Commissioner Tobia inquired how she selected her legal counsel.

Ms. Blickley replied she uses the one that she has had since becoming Property Appraiser.

Commissioner Tobia stated that is not....

Ms. Blickley interrupted by saying she fired the one that the previous appraiser had and she hired her own.

Commissioner Tobia reiterated the question was how; and he stated if Ms. Blickley does not want to answer, that is fine; and he inquired how she selected that attorney.

Ms. Blickley remarked she does not know how that is germane here; and she stated they are trying to stay professional.

Commissioner Tobia stated that is fine; he inquired if it concerns her that the attorney she hired Trizia Eavenson, according to her Curriculum Vitae (CV) posted on her website at [www.TGElawfirm.com](http://www.TGElawfirm.com) is the WOKE founder of "Your Diversity University, who trains thousands of much needed common sense diversity inclusion training."; and he inquired if that bothers her.

Ms. Blickley asked Chair Pritchett if she is going to allow him to attack her attorney and say that she is WOKE, rather than letting her finish her budget presentation, that honestly is just for the citizens of Brevard County; and she is going to be done here unless she has questions about her budget, and the \$691,000 of increases.

Commissioner Tobia repeated this is on her website.

Chair Pritchett stressed enough Commissioner Tobia, stick to the budget. She added Ms. Blickley is welcome to answer questions and ask them on this as they go through this routine; they are just trying to get through these questions; and it is hard to deal with her when she is just angry about everything.

Commissioner Tobia advised he would move on.

Chair Pritchett informed him to wait a second. She advised they are just trying to get through this the best that they can; just answer the questions and get the data; it is all public record anyways; and they are just going to get through it and get it done. She stated Commissioner Tobia is going to move on, he does this with the Board all the time; they have done it forever, they have always had to answer questions, and she does not always enjoy doing it; and by the time they get done they end up doing a very good budget for the community and for the people. She went on to say they will just get through this; they had to do it before and they are just going to finish this up now; typically, when he is done they are all better at the end of it; so they are just going to get through this process; and if everybody would just rein it in and they get through it, it would be a great afternoon.

Ms. Blickley inquired if it would be possible to spend a little bit of time, just for the men and women who work for her so hard every single year, for the Board to get through some semblance of a question that relates to the budget request she is asking for this year.



Chair Pritchett responded she would have loved it if she had started with that, she probably would have been sitting down by now and the Board would have just been done. She stated she does not know where to bring this in at; there are some things going on; and she asked Commissioner Tobia if he would finish with his budget questions.

Commissioner Tobia expresses his apology. He responded he is going to focus in on statute that Ms. Blickley cited already. He appreciated Ms. Blickley being interested in following the constitution. He inquired if she is familiar with the DOR property appraisers' instruction workbook for 2023 2024 budget request.

Ms. Blickley responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia inquired if she submitted to DOR with her budget justification worksheets detailing expenses, including but not limited to, pertinent positions, vacancies, contracts, travel, postage, education certification, vehicles, and data processing.

Ms. Blickley responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia stated good; he flipped through it and on pages 33 through 62 he found at least 10 times where it says they were mandated; and he greatly appreciates her doing that.

Ms. Blickley stated she greatly appreciates him asking.

Commissioner Tobia stated it goes to the statute that she mentioned and she may want to look at it; he knows she is familiar so he will not go over the number, but for the Board's information that Statute is 195.0871, that she quoted, "The property appraiser shall submit his or her budget in the manner and form required by the Department. A copy of such budget shall be furnished at the same time to the Board of County Commissioners." He asked if he might punt the questions over to Attorney Richardson.

Chair Pritchett replied affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia inquired if the County received justification worksheets and documentation, as referenced in DOR for the property appraiser's instruction workbook including, but not limited to, the details regarding permanent positions and vacancies, contracts, travel, postage, education and certification, vehicles, data processing, and reductions, along with the property appraiser's 2023 2024 budget requests.

Attorney Richardson responded the budget request was received without that documentation listed.

Commissioner Tobia inquired if they received those extra documents with the 2022 2023 budget request.

Attorney Richardson replied not to his knowledge, he was not here. He stated he checked with the Budget Office and the submission for last year seemed to be the same as the submission for this year.

Commissioner Tobia inquired if they received those extra documents with the 2021 2022 budget request.

Attorney Richardson replied he does not believe so.

Commissioner Tobia asked if the DOR received these documents, as the property appraiser

had stated that she did that, he would take her at her word, does he believe the property appraiser is in conflict with Florida Statute 195.087(1)(a).

Attorney Richardson responded if those were provided to DOR, they should be provided to the County a copy at the same time.

Commissioner Tobia stated for the record that many other property appraisers provided this information to the office voluntarily.

Ms. Blickley remarked because they were asked.

Commissioner Tobia stated in Ms. Blickley's emails she claimed that she "Strives for continued effort of increasing transparency, openness, and honesty." He inquired if this were true why would she intentionally choose not to provide the information to the Board of County Commissioners, and violate State Statute.

Ms. Blickley stated first off she does not believe that she violated State Statute; she provides schedules to the Board that she thinks are prescribed by law; if she has failed to give the County schedules that are required to be sent for which had never been asked a question about, she will go back and do that research; as the Board knows with this budget everything is open to public record; she would have no reason thinking that she could give the DOR something that she would hope that the Board never get its hands on; however, it may be that since there never is a single solitary question it is not additional information that supports the schedules that she gives to the County Manager, that he has never even asked for.

Commissioner Tobia stated from what he is reading the property appraiser shall submit his or her budget in the manner and form required by DOR; and he inquired if that requires the Board to ask the property appraiser, or if Statute is written in such a way that it is incumbent on the property appraiser's office to provide that to the Board.

Attorney Richardson advised Commissioner Tobia had read the Statute accurately; and it seems to require the property appraiser to provide a copy to the Board.

Commissioner Tobia expressed his thanks; he understands it puts him in a tough position; he appreciates the insight; and he has a motion.

Chair Pritchett asked if this is something they have never turned over so they might not have thought about it before; and she asked if Ms. Blickley had turned it over.

Mr. Pelham replied that documentation has not been provided to the Board since 2013 2014.

Chair Pritchett stated so it was before but not now; and she asked if there is a reason they quit.

Mr. Pelham responded he cannot speak prior to that time period.

Motion by Commissioner Tobia, to move that the Board of County Commissioners require the Property Appraiser to comply with the Board's obligations under Section 195.087, and to submit the Board with each budget request a full and complete copy of the budget request she submits to the Florida Department of Revenue (DOR), including all supporting justifications and worksheets required by the DOR as set forth in the property appraisers instruction book for budget requests; pursuant to State Statute, the property appraiser is required to furnish a copy of her budget request to the Board, in the manner and forum required by the DOR at the same time, per Florida law such information shall already have been submitted to the County on or before June 1; if that has not been done, the County requests such information be submitted

within 48 hours; and failure to do so will result in the Chair being authorized to file a report with the Governor's office outlining the property appraisers neglect of duty, as per Article 4, Section (7)(a) of the Florida constitution.

Chair Pritchett inquired if she is due to turn that in at this time, because her budget is not fully prepared right now, correct.

Ms. Blickley responded her budget is fully prepared. She stated her budget has been submitted to DOR for approval; her budget is always first, it is always June 1; to her knowledge, they always provided the Board with the schedules that the law requires; but DOR just does require additional documentation and justification to support those schedules. She went on to say her office is not omitting to give the Board that information to be clandestine; her office is complying with the law, to give copies of the schedules that she believes are required for her to give the Board, even though the DOR requires additional information; so if that is incorrect, she will just include that additional documentation with the schedules; she does not know that it is; it is not something her office purposely kept from the County; and she does not believe she has ever been asked for it.

Chair Pritchett stated to sum it all up, she has it ready; and she inquired if she is fine with just sending it to the Board.

Ms. Blickley replied it has already been submitted to DOR.

Chair Pritchett stated she knows, but send it to the Commission. She inquired if they need to do a formal request.

Ms. Blickley responded they do not; and she believes the Board already has it in its possession, or at least Commissioner Tobia does.

Chair Pritchett advised she does not know that he does.

Commissioner Tobia stated he does not.

Chair Pritchett asked if they could get the past couple of years as well, so she can get an overview of what it is they are supposed to be looking at.

Ms. Blickley replied sure.

Chair Pritchett stated she heard Commissioner Tobia's motion, but she has a feeling they will not need to do that if Ms. Blickley will just send that to the Board.

Ms. Blickley stated of course, she would send it to the Board, it is a public record.

Commissioner Tobia stated it is important to say not only is it a public record, it is mandated by the State Statute that, that be provided; there is a difference between being a public record and a Florida Statute; the very Statute that she cited requiring to do that; and she may want to speak with her attorney, because the County Attorney disagrees there is some trouble with the Statute, apparently.

Ms. Blickley mentioned she gets his point and she understands the difference between a budget questionnaire he would like her to fill out and a mandated budget.

Commissioner Tobia stated this was on the Agenda, and hopefully, Ms. Blickley checked it, but

according to AO 26, Bill Folder and BCC 25, Procurement, the Board chose in an effort to increase transparency, to submit its purchases of materials and/or services for the acknowledgment into the bill folder for each Commission meeting; while the Board cannot force her to do the same, they can enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) where she complies on her own account to that same Administrative Order and Board Policy, that the Board abides by; this would be at no additional cost; this would provide increased transparency; and he understands that this a public record, but one has to file a public record, there are fees for public record, and getting it on the Agenda is absolutely free. He asked if in the spirit of transparency, if she would be willing to rise to the same level of transparency and honesty that this Board of County Commission currently maintains.

Ms. Blickley stated before she answers that, she asked if he is asking for a MOU because she seen it on the Agenda; and she asked if he is asking for that for all constitutional officers.

Commissioner Tobia responded her office, specifically; and he stated her office is the only office the County caught not following State Statute.

Ms. Blickley interrupted by saying that is his interpretation.

Commissioner Tobia clarified by saying no, it is not his interpretation; he is not an attorney; he would never interpret State Statute, that is Attorney Richardson's interpretation of State Statute; she is above the three percent and she provides a budget to this Board that does not meet statutory minimums; and his question is to her if she would provide that level of transparency that the entire Board abides by. He advised this is voluntary and if she does not want to meet that level, she absolutely does not need to.

Ms. Blickley replied right; and she stated that is another one of the when did you stop beating your wife questions.

Chair Pritchett indicated she is not doing that.

Ms. Blickley stated okay. She responded the answer being absolutely not. She explained not because her office does not want to be transparent; she is not an officer of the court; and it is because she believes entering into such an agreement would violate several things. She stated she believes it would violate potentially what is coming down the pike House Bill 1373; she believes it would violate the County Charter; she believes it would violate the separation of duties enumerated in the constitution; and it is very, very, very important that this independently elected constitutional officer never enter into an agreement where there is undue influence from a taxing authority, the person who sets the tax rate over the person who establishes the other side of the property tax equation, the value. She reiterated no; and she stated for that reason she absolutely will not.

Commissioner Feltner advised the Property Appraiser's point is well taken and if the Board is going to ask this, he thinks it should be all five of the constitutional officers; and further, he would prefer something like that be brought up in a regular meeting, and put on the agenda. Chair Pritchett stated she does not disagree with that; she started doing that a while ago, because it was hard for people to do pubic records, so they just put it on the Agenda; of course, it is whatever the Board wants to do; everything they spend individually, not necessarily the whole office; her staff gets reimbursed for mileage and hers is not put on there; everything that she does is personally just put out there; and it helps to solve a lot of problems. She added the Board brought it up to solve a problem it had when it was dealing with a problem on the dais; this is not necessarily a bad thing, but, again, it is whatever people can find a way to do it or whatever.

Commissioner Goodson thanked Ms. Blickley for coming; he apologized for her going through this; he stated he thinks he has a good way to solve this if she would agree to a public hanging, they could take her outside, and the other three who are opposed; he just finds this so unusual for the Board doing this and not knowing where it is going; if a person knows anything about Tallahassee and they did this, they would all be locked up; he does not think Ms. Blickley did anything intentionally wrong; he thinks she is doing her best to run her organization; he thanked her for what she does; but if she wants to submit to a public hanging, he thinks they can set it up.

Ms. Blickley remarked no, she is not willing to do that.

Commissioner Goodson stated he does not blame her.

Ms. Blickley stated this really is not about her, she ran for office and it was a treacherous campaign, but the men and the women who work in the Property Appraiser's Office do not deserve this; they deserve more respect than this; her office has never ever, in the decade that she had her name on the door, and the other 30 years that she spent in that office has never been impossible to get information out of the Property Appraiser's Office, in the time that she has been the elected official; the Board knows that, the people behind her know it, and the people listening know it; and anytime any of the Board sitting here today, and all of the people who sat there before them ever asked the Property Appraiser's Office for information, for help, for guidance, and for numbers early so the budget process could kickoff, this office does it, as a matter of fact, she spends a lot of time trying to repair the relationship between Brevard's taxing authorities, and her office. She stated no matter what the Board does, no matter how it does it, it is completely transparent what it is attempting to do; her office has nothing to hide and it has a very, very basic one source of revenue, no cash carry forward, no reserves, and no ability to keep money from one year to the next to fund her office; every dollar that is left over after all the bills are paid, to provide all the services that she is statutorily required to provide, and some that they do as a courtesy; and all of that money comes back to the Board.

Commissioner Tobia stated he appreciates Commissioner Feltner's point; he thinks that would be well received, if the Board dealt with that in another meeting, and maybe the MOU could be used as a basis; more information to the public at no cost, he thinks is a good thing and he thinks this is a very good meeting so far; he appreciates Ms. Blickley coming up to the podium; he appreciates her acknowledging her failings with the Florida Statute and for not providing the Board with the minimum requirements, and for rectifying that by giving that to the Board in a timely manner; and for the Board not having to take actions, which he thanked her for. He added he has not seen those and he believes if the Board had that data 80 percent of his questions about leases would have probably been answered in the data the Board should have received statutorily on June 1.

Ms. Blickley stated no, that would not have been; she is going to get the Board the justification forms, the other supporting documentation for the schedules that she gives to the DOR; she is still not sure there is a requirement, although there is no problem for them to be omitted, she does not have pockets of money in charts of accounts where dollars could be hidden; she can assure the Board that justification has to be had; however, in going back to the questions, Commissioner Tobia asked about travel, mailings, who is mailed, how much it costs, breaking it out for each piece; and the cost of postage. She remarked she guesses postage has only gone up for the Property Appraiser. She stated Commissioner Tobia wants to know if these mailings were done statutorily or if she just decides to send a bunch of mail, he wanted to know about vehicles; most of this was not applicable; she has two people who have take home vehicles and they are subject to Federal income tax for that; she does not have any capital expenses, she does not own any vehicles, everything is under the lease, and in the budget the Board does have; there are no outside contracts; they use the same procurement policies

as the Board does; after the Board approves her budget, well they do not so that was not applicable; wage increases, they follow the County's model or the State because that is what is prescribed by law; employee benefits, nope only deferred comp; and contract employees is none. She advised none of the information contained in the questionnaire, that the Board held a Special meeting over, would have helped it in determining any of the increases in the budget for this year that unfortunately they did not get to cover; the five percent salary increases is \$280,000 based on the County's model, she does not put that in a budget amendment which she could do, that is what the previous Property Appraiser did every year; her budget is due first and the Board has not adopted what it is going to maybe do, the State has not adopted what it is going to do; so, in order to be transparent, open, and honest she included in her original budget request the monies that may be expended for salary increases, it is in there; \$103,000 for health insurance; \$174,000 for the FRS increases; the workman's compensation insurance liability increases and the leases; and maintenance costs and postage. She continued to say out of that, that she has no control over \$42,719 is really, why they are present today; .42 percent of the 6.73 percent is actually stuff she is asking the State to fund; it is for those men and women who are going to reach their career milestones this year like the field appraiser taking their four classes, they are going to go from a field appraiser one to a field appraiser two, they are going to get a five percent increase in pay, and they are going to get their \$1,000 certification pay; and those are the men and women who should receive it for their projected milestones. She assured the Board that, that \$42,719 will be funded this year; she will tell the Board from the bottom of her heart if the County could find a way to reduce health insurance, FRS rates, workmen's compensation, liability insurance, and a better lease option rate than the State of Florida, she is there for the Board to help her because she would certainly like to take more of that money and put it into the men and women who she would like to come work for her, because like the Board, she has vacant positions; but other than that \$42,719, which seems to be what the Board is really interested in for who, how, and whether the \$31,000 was appropriate.

Chair Pritchett stated when they have to put budgets together, they have to get all of the data, and there are two new Commissioners who are learning the process; Commissioner Tobia through the years gave the County a hard time about buying a paper folding machine; a lot of changes were made, and he has always been very adamant about CPI; the Board put Sheriff Ivey through heck because in the first couple of years, he desperately needed more money, and Commissioner Tobia beat the tar of him; and she thinks he has never voted on Sheriff Ivey's budget yet. She went on to say there has been a lot things that she does not agree with him on; she does not mind him asking the questions; they just answer the questions; Ms. Blickley has answered the questions and that is good; this is just kind of what they do; she does not believe it is personal, she thinks it might have gotten a little personal after a while just because of the response; but people do that to themselves. She stated if Ms. Blickley had just come up; and she inquired if Ms. Blickley knew about the previous Special meeting.

Ms. Blickley replied she found out at 4:00 p.m. on Friday evening that the Board was having a Special meeting. She stated in complete transparency, she read the Agenda and saw that it had nothing to do with her; then somebody pointed out it specifically has to do with her; the Board was going to be formulating or voting on a questionnaire that it would like filled out; and she was very inquisitive about that, because...

Chair Pritchett interrupted by saying her abilities have never been in question to her; she had no concern at all; but if a Commissioner wants to ask questions, it does not phase her much. She added if anyone felt like she was doing something that insulted his or her integrity, farthest thing from her mind, but as far as him asking questions she is behind him doing so with the answers coming out; she knows Ms. Blickley does not get much of an opportunity to be in front of the public and she is guessing that she said that about the public workshop; she is going to make a motion in a little while that way the constitutional officers will have the ability to talk

about their budgets and why they have what they have and if there is an increase, when the budget is getting ready to be prepared; and she just wanted to say that. She added with Commissioner Tobia doing this, he honestly has done great things for the Board; they are very tight with the budgets up here, doing the best that they can, not that Ms. Blickley is not, but when a Commissioner wants to bring that up and trying to figure out CPI, they went through COVID and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funds, and they have been through a mess on the Commission; and they are trying to figure out how to do things appropriately, so for that she does not mind it. She stated sorry that it maybe went to some areas it probably did not need to get through, but she thinks this is good government and asking questions and answering them is always good government, and the quicker they are able to do that the people maintain confidence in their property appraiser; and it is a very good thing and she just wanted to mention that. She went on to say they are going to be able to continue having good relationships with all County staff by working together and asking questions and answering because this has nothing to do with the Budget Office or anybody, the Board is just working the job, and there are Commissioners on the dais just giving her a hard time once in a while; but she asked that it not affect her staff working with the County staff.

Ms. Blickley stated to be honest she is insulted by the question.

Chair Pritchett mentioned her CFO mentioned to Jill Hayes, Budget Office Director, that she was going to be collateral damage; she just wanted to make sure that they do not have those types of things happening; and that this is going to be smooth and comfortable, and nobody is going to be picked on.

Ms. Blickley responded not to her knowledge has her CFO said that Ms. Hayes was going to be collateral damage. She advised she has to tell the Chair, although she owns the microphones, she owns the time, and she gets to schedule the special meetings; she guesses she gets to scour the Agenda to see if they have anything to do with her; but...

Chair Pritchett interrupted by saying she should have been sent that and she will make sure that, that always happens.

Ms. Blickley went on to say she has a question.

Chair Pritchett pointed out when Ms. Blickley sends an email requesting one, she quickly said for them to make sure Ms. Blickley receives the special meeting; and she did this for her because she wanted one.

Ms. Blickley confirmed.

Chair Pritchett stated at any time that any of the constitutional officers want a special meeting, she would be glad to pull that together for them.

Ms. Blickley advised she would have certainly appreciated the same professional courtesy; she would have certainly appreciated that if Commissioner Tobia had a single question about a single budget that she had ever submitted to the DOR for approval in the seven or eight years that he has been a Commissioner, that he would have either emailed saying he has a couple of questions about travel, how many take home vehicles does she have, if the mailings are statutorily required or if she is just choosing to do them, and how many had her face and name on them.

Chair Pritchett stated she thinks with the questions, he was just going to send them out to everyone.

Ms. Blickley stated she does not know why it took a Special meeting. She asked if the Board requires a Special meeting for anybody to send a questionnaire in this County; and if that is what is required in this County.

Chair Pritchett responded it would need to be approved by the Board if it were being sent out as a Commission.

Ms. Blickley stated so the Commissioner cannot send her a question if there is a question about her budget.

Chair Pritchett stated one might be able to. She reiterated this is what Commissioner Tobia does and by the end of it, it is a real pain, but by the time it is done they usually end up in a better place.

Ms. Blickley advised this is never a painful process for the Property Appraiser.

Chair Pritchett remarked it seems to be right now. She stated she does not want to debate that with her right now; she really does not want to go down that path; but she has done really well answering the questions today. She advised she completely appreciates it; and she thanked her for all of the information that she brought and for the way she is handling her office, it is truly appreciated.

Ms. Blickley remarked if she decides subsequently that the Board actually has a question about her budget to feel free to reach out to her.

Chair Pritchett concluded by saying she certainly will.

Commissioner Goodson inquired if the Board has a mandate by Commissioner Tobia to vote on now.

Chair Pritchett responded for an MOU, but she thinks he talked to Commissioner Feltner and he decided to bring it to a regular meeting.

Commissioner Goodson inquired if the Board is going to go through the same stuff with the Tax Collector and Supervisor of Elections that they just went through with Ms. Blickley.

Chair Pritchett responded it would be their right to do it if they want; she stated she does not know what the questions are right now; and they did not receive any of the correspondence.

Commissioner Goodson asked if the questions would be the same ones he asked Ms. Blickley.

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Chair Pritchett replied she does not know. She stated they would be called upon and the Board would be giving them an opportunity; they do a great job on their stuff as well; and it is going to be great having them come forward and talk to the Board.

Commissioner Goodson stated he does not understand if a motion is going to be made.

Chair Pritchett advised she does not think Commissioner Tobia is right now.

Commissioner Goodson remarked well then waste their time doing this, go on and get it done.

Motion failed due to the lack of a seconder.

### **Public Defender 18th Judicial Circuit Court**

Blaise Trettis, Public Defender, stated he is pleased to request a Public Defender budget from the Commission, which is 60 percent less than last year's budget; he has been able to make this budget reduction through efficiently and effectively running his office and passing along those cost savings to the Board; in addition to the 60 percent reduction, he pointed out his budget since he has been public defender from the Commission is actually 10 years ago; today it is one half percent less than it was 10 years ago; and next year he is requesting a 60 percent lower budget.

Chair Pritchett inquired how he is doing that.

Mr. Trettis responded he thinks the main reason is in 2015, he negotiated an agreement with the Commission to move a couple of County employees who worked in his office to State employment; the Commissioners at that point through the budget process, basically paid the salaries of those employees, but they were not County employees anymore; that allowed for him to basically subsume them in his office and then whatever cost savings he has been able to achieve in the Public Defender's Office which has been pretty substantial through a reduction in the number of employees is about seven percent since he has been in office; and he has been able to just pass along those savings to the County Commission.

Commissioner Tobia expressed his thanks; and he asked him to disregard everything he heard, because he is trying to keep it below the three percent cap, and here Mr. Trettis has not even shown a positive budget, he has reduced his budget as he just said. He stated he does not know how it was done; but Mr. Trettis sent the Board a letter of April 21, informing the Board of the cost saving measures. He went on to say he greatly appreciates his diligent work as a public servant, as well as keeping them informed; and he thanked him for showing up and helping the Board craft a budget that is conservative for their constituents.

Mr. Trettis expressed his thanks.

Chair Pritchett expressed her thanks for him serving on the Charter board as well.

Commissioner Feltner expressed his thanks for him being present today. He stated he is just curious if his public defenders that are in County court are State employees.

Mr. Trettis replied they are all State employees, whether they are felony, misdemeanor, or

juvenile.

## **Brevard County Tax Collector**

Chair Pritchett expressed her thanks to the Tax Collector for all the work that she does.

Lisa Cullen, Tax Collector, stated she just wanted to talk a little bit about how the Tax Collector's Office budget is funded and how it specifically affects the Board; her office is a fee office in Brevard County; it operates on the fees collected based on the services provided; the fees for those services are statutorily set by the Legislature; the Board pays the statutory fee for the collection of real and tangible personal property taxes; 2.25 percent for the collection of Tourist Development Taxes; and she issues Business Tax receipts at cost. She advised as the Tax Collector, she sets no millages or fees; the Tax Collector's Office must earn what it spends by completing those transactions and earning those associated fees; expenses are justified to the Department of Revenue (DOR) for approval prior to expenditure; the DOR looks to ensure the Tax Collector's Office budget is adequate, but not excessive; she can tell the Board to call them if it has a question about how it looks at the Tax Collector's budget; and in her years as Tax Collector, she has developed a wonderful relationship with them, in fact, if she does not know how to handle something she calls them and they talk through it. She stated at the end of the Fiscal Year, she has always had unused fees; those unused fees are distributed to the Taxing Authorities proportionate to what they paid her office; she has no carryforward; she has no long term investments; everything resets to zero October 1, as that new Fiscal Year begins; and is a true zero based operation. She advised what she is not going to do is cut the State services that she provides on behalf of numerous State agencies to increase unused fees; she has always been transparent with her office; the meeting was a blindside, she just really feels that way and she has to be honest about it because in her tenure as Tax Collector her audits have never resulted in one single finding, not one; and the DOR has never denied her office budget approval.

Chair Pritchett stated she is sorry.

Ms. Cullen added it has been several years since the Board asked her to present her budget, but she is readily available for the Board to call her and talk. She stated she would like to address the last two Fiscal Years, which were different from her prior years; she built an addition onto the Palm Bay complex, with the oversight of the Board's Facility construction department; the project doubled the size of that space, that is a fast growing City, and she is going to be able to bring some more services down there; the Tax Collector's Office paid all costs associated with this project, but it is a Board asset, it is not hers it is theirs; it was paid for solely with those fees generated by her office, there was no other funding; and since the Palm Bay office will be completed in this budget year, the budget she submits for 2023 2024 would actually show a decrease. She stated but like the Commission and her fellow constitutional officers, she has those mandated increases in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) rates, health and property insurance costs, she participates with the Board because as a larger group they get a better rate; she has workers compensation rates and increased operating costs, but the DOR does have the budgetary control over the Tax Collector's Office; this is because as someone who collects taxes and like the Sheriff, she can actually go out and seize property; and they want her to act with undue influence, especially undue influence from those that set tax rates, spend those collections, and benefit from unused fees. She mentioned being the last piece in the budget puzzle because she generates those fees, that is how her office operates, and her budget is not due until August 1; as in prior years, the County Manager will receive that copy at the same time DOR does; she has not completed the questionnaire, but she fully intends to do so; she did feel admonished for not being here and she did not know about the meeting until late on Friday either; and she does not watch the Agendas, she has plenty to say grace over, she keeps very busy, and right now she is in the budget process. She

expressed her thanks to Commissioner Goodson for reaching out and discussing her budget. She stated she has nothing to hide, nor does the Tax Collector's Office; she stands by the vision, the 207 men and women of the Tax Collector's Office operated by transparency and accountability every day in every way; and if there is anything the Board wants from her, she would be happy to provide it, and it does not have to public records it because she is not going to charge them.

Commissioner Tobia expressed his thanks for Ms. Cullen coming here and for coming to the Board because of Statute, and for the reasons she mentioned that the Board would not receive her budget until much later; he looked at the previous budget and that is where the numbers came from, but what he wants to do, is specifically point her out; he thanked her for picking up the phone and calling him personally, and for going over this; he knows he had reached out and there had been a little bit of a cross, but she got back with him and explained the situation; and he cannot tell her how much that meant when she said they haven't completed the budget yet, but are going to come in at or below three percent.

Ms. Cullen remarked it is going to be a decrease.

Commissioner Tobia stated that is as good as gold to him; he feels partially responsible, but since it was Board action, he did not have authority; but now the Board is here now, and he would like to make a motion. He stated he would like for Ms. Cullen to get and continue providing the excellent services at the conservative principles that she does.

Commissioner Goodson inquired if that is just for Ms. Cullen or for all.

Chair Pritchett reminded him that Ms. Blickley already turned hers in.

The Board rescinded the request made by the Board on June 12, 2023, for a comprehensive response to the questionnaire from the Tax Collector, as she had committed to a budget at or below three percent net, after remitting excess collections to the County.

**Result:** APPROVED

**Mover:** John Tobia

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, and Feltner

Ms. Cullen advised in full transparency, she cannot say that in the next year she will not go over three percent; and she is not present to hide anything.

Chair Pritchett stated by the way she always wanted to grow up and be Lisa Cullen, she thinks what Ms. Cullen gets to do is cool; and she does her job so well. She mentioned everybody is saying blindsided and she thought everyone would just show up like they have done before; she was not going to vote to send the questionnaire out, but she looked around and no one was present, she said go ahead; and so that is all that was.

Ms. Cullen stated Commissioner Tobia even told her in all honesty that he had not asked them to be here.

Chair Pritchett stated after the fact that was all fine after that, but when it hit that, it was just like regular business to her, just so she knows, and she knows her well enough, too.

Ms. Cullen pointed out that she knows for a fact that in 2024 because she works closely with the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, they are going to go to a new system for the issuance of title and registration; she is going to have to train her staff for that; and there is going to be an increase for that.

Chair Pritchett stated see that sounds like so much fun though.

Ms. Cullen expressed loving her job, it is fun, and there is a couple of things that she truly does not like about her job; she raised her hand and took the oath, she does not like to take people's property away from them or take their right to drive; she signed up for that; it is not fun; but she does it.

Chair Pritchett mentioned knowing Maria Erdman, she is one of the best people in the whole world.

Ms. Cullen remarked she is very blessed; and she believes she is the one who took the Sheriff's finance manager.

Commissioner Feltner expressed his thanks for being here today; he stated Ms. Cullen has always been quick to take his call over the many years and he appreciates that; and he feels confident in saying he knows all of the constitutional officers very well and he talks to them a great bit. He inquired if she could speak about the short term rentals in Brevard County over the years has been hard to collect and now there is a mechanism to do that automatically for Vrbo and Airbnb, they remit that now to the County.

Ms. Cullen responded in the past it was hard to regulate, even control and find out about those properties; she has contracts with Vrbo, Airbnb, and a handful of others that are not big but some niche groups that rent short term; in fact, she was the second Tax Collector in Florida to sign that contract with Airbnb, and one of the things she asked them is if this the Tourist Development Tax (TDT), because it has to be on that bill; and that is part of the contract, and even the owner cannot change that.

Commissioner Feltner advised he asked that because she probably read or heard that TDT is becoming, it seems a much bigger and important part of what is being done here.

Ms. Cullen mentioned legislatively they try to attack it, change it, and watch that as well.

Commissioner Feltner commented he understood.

### **Brevard County Supervisor of Elections**

Chair Pritchett announced Brevard County Supervisor of Elections, and thanked him for all he does.

Tim Bobanic, Supervisor of Elections, stated he would like to introduce Maria Mayer, his Finance Director who has been with the office less than a year and apparently is getting a trial by fire; he appreciates all of her assistance in putting everything together for him; he thanked the Board for the opportunity to discuss the Supervisor of Election's budget request for Fiscal Year 2023 2024; he noted that amount is for \$7,820,283 and it does represent a 19.4 percent increase over the current year's budget; and to put it simply this budget includes more elections than the current Fiscal Year. He went on to say the current Fiscal Year, 2022 2023 contains the majority of funding related to one election, and that is the 2022 General Election; the proposed 2023-2024 budget contains funding for four elections, the 2023 Municipal and Special District Election, the 2024 Presidential Preference Primary (PPP), the 2024 Primary Election,

and a portion of the cost of the 2024 Presidential General Election; one simply cannot compare the current Fiscal Year to the Fiscal Year budget that was submitted, it is not an apples to apples comparison, it is more like comparing grapes to watermelons; history shows that Fiscal Year 2023 is the lowest percentage increase from prior budget requests leading into a Presidential Election over the last decade; the budgets for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 and Fiscal Year 2019-2020, going into Presidential Elections that were approved, without question, by the Board of County Commissioners at the time were each 27.6 percent; and this proposed budget is 19.4 percent going from one election to four elections. He continued to say this reduction is the direct result of efficiencies that his office has gained through the use of technology and other cost saving measures; history will also show that his office, traditionally, has a decrease in proposed budget for the Fiscal Year following Presidential Elections; his office must always ramp up going into a four cycle Presidential year and then it has a negative budget; every penny of taxpayer dollars is and should be spent wisely; but he wanted to share some other relevant facts about the Supervisor of Election's budget. He noted for Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the Supervisor of Elections constitutes only 2.27 percent of the General Fund adopted budget, and only 0.35 percent of the overall County budget; when one looks at the overall adopted budget for all the Brevard County Constitutional Officers, the Supervisor of Elections is only 3.61 percent of that total Constitutional budget. He stated approximately two weeks ago Commissioner Tobia contacted Most, if not all, of the Florida Supervisors of Elections stating that he was conducting a comparative analysis of Supervisor of Election's Office budget requests and asked that they provide copies to his office for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget and Fiscal Year 2023-2024 proposed budget; many Supervisor's contacted him about this request asking what this is about; he encouraged them to promptly respond to this public record request and subsequently put in a public records request for the same information to be that was sent to Commissioner Tobia to be sent to his office; based on the data received as of yesterday, here is how Brevard compares to the counties that have responded so far, and to his knowledge 36 counties have responded; and he is not sure if Commissioner Tobia received any additional responses, but he counted 36 that either copied him on the responses or subsequently afterwards; of the 36 that responded the average budget increase from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 was 20.67 percent; Brevard's is 19.4 percent, therefore, he is slightly below the average increase going into a Presidential year; however, mostly importantly, the average cost per voter, taking the number of registered voters and dividing it by the requested budget, the average was \$27.64 per voter. He added Brevard County for the proposed budget for 2023-2024 is \$16.96 per voter, well below the average of the responding counties, and a difference of \$10.68, therefore, it is clear that Brevard is not an outlier with regards to the budget request. He continued by saying besides three additional elections, he wants to spend some time talking about his budget and what else has contributed to the increase; to begin, there were multiple unfunded mandates in the most recent session of the Florida Legislature; Senate Bill 7024 has been brought up many times and requires increases in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) and employer contribution rates; compensation and benefits increased 5.76 percent over the last budget which includes increases in health insurance, workers comp, and general liability insurance; in addition, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 7050 which amended every single Chapter of the Florida Election Code; the biggest impact is a section of the bill that requires no less than six government agencies provide to Supervisors of Elections weekly information relating to felony convictions, deceased persons, persons deemed mentally incapacitated, persons removed from the Florida Driver's License database, and other information that identifies a voter as potentially ineligible; all of this was previously handled by the Florida Department of State and the Division of Elections; and this unfunded mandate requires the addition of a full time employee position. He went on to say it is important to note that this office has not added a full time position since 2009 and they have had to add a new funded position with this unfunded mandate; the proposed budget also includes funding for continued implementation of Senate Bill 90, which requires secure ballot intake stations at all branch offices and early voting sites be monitored by an employee of the Supervisor of Elections Office when available to the public; also included is funding for the two additional polling places due to

changes in election day voting trends and costs associated with temporary labor required to receive and process an average of 150,000 initiative petitions in a presidential election cycle; operating expenses have increased due to poll workers, temporary labor, and security to conduct a municipal special district election and three county wide elections; he reiterated going from one election to three for all poll workers, temporary labor, and security; printing services and supplies have increased for the 2023-2024 budget because all printing costs for the mail ballot envelopes which is now done in house, have to be purchased for the 2024 General Election, in this Fiscal Year; previously, the office, for the last Presidential Election year, the mailings were outsourced and the Supervisor of Election was charged in the following Fiscal Year, but he has to pay for those printing costs now; also included in the costs are costs associated with continued litigation; and his office would be remiss if it were not prepared for more future elections within recount range and contested elections warranting increased litigation costs. He mentioned also included are salary increases for permanent staff which are commensurate with the Board of County Commissioners proposed increase for County employees, which is five percent or \$1.00 per hour increase; overtime costs are increased again due to conducting multiple elections leading into a Presidential Year; and finally, the budget includes funding for capital purchases which includes the replacement of one fully depreciated vehicle and desktop computer upgrades to remain in compliance with cyber security protocols. He noted his proposed budget for 2023-2024 is actually a 7.21 percent decrease from 2022-2023; with that, he wanted to address the role of the Supervisor of Elections as a constitutional officer; the Florida Legislature, through the Constitution and State Statutes continues to strengthen the autonomy of the County constitutional officers and for good reason especially with the Supervisor of Elections; every Commission sitting on the dais right now, he typed their name on the ballot and counted their votes; there has to be a certain level of independence between the County Commission and a constitutional officer; Florida Statute 129.201(3) clearly states that the Board of County Commission may not amend, modify, increase, or reduce any expenditure at the sub object code and that the independence of the Supervisor of Elections shall be preserved concerning the purchase of supplies and equipment, the selection of personnel, and the hiring, firing, and setting of salaries; most recently the Legislature passed House Bill 1373 which was referenced by Property Appraiser, Dana Bickley; and it states that a County may not create an office, special district, governmental unit, or expand the powers or authority of any existing office, special district, or governmental unit for the purpose of exercising any power or authority allocated exclusively to the Sheriff, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections, or Clerk of Court. He commented it also says that a County Commissioner who votes in favor of a proposed ordinance to create an office, special district, governmental unit, or expand the powers or authority of any existing office, special district, governmental unit for the purpose of exercising any power or authority allocated exclusively to the Supervisor Of Elections, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, or Sheriff shall be guilty of misfeasance or malfeasance in office; it is plainly obvious that Commissioner Tobia, who is now a candidate for Supervisor of Elections and who was the architect of the June 12 Special meeting, which the constitutional officers were not asked to attend, as well as the architect of the constitutional office budget questionnaire, has a newfound interest in the Supervisor of Elections budget, despite the fact that Commissioner Tobia has never previously questioned that budget; according to the minutes of the September 24, 2019, budget approval meeting, Commissioner Tobia never once questioned the Supervisor of Elections 27.6 percent budget increase; and in fact, less than one year ago, Commissioner Tobia awarded the Supervisor of Elections office and Lori Scott, right in this chamber, with a Board approved Resolution noting that, "whereas this office efficiently facilitates voting, collects and disseminates election information, and ensures the security of the elections process". He commented it would appear Commissioner Tobia is now using the resources of the County Commission and his office to campaign from the dais; Commissioner Tobia's statement that the Supervisor of Elections budget request is an increase

of 546.66 percent over the three percent charter cap is a gross misrepresentation of the actual budget; he could have simply stated that the budget was a 19.4 percent increase over its existing budget, which is a direct result of conducting four elections versus one election; but he chose to represent this instead as a percentage of a percentage to exaggerate the increase. He stated he would be happy to answer any questions on the budget that he submitted on June 1 for Fiscal Year 2023-2024; his Finance Manager has the questions to the questionnaire that was sent to his office; and he will provide them to the Board now.

Chair Pritchett stated she is not running for Supervisor of Elections and she does have questions because it is a large increase and he knows that; she is trying to get the information and education on it as they move forward; she inquired if the Supervisor of Elections has to raise its budget this much next time, is he able to bring it down the next time; and she noted the reason that question is out there is because his office will not be doing that many elections or pre printing, so if goes up that high this time, will it be reduced.

Mr. Bobanic responded that historically looking at the last decade of the budget requests, the Supervisor of Elections has done that after Presidential years.

Chair Pritchett stated okay, she took a peek at it.

Mr. Bobanic noted he wants to say the number was almost 14 percent decrease the last time.

Chair Pritchett noted she had not seen that on there.

Mr. Bobanic mentioned she would have had to have gone back four years; that is his argument for everything; and his office needs to be looked at in a four year cycle.

Chair Pritchett mentioned it was all given to her, but she did not see those numbers.

Mr. Bobanic advised the Board would see a significant decrease next year; he can never predict what the legislature is going to throw at him like they did this year; however, that is certainly his plan.

Chair Pritchett stated that was just a question she had; and she asked for clarification that his office is going to do four elections instead of one and with the mandates, that is why his office needs the extra amount.

Mr. Bobanic responded affirmatively and handed out the answers to the questionnaire.

Chair Pritchett stated she cannot help but ask since he placed this on the questionnaire, because she does depreciation in the college, but is his office buying an automobile that is completely depreciated.

Mr. Bobanic responded it is; there is a vehicle on its absolute last legs, and they are going through the process...

Chair Pritchett inquired so it is old, depreciate to her is four or five years old.

Mr. Bobanic responded it is very old; they have a 2014; they actually inherited it from Lisa Cullen's office; he has a few thousand dollars' worth of repairs that are being required right now; they always try to use other County resources; and across the hall, every piece of modular furniture they have is all hand me downs from the Tax Collector.

Chair Pritchett mentioned the other thing she was going to ask is if he could do his best, because the other constitutional offices are not having a lot of overtime, if he could do his best to maybe do something different with that.

Mr. Bobanic stated he would love to cut overtime.

Chair Pritchett asked if he could maybe do flex with it because they have high seasons and low seasons; she mentioned she is just throwing it out as a suggestion; and she might have had one more question in this mess, but she will come back to it later.

Commissioner Tobia stated he appreciates Mr. Bobanic outlaying his budget; he provided a handout and he does not think it is fair unless Mr. Bobanic has it, even though all of it is public record; he would like to point out, and Mr. Bobanic has not been the Supervisor of Elections very long, but over that decade, Mr. Bobanic said one would need to look at a longitudinal approach, but his budget is up 134.69 percent; when placed in comparison that is multiple times the other constitutional offices; yes it does dip, but longitudinally it is up four or five times more than the next highest; and he wants to get into some general questions and some of those things that Mr. Bobanic has brought up himself, but he appreciates him laying that out because it makes this a lot easier. He stated according to Mr. Bobanic's budget request summary, HB 7024, FRS, and as well as increases in health insurance premiums were part of the reason why he had asked for an increase; and he asked if Mr. Bobanic happens to know what percentage of his total requested budget increase that makes up.

Mr. Bobanic advised he does not have the exact number of the overall percentage of the budget increase, but he can prepare that for him.

\*Commissioner Goodson's absence is noted at 3:06 p.m.

Commissioner Tobia mentioned he has one included in the package he handed out; if Mr. Bobanic wants to look at it, he got this through public record; seeing how Mr. Bobanic's office does not have many folks on the special risk on FRS it looks like this increase is \$162,000 and this was from a combination of his budget as well as from Human Resources because they do it; Supervisor of Elections saw an increase of 13 percent, not 13 of the \$1.2 million; and his point being it only makes up a small percentage.

Mr. Bobanic responded he would agree with that.

Commissioner Tobia explained Mr. Bobanic also referenced CS for SB 7050.

Mr. Bobanic responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia noted Mr. Boboanic stated it had unfunded mandates.

Mr. Bobanic again responded in agreement.

Commissioner Tobia stated he appreciates that; he mentioned in the packet Mr. Bobanic will see that he went to the summary and the bill analysis by the Florida House of Representatives; he will see that they say, "This bill could have a minimal negative fiscal impact" and it goes on to say in that same paragraph, and Mr. Bobanic has a copy of this, "authorize certain notices on the County or Supervisor's website instead of in the newspaper of general public circulation may result in cost savings"; he noted he is just trying to understand this budget increase because 19.4 is a large number; and he inquired how much in dollars or percentage of the \$1.2 million extra that is being asked for over this year, is that minimal impact on his office.



Mr. Bobanic responded he does not that he would describe it as far as the minimal negative fiscal impact; and if he had a dollar for every time the legislature passed an elections bill that said it had negative fiscal impact, he would not be asking for an increase that he has now.

Commissioner Tobia asked if he could give him something.

Mr. Bobanic stated his office will be able to have cost savings with the new legal notices being published and his office will be utilizing all of those newly enacted laws to cover that.

Commissioner Tobia asked if he could provide numbers; what the cost would be and what will the savings be; he mentioned he is trying to understand a 19.4 percent increase; he knows there will additional costs because the State says so; he knows there will be savings because the State says so; but he is asking Mr. Bobanic because he or his office was who prepared the budget.

Mr. Bobanic stated the cost increase is simply the vast amount of labor, temporary poll workers; he is going from running one election; if he had 1,000 poll workers, he has 1,000 poll workers that are working three times instead of one time; and the largest increase will be in wages and in those expense categories.

Commissioner Tobia stated he is just looking for numbers, but if he does not have them...

Mr. Bobanic advised he does not have an exact number right now.

Commissioner Tobia continued by saying if he does not have an exact number if he would at some point.

Mr. Bobanic stated looking at the sheet that was provided to the Board, the largest of the increased percentages is poll workers at 115.2 percent, temporary labor 48.71 percent.

Commissioner Tobia stated he is in direct reference to Senate Bill 7050.

Mr. Bobanic responded he would get him a number.

Commissioner Tobia went on to say some of this Mr. Bobanic said was involved in additional elections; and he asked if that is correct.

Mr. Bobanic replied the vast majority.

Commissioner Tobia explained he is trying to differentiate that; if Mr. Bobanic does not know the answer that is fine, but if he would not mind getting that information back to the Board that would be extremely helpful; he commented this is not a 'gotcha' he is just looking for what the added costs are and what the savings are.

Mr. Bobanic mentioned the one full time employee that they are having to add is approximately \$35,000 salary; that is one; and he thinks it is a pretty good bargain for what that person is going to be doing in the volume.

Commissioner Tobia stated vehicles are not broken down in there so maybe he can help, it may be in what he just handed the Board but he in all honesty did not have the opportunity to read it.

Mr. Bobanic advised they do not have any take home vehicles.

Commissioner Tobia asked what type of vehicle he is replacing.

Mr. Bobanic mentioned they are replacing a utility van that has supplies and shelves in it.

Commissioner Tobia asked if that is what Mr. Bobanic will be purchasing.

Mr. Bobanic responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia asked if it would be from a State contract.

Mr. Bobanic advised the last one was from Alan J. Fleet, which he believes is under State contract, so yes.

Commissioner Tobia thanked him for that.

Mr. Bobanic noted he wants to caveat that they had found out way before Covid, that sometimes the State contract price is not the best price, sometimes one can negotiate a better price; one of the prior vehicles that was purchased was actually through a local dealership and through manipulation of the numbers and a little bit of elbow grease, sometimes it is better, therefore, he does not ever rely on State contracts; he finds that if his office purchases Dell computers, they can get them better if they contact Dell directly; and he mentioned his office does not live and breathe on State contracts, they always try to get the best price.

Commissioner Tobia stated he appreciates that, but it does set a standard for them.

Mr. Bobanic responded yes at the very minimum.

Commissioner Tobia noted if he can find it at a better price then the more power to him, and a more thorough budget, better than one page; this is his own failing as a policy maker to accept a one page budget because the Board does have authority to ask for a little bit more; that is part of this and he appreciates Mr. Bobanic's openness with getting that; and he wants to get into travel a little bit before going into elections. He inquired over the past four years the Supervisor of Elections has allotted about \$126,000 for an office of 33 Full time Employees (FTEs) which is significantly higher, and he may have actually gotten one more, Supervisor of Election (SOE) responses before he did, but Mr. Bobanic is new to this; he is nine months in as the Chief Executive, so he is pushing that aside because he does not think that is fair, that would be the apples to oranges or grapes to watermelons; and he asked what travel Mr. Bobanic has done in the past nine months using taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Bobanic advised he would be happy to answer that; he wanted to note that the SOE's travel budget decreased compared to what had been submitted previously; his travel budget has consisted of three trips to Tallahassee, one of which is mandatory, new SOE orientation; one was for the legislative days where they had met with legislators, and many SOEs do this because face to face time with their elected representatives is the best way to share concerns and help craft the bills as they move through the process; and the third time he was there was for meetings with the Bureau Voting System Certification and VR Systems who are their vendors. He added Euro voting system certification had been hung up on the certification of the recently released tabulation system, the latest version to come out, as well as the audit system that his office uses; he met with them up there to find out what his office could do to get that process done, which they were actually able to accomplish; and at their last conference, the Secretary of the State thanked them through the help of the input from the SOEs they were able to certify the latest version of the audit system.

Commissioner Tobia asked if Mr. Bobanic could tell him, which ones were not in Tallahassee.

Mr. Bobanic advised there were probably 15 to 20 that were in Tallahassee, but he does not know who was not there.

Commissioner Tobia apologized stating he meant other conventions, meetings, events, awards that he went to outside of the three trips to Tallahassee that he has justified very well; and he wants to know what other conferences he attended at taxpayer's expense.

Mr. Bobanic mentioned the Florida Supervisor of Elections Association has two conferences per year, one in the summertime and one in the winter; he attends both of those; and the only other conference he attends is the Joint Election Officers Liaison Committee in Washington D.C. which is a federal conference; he attends once a year, and it is a meeting with federal representatives and members of the Elections Assistance Commissions.

Commissioner Tobia inquired if that is the only one he attended outside the State of Florida using regular non campaign dollars.

Mr. Bobanic responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia mentioned he appreciates that.

Mr. Bobanic stated part of his travel budget is mileage; he has a significant amount of mileage reimbursement as they have couriers bringing ballots back and forth from early voting sites; all of that is reimbursed with mileage; therefore, the travel budget is not just him going to conferences, it has other expenses in it.

Commissioner Tobia noted he greatly appreciates the level of detail; he feels it is his fault as a policy maker allowing over and over a travel budget that just says travel; he could have asked for it because he has statutory authority to do it; he saw an increase in the SOE budget that is 130 percent over the last 10 years, when Mr. Bobanic was not running it, and he had the opportunity to ask and did not; he apologizes if Mr. Bobanic thinks this is an affront to him; his answers have been very good and he appreciates that; and he would like to follow up with some election stuff that he does not understand in the budget. He asked in Mr. Bobanic's Fiscal Year one page 2023/2024 budget, he mentioned as an increase United States Postal Service postal rate increases.

Mr. Bobanic responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia stated he is not arguing; he pointed out he also mentioned more elections than in the previous year; and he inquired if that means that Mr. Bobanic will be sending out more mail.

Mr. Bobanic replied yes, absolutely.

Commissioner Tobia stated postage is a derivation of the number of pieces, times, multiplied by a cost per piece and it has gone up.

Mr. Bobanic explained it is an average cost per piece; and it depends on the number of mailings.

Commissioner Tobia stated he understands; he does not understand if there are more pieces going out, and each piece cost more, why the postage budget has a decrease.

Mr. Bobanic explained the answer is very simple, they had left over postage money in the

postage account from prior years where there were not as many mailings; when they come in from a general election year, they are in a 90 day period where they are prohibited from sending certain mailings by Statute; it is actually the Federal Voting Rights Act, it prohibits the SOE from sending list maintenance notices; and they actually have left over postage money sitting in the postage account that they are allowed to use.

Commissioner Tobia asked where on the budget is that cost carry forward.

Mr. Bobanic admitted it is still sitting in the postage account.

Commissioner Tobia inquired where on the budget.

Mr. Bobanic advised he does not know if it is reflected on there.

Chair Pritchett asked if they have it in accounts receivable for their credit.

Commissioner Tobia asked if he missed that or if it is listed somewhere on the budget.

Mr. Bobanic explained it is not listed on there.

Commissioner Tobia stated he appreciates it.

Mr. Bobanic noted it is okay, he is there to explain.

Commissioner Tobia stated in the budget he listed an increase under communications, printing, and postage are separate line items, there is 33.7 percent increase in communications; it is not postage and not printing, not travel, not dues, not subscription, and it is a pretty sizable amount at a total of \$169,704; and he asked what that is for.

Mr. Bobanic explained it is cellular services; every election they have hundreds of cell phones that poll workers are assigned; they have MiFi devices which is how all the polling locations connect; they activate them right before an election and deactivate them after the elections; and he has more elections, more communication charges than he typically would have in a one election year.

Commissioner Tobia clarified that these are communication charges between the polling locations.

Mr. Bobanic responded yes, those would be MiFi devices for internet connectivity for the electronic poll books that are used to ensure there are not people double voting.

Commissioner Tobia reiterated he appreciates it and this is his own failure as a policy maker for accepting a budget that just says communications, because clearly Mr. Bobanic has this down and he understands what is going on.

Chair Pritchett stated Mr. Bobanic is not the financial guy, and they have just received some data about carry forwards.

Frank Abbate, County Manager, stated he just wants to clarify that there really was not a cash forward for the postage, at the end of the year there were unspent funds that Mr. Bobanic had, and he believes it was used for the vestibule, so they carried additional monies forward so they could do things that were needed for the Homeland Security Requirements for the John Rhodes property.

Chair Pritchett stated this is not real...she is used to seeing carry forward, so...

Maria Mayer, SOE Finance Director, stated the way the postage works, the SOE does a budget on how much postage they expect to spend; that check has to be mailed to the post office because as postage returns come they go towards their account; they just take from that balance; she thinks in the previous year they had budgeted somewhere around \$70,000 in postage, but they reduced the amount of the check that they had spent; they keep the balance at the postal service, they cannot do anything about that; once they write the check, if it is for \$35,000, the balance is sitting there on the postal account and as mail returns come in, it subtracts from that; and there is no way to get it back and no way to place it on a carry forward, it is an expense.

Chair Pritchett advised it should be listed a little different.

Ms. Mayer advised it has already been expensed.

Chair Pritchett explained it is still an asset the SOE owns so it probably should be, just so they know.

Mr. Bobanic mentioned it has been documented this way since they have been doing the budgets and the auditors never found a problem....

Chair Pritchett noted it is all right, the Board has not had this much fun with Mr. Bobanic before.

Mr. Bobanic commented no they have not.

Chair Pritchett mentioned it was somewhat interesting.

Ms. Mayer stated to help clarify the question on postage also reducing, the SOE has to change how it does mail ballots estimates, because they have to zero out mail ballots and now do an estimate going forward; the estimate for mail balance has reduced; therefore, the postage rate would reduce.

Commissioner Tobia commented Mr. Bobanic asked why he is giving questions on why he is saving money, and Mr. Bobanic gave him questions on why the Board passed a Resolution for him and his office; he greatly appreciates this opportunity; he is learning a lot; and probably the rest of the Board is as well.

Chair Pritchett mentioned this would be great if SOE could get out of mailing and send it all out electronically.

Commissioner Tobia stated his goal is to see SOE budget go down; he has some questions with some Florida Statutes to see how Mr. Bobanic is handling things; Mr. Bobanic mentioned additional labor as a cost driver and he wants to find that out; Mr. Bobanic requested \$887,486 in additional labor and temporary services for poll workers; he subtracted the Sheriff's \$3,000 out; and he asked if Florida Statute 101.657 provides the discretion of the SOE to offer early voting between eight and 14 days.

Mr. Bobanic responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia went on to say Mr. Bobanic crafted this budget; and he asked how many days Mr. Bobanic budgeted out in order to come up with these totals.

Mr. Bobanic replied for this budget year it was the minimum days.

Commissioner Tobia clarified if that was eight days.

Mr. Bobanic affirmed it was eight days.

Commissioner Tobia noted his next question reflects that same statute; it provides anywhere between eight and 12 hours per day; and he advised the last election he had 13 days. He noted that is why he is asking the question; he does not have it in the budget; and he appreciates the clarification. He reiterated Statute provides for between eight and 12 hours per day for polls to be open; SOE was above that average last election when Mr. Bobanic was the Supervisor; and he asked how many hours a day he has budgeted out.

Mr. Bobanic advised he would follow what the SOE has done prior, which is 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the weekends.

Commissioner Tobia noted he thinks that averages out to nine and one half hours or something like that.

Mr. Bobanic agreed.

Commissioner Tobia continued on by asking what the average cost is; he mentioned he saw that SOE advertised about \$15 per hour for temporary workers, and there is an additional cost; and he asked what that number has grown to.

Mr. Bobanic stated he would have to look and see because there are varying levels of IT technicians that are hired for temporary labor that are going to be higher; the base temp labor rate is approximately \$15 per hour; they are running all of the temporary labor through a staffing agency so they have to pay a markup on that in exchange for them handling all of the payroll taxes and workers compensation liability that is associated with it.

Commissioner Tobia advised Florida Statute 101.657 states the SOE shall allow an elector to vote early in main branch offices of the Supervisor; his question is those are not listed on early voting locations; and they were not listed as early voting locations at the last election.

Mr. Bobanic informed the Titusville Office would be an early voting location.

Commissioner Tobia advised it was not listed on the last one.

Mr. Bobanic affirmed it was not last time; he noted that statute changed on that a little bit with counter ballots; and one can pick up a counter ballot in any of the four election offices early and cast that ballot.

Commissioner Tobia inquired what was advertised online was probably not sufficient enough; and it could have been done but it was not advertised as such.

Mr. Bobanic stated they advertised for early voting sites; they listed the sites; they also advertise that ballot pickup was also available in all four of their administrative offices.

Commissioner Tobia advised that is good because it says 'shall' as Mr. Bobanic is probably well aware, but he did not see it on that; he wants to ask a number of sites because that is obviously a cost driver; and he asked if Mr. Bobanic is aware of the minimum number of polling locations.

Mr. Bobanic replied he is not aware of a minimum number of polling locations that is in statute.

Commissioner Tobia stated it is and it is the number of 2012, the number of...

Mr. Bobanic stated that is the number of early voting sites, not polling places.

Commissioner Tobia apologized stating locations; and he asked if Mr. Bobanic knows what that number was.

Mr. Bobanic advised it was eight in 2012; and they have 10 now.

Commissioner Tobia asked if Mr. Bobanic plans to greatly reduce the number of days to save funds, and the polling locations, as well.

Mr. Bobanic stated when talking early voting, in the 13 days that Commissioner Tobia is referring to, the SOE does do the optional days in the general elections; Commissioner Tobia is asking questions about his 2023-2024 budget; and early voting does not occur in the 2023-2024 budget.

Commissioner Tobia noted he is aware of that but it is budgeted for...

Mr. Bobanic continued by saying it is budgeted for the 2025 budget; the budget he is being questioned on has the eight days for the PPP and the Primary; and Municipal elections do not have early voting.

Commissioner Tobia reiterated that he is aware; he noted what he is asking is if there is a change from the 13 days that was previous; and he understands they are different elections.

Mr. Bobanic stated there is no change if one compares the years that they are in now, they would still be doing the eight days for a PPP and a Primary election. He went on to say there is no change in days or hours from prior Primaries and PPPs.

Commissioner Tobia asked if using the SOE branch office...

Mr. Bobanic interjected by saying he will take that back, the 2016 PPP they did have optional days and they did not have those in this budget that he submitted.

Commissioner Tobia noted he was not the Supervisor of Elections then so he is not going to hold him accountable for those decisions; and he asked if it would provide savings if he were to

use his branch offices exclusively as polling locations. He added Mr. Bobanic mentioned communications, so he is thinking, and he does not know, he is just trying to...

Mr. Bobanic replied first he wants to make sure they are differentiating the proper terminology, polling place and early voting site are two different things.

Commissioner Tobia commented he understands.

Mr. Bobanic continued on by saying when he refers to name of polling place, he is talking about and election day site; the reason they pull it out of the office is they are dramatically too small; there is not enough adequate space to conduct that process; they are putting it in Titusville because they do actually have room and they have managed to open the Titusville Library which will allow them to take those massive lines; anybody who worked in the six story building when they had early voting going on, knew how bad it was, it was like It's A Small World ride line going out the door; and by alleviating the stress on that site, they can put it at the Titusville office. He noted the office in Viera is the size of a postage stamp, he may be able to fit five

voting booths in there if he is lucky; same thing in the Palm Bay office; and the office on Sarno Road.

Commissioner Tobia mentioned Mr. Bobanic created a wonderful segue because he is now getting into mailing; he expressed his appreciation to the County Attorney's Office for doing the Yeoman's work on looking at statute and determining what was mandatory and the changes in Statutes; and he noted he is sure Mr. Bobanic is well aware of it, but Florida Statute 101.20, allows the SOE the option to email sample ballots to voters and does not require physical mailing.

Mr. Bobanic commented that is incorrect they have to either actually mail a sample ballot to all voters or publish it in a newspaper of general circulation; and they are opting out of the newspaper of general circulation and sending it to the voters by mail.

Commissioner Tobia asked if Mr. Bobanic wants him to punt that over to the County Attorney.

Mr. Bobanic responded he would be more than happy for that.

Commissioner Tobia advised he received a different answer from the County Attorney and it is in direct contradiction to what the Statute is.

Morris Richardson, County Attorney, inquired if Commissioner Tobia is asking about 101.20.

Commissioner Tobia affirmed.

Attorney Richardson stated Commissioner Tobia asked him to run down all of the mailing requirements in Statute and this is one; this provides that sample ballots shall be published as the SOE said in a newspaper of general circulation in the County; in lieu of that publication a SOE may send a sample ballot to each registered elector by email at least seven days before an election, if an email address has been provided, and the elector has opted to receive a sample ballot by electronic delivery; if an email address has not been provided or if the elector has not opted for electronic delivery a sample ballot may be mailed to each registered elector or to each household in which there is a registered elector; therefore, there is an option between either publication in newspaper of general circulation, or emailing and mailing.

Mr. Bobanic responded yes, they mail those to all in the County.

Commissioner Tobia stated to be very clear, it says may it does not say shall mail.

Attorney Richardson advised it does say may; it appears to give an option to the SOE between the newspaper or mailing.

Mr. Bobanic agreed with Attorney Richardson.

Commissioner Tobia went on to ask what the cost difference is between, and he is sure Mr. Bobanic has run the analysis on this, publishing and it in the newspaper or mailings; and he asked how many sample ballot mailings there are.

Mr. Bobanic explained it is almost everybody in the County who has not returned a mail ballot already.

Commissioner Tobia asked him to provide a number.

Mr. Bobanic stated 460,000 give or take.



Commissioner Tobia inquired what it cost for mail as well as printing for each one of those.

Mr. Bobanic stated he does not have that exact number with him.

Commissioner Tobia asked if it would be fair to say \$0.50 which is below a first class stamp for time, printing, mailing.

Mr. Bobanic stated he would say it is probably a little more than that; it is a large document and it depends on the election.

Commissioner Tobia stated he gets that; given the benefit of the doubt, \$200,000 per mail.

Mr. Bobanic stated okay.

Commissioner Tobia noted that is half of 460,000; and he asked if it would cost \$200,000 to publish that.

Mr. Bobanic responded no, of course it would be less expensive; the rationale is very simple for why they mail them to the voters and that is the Florida TODAY has a subscription rate of about 10,000 people; and this is a County with 450,000 registered voters; to get the information properly to the voters to give them time to review all of the amendments; this Commission...

Commissioner Tobia asked if that is all available on the SOE website.

Mr. Bobanic advised it is also available on their website, but not everybody has a computer to get to the website.

Commissioner Tobia asked what those numbers are; and he reminded Mr. Bobanic that his office is asking for a \$1.2 million increase.

Mr. Bobanic commented he understands.

Commissioner Tobia noted he just told him something that could save better than half of that because that is multiple sample ballots being sent out and he also said it would be more than what he estimated; and that would make up more than half.

Mr. Bobanic stated he is also not going to cut the budget at the sake of...

Commissioner Tobia advised he is not asking him to cut the budget, he is asking him to come in at a number below 19.4 percent.

Mr. Bobanic replied he would disagree and say that a sample ballot is one of the most critical components that a voter needs to get an education before they walk into the polling place, therefore, he is perfectly happy justifying that cost.

Commissioner Tobia stated out of curiosity, Mr. Bobanic brought up the campaign, he did not, it is fair game; and he asked if each mailing would have Mr. Bobanic's name on it.

Mr. Bobanic responded the mailing would have his name on it because he is the constitutional officer for the office.

Commissioner Tobia asked Mr. Bobanic how many times it would have his name on it.

Mr. Bobanic advised it depends on what mailing he is talking about; and if it is the sample ballot, it will have his name on it one time at the top of the header because it is coming from Tim Bobanic, Brevard County Supervisor of Elections.

Commissioner Tobia asked just the ballot or the ballot and the envelope.

Mr. Bobanic asked if he is talking about mail in ballots or about the sample ballots.

Commissioner Tobia responded sample ballots.

Mr. Bobanic advised sample ballots do not have an envelope, they are printed and folded and adhesively taped; and that is how the voters receive them.

Commissioner Tobia clarified then Mr. Bobanic's name is only on there once.

Mr. Bobanic responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia asked if Mr. Bobanic gets a discounted mail cost for those.

Mr. Bobanic explained because of the volume they have, they do not pay the full rate of postage.

Commissioner Tobia asked if he could provide, and he does not have to, but he certainly would like that provided; he is making a determination of a cost that is many times more than what State Statute allows him to make; and he would like to know exactly how much extra costs those mailings that have his name on them at least once costs.

Mr. Bobanic advised he could give the cost of what the last sample ballot run is; he does not have a cost for what Florida TODAY might charge him for a full page sample ballot ad because they cut it down a couple years ago because it got so expensive.

Commissioner Tobia noted he can call and find out, but he is guessing it is less than a couple hundred thousand dollars; he advised Chair Pritchett he has a couple motions; he mentioned Mr. Bobanic did a great job answering his questions; he did not expect him to be able to nail all of these ahead of time; he just received the white paper from the County Attorney's Office less than 48 hours ago; and providing more detail for his rationale for spending that extra money is pretty darn important and they are not listed in Mr. Bobanic's one page budget.

Chair Pritchett stated she is going to ask him to take that to a regular County Commission meeting since Commissioner Goodson has left, unless it is just housekeeping.

Commissioner Tobia stated he would look over them; and he asked her to go to Commissioner Feltner.

Commissioner Feltner asked a couple years ago the legislature wanted to reset the number of mail ballots for this cycle.

Mr. Bobanic confirmed.

Commissioner Feltner asked what the standing request is today.

Mr. Bobanic stated the standing request today is about, just under 10,000 mail ballots.

Commissioner Feltner mentioned he is going to anticipate that Mr. Bobanic is going to send a

lot more than that for the upcoming elections.

Mr. Bobanic responded affirmatively; he explained that is also part of the reduction of cost, they assume there is going to be a staggered increase by the time they get to the March PPP election; they have to budget for the possibility of both parties having a Primary election in there even though they do not know if President Biden is going to be opposed or not; obviously the Republicans will have a candidate; they have also seen where a sitting President Donald Trump was challenged in the PPP 20, therefore, they have to anticipate both parties voting in the PPP; and yes the numbers are lower and they anticipate them building back up.

Commissioner Feltner stated he was anticipating those things too, in thinking about this; quite honestly, in Mr. Bobanic's budget, the only thing that popped out at him is the postage and it was because he had anticipated more, just to be candid.

Mr. Bobanic commented primarily they have less postage because they have less mail ballots; that would be the highest cost of postage; they have postcards that go out and they obviously go out at a post card rate versus the full mail ballot envelope that they have; and yes, there is a lower number on that.

Commissioner Feltner asked Mr. Bobanic to take him through Presidential Preference Primary, the State Primary, and then the general that will happen in 2024; and he asked Mr. Bobanic to guestimate how many mail ballots for each one of those will be sent before it is all said and done; and he noted he will not hold him to it, and it can be just on the past, not new growth.

Mr. Bobanic stated it is really hard to say because they have never in the history of the State had the entire mail ballot list wiped completely clean.

Commissioner Feltner noted he understands.

Mr. Bobanic advised he would not want to speculate on a number and then be held to that number by the Board when it is considering his budget; his office has an estimate that it thinks it might see about 75,000 ballots accumulated back up by the Primary Election; and then when it gets to the General Election they will potentially have more, over 100,000 like they typically have had in the past.

Commissioner Feltner stated during Covid there was obviously a big push for mail voting.

Mr. Bobanic agreed; and he stated it was their largest mail ballot.

Commissioner Feltner stated it was historic; Mr. Bobanic knows he watched that closely in multiple counties; he does not know what is going to happen by the time of the general gets there; and he asked if there was a Covid-type of event would he have to come back to the Board for a Budget amendment just for postage for mail ballots.

Mr. Bobanic stated if there was another Covid event like that, he does not know that they would have to, he would have to see; and it all depends on how many ballot requests are built up to, to what they have estimated it might be built up to.

Commissioner Feltner stated he would split it with him; and he asked how about if the two major parties just push really hard for mail voting for the 2024 General.

Mr. Bobanic stated when they built their budgets they estimated the number of Republicans and Democrats that voted by mail in the PPP in the last PPP Election and then added a percentage over that for some possibility of additional growth.

Commissioner Feltner asked if the mail ballot costs for the 2024 General is in the next Fiscal Year.

Mr. Bobanic explained for the Presidential/General, some of the cost; the envelope printing costs are in this one here; and the actual postage and mailing would be in the 2024-2025 budget for Presidential.

Commissioner Feltner stated it is understood.

Chair Pritchett stated she thinks Mr. Bobanic did a really good job today; she is curious about something because he said this; they were talking about having to separate themselves when they run, from the things they do; and she asked how he does that when he runs.

Mr. Bobanic stated that is a great question; Chair Pritchett knows as she served on the Canvassing Board...

Chair Pritchett mentioned she never did it when they were running though.

Mr. Bobanic commented it is a unique situation; in this particular case, the statute actually accounts for this, the SOE cannot actually serve on the Canvassing Board; they are in an advisory capacity only and will have to have an alternate; therefore, he will have to have an alternate for the Primary Election assuming both Commissioner Tobia and himself qualify for the ballot.

Chair Pritchett announced the good news is she is not running for anything so she can jump in and help with anything he needs; she mentioned the SOE has assets everywhere; she asked if they would be able to consolidate that all in; she noted his office has Brevard Cultural Alliance office and are using it for storage; and she asked if they are eventually going to move that so it can be opened up for office space.

Mr. Bobanic advised right now they use that for their telephone bank for training; if the County sees fit to grant his office more space in another location where they can all stay under one roof he would be more than willing to.

Chair Pritchett stated she hoped he would pull it out of there.

Mr. Bobanic mentioned his office has to pay for training over at the Holiday Inn Space Coast Convention Center for their poll workers to train all 1,000 of them.

Chair Pritchett added that would be her request; anything he can do to figure that out she would love it; anything he can do as he is putting this in to do his best to tighten up the budget; and she does not know where the Commission is going to be, but if it is this high, next time she is expecting it to be a great decline.

Mr. Bobanic mentioned they always have, historically.

Commissioner Feltner thanked Mr. Bobanic for the tour of John Rhodes with his staff, it was very educational; it was the first time he had been in that building since it was DRTV many years ago; and he appreciates that.

Mr. Bobanic stated once they finish construction of their secure vestibule he would love to have all of the members of the Commission come out to see.

Chair Pritchett commented everything all in the same building.

Mr. Bobanic responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Tobia stated he thinks Commissioner Feltner had a great idea which was table some of these suggestions; he will place them on the Agenda ahead of time, but he wants to provide Mr. Bobanic with some foresight of where he is going on this; he thinks these questions certainly brought up a need for some added transparency; his fault as a policy maker for not asking that; he thinks they can probably get there and he can probably provide the information prior; the Department of Revenue (DOR), as discussed earlier, was pretty good with all of their worksheets so there was justification, and of course the Board had not seen them, but it set a good groundwork for it; and he would like to see Mr. Bobanic's office provide that same level of transparency that DOR requires. He continued by saying he thinks it look pretty similar to the budget that Mr. Bobanic has, travel, mail, personnel, vacancies, and all of that good stuff; that would add a level of transparency and there would be no questions about communication, and no questions about postage because it would all be answered in there; he will be bringing something to that light; there is a good measure there and that is what is provided by DOR and what the Property Appraiser should be sending the Board members; secondly, carry forward assets, whatever, he is not an accountant and not that it was hidden in the budget, but it was not apparent in the budget; there has to be a way for the Board to be able to see that as well as everyone else; and whether it is budget amendments or sub object level transfers, it would be best if that was made apparent in the budget or at least brought to the Commission so the Board would have an idea that if he actually budgeted X amount is was not transferred into another, and he is not saying Mr. Bobanic would, but putting it on there the same way the County Departments do it would make more sense for him to do that. He went on to say finally, he really likes the billfolder; that was Chair Pritchett's idea; he knows all this stuff is public records but there is a complete difference between sending a letter to the custodian of public record, paying a fee that may be in excess of \$15, and having it readily available; he is going to ask Mr. Bobanic's office meet those, and he has done a good job with explaining where he went but it is not listed in the budget, and providing that level of transparency; and Mr. Bobanic does not have to respond, he will put them in, but he did not want to surprise him.

Mr. Bobanic commented he appreciates that.

Commissioner Tobia continued by saying he will place it on the Agenda.

Chair Pritchett stated to just put it on the next Agenda to just get it done; and she will put it on the next Agenda so the Board can just get it done.

Mr. Bobanic replied that way they would know about it ahead of time.

Chair Pritchett advised all the constitutional officers that on the next Agenda the Board is going to do a part of this; she will do a time certain if they would like; she just wants to get it taken care of, so by then it will just be housekeeping.

Commissioner Tobia stated he does not want to dictate this stuff, if Chair Pritchett or the constitutional officers can provide a better way for the Board to do this, he is only going off of DOR and the way the County does it; and if there is a special need, he will ask...

Mr. Bobanic responded he is not familiar with DOR formats because he is not required to or interact at all with DOR.

Commissioner Tobia noted he understands that but it is a good rubric; if he has a better way the Board is open to that; whatever gets transparency is best; he takes the responsibility for not having a better accounting system and not requiring that; it appears Mr. Bobanic is open to that; and he appreciates his demeanor, transparency, and willingness to show up today.

Chair Pritchett stated he did a good job and thanked him for showing up.

### **Brevard County Property Appraiser (Continued)**

Dana Blickley, Property Appraiser, stated she does not take it lightly being accused of violating State Statute and she wanted to let the Commission know two things; one, the first thing, she went back and viewed the first few budget requests prior to her becoming Property Appraiser, and the only budget schedules that had ever been provided to the County Manager are schedules a, one through four; then she reached out to the budget section of the Florida Department of Revenue (DOR) and spoke with Gabrielle Alday, and they consider the budget exhibit a and schedules one through four, because the other schedules are budget justification sheets that many times change when they are going through and approving her budget, or asking her to make adjustments; she would suppose that is up to the attorneys to fight out; her office does not have a problem providing those; but she does not take it lightly when she is accused of violating State Statute and it certainly does not require a lawsuit or anything other than asking her office the question.

Chair Pritchett stated she appreciates that and they will figure it all out by the next meeting, and having all the information in order; she hopes the Board has received a lot of good information out of this, she certainly has; and it has been wonderful to get to spend some time with all of the charter officers.

### **D.6. Rita Pritchett, Commissioner District 1, Chair**

Chair Pritchett advised at the next meeting she is going to bring a motion as well, it is just kind of for the Commissioners. She stated she wants to give Commissioner Feltner a shout out from before he was a Commissioner, he taught her a lot of things; she remembers him telling her, if anybody asks her for anything just give it to them, and it gets rid of a lot of conflict; she had learned that from him; so whenever anyone contacts her office, if she has it handy she just sends it out; if they would rather do a public record, they are more than welcome to do that; and she thanked Commissioner Feltner for that.

Upon consensus of the Board, the meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
RACHEL SADOFF, CLERK  
RITA PRITCHETT, CHAIR  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Approved by the Board on October 5, 2023.