

SWFRPC FY2012 BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

July 15, 2011

The SWFRPC's FY2012 Budget Committee held a meeting/conference call on July 15, 2011 at the offices of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council.

Committee Members

Councilwoman Teresa Heitmann, City of Naples
Vice Mayor Mick Denham, City of Sanibel
Ms. Laura Holquist, Lee County Governor Appointee
Commissioner Christine Robinson, Sarasota County BOCC

Others

Mr. Todd Pokrywa, Schroeder-Manatee Ranch, Inc.
Mr. Ken Heatherington, SWFRPC Executive Director
Mr. Dave Hutchinson, SWFRPC Planning Director
Ms. Liz Donley, SWFRPC Legal Counsel
Ms. Janice Yell, Finance Manager
Ms. Nancy Doyle, HR Operations Manager
Mr. Don Scott, Lee County MPO Director
Ms. Nichole Gwinnett, Administrative Staff Specialist
Mr. Tim Walker, GIS Manager
Mr. David Crawford, Principal Planner
Mr. Dan Trescott, DRI Coordinator
Mr. Jason Utley, Senior Planner
Mr. Dan Cobb, GIS Specialist
Ms. Angela Tomlinson, Purchasing Agent
Ms. Meghan Marion, MPO Public Relations Specialist/Planner

Vice Mayor Denham called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. He then gave an overview of the background and process of the Committee and its challenges.

Vice Mayor Denham stated that he feels that the Committee is currently in the position where there is a budget in place which has an approximate \$400,000 savings of which \$250,000 is necessary to balance the budget and an additional \$150,000 to make the staff changes. He then announced for those members who weren't present at the previous meetings, that Mr. Heatherington has resigned and on an interim basis Ms. Liz Donley has been asked to step in as an Interim Executive Director, which will be proposed to the Council. Ms. Donley has stated that she does not want to continue as interim beyond the end of the calendar year.

Vice Mayor Denham then moved on to the proposed mission statement, which incorporates the environment and strengthening our economy as part of our mission statement. The members felt that those were very worthy additions to our mission statement which we would then propose to the Council.

Vice Mayor Denham explained that the Committee hasn't had the time to fully define what the new direction would be and felt that it would be a job for the full Council, but did list some statements which they felt might be included within the new direction.

1. Review the Council's role in the future and whether it should be changed to face the new environment. We have both the economic and social initiatives and with the change in the designation and desires of the Governor and Legislature on how the Council should operate, it will be much more locally focused rather than state driven.
2. The Committee decided that it is important that the Council does some regional visioning and consider some economic development, along with a change in the way we plan things.
3. The Committee decided that the Council needs to consider how both the Lee County MPO and Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) works and relates with the Council.
4. Grant products are important.
5. What the effects are going to be to the Council with the elimination of DCA. Such as, additional reviews at the regional level.

Vice Mayor Denham stated that he feels that the Committee has met all of the requirements which the Council had asked of the Committee. He then went onto the key competencies. We needed to recognize the cities and counties are key stakeholders in the Council as are the business and development communities. We also added the educational institutions.

Ms. Holquist stated that under educational institutions, Edison State College and school boards should be added.

Vice Mayor Denham explained that after a few changes, this will be the presentation that the Chair will give to the Council.

Vice Mayor Denham stated that with the budget there are proposed changes to head count and hours. Unfortunately, we had to let some people go and also worked on some expenses to come up with a head count. The organization proposal hasn't gotten any names; it is just broken down into what is perceived as three functions:

1. Executive Director Function,
2. Planning Functions, and
3. Administrative Functions.

Vice Mayor Denham explained that staff has been assigned to those functions Under "Planning" there are:

- Planners
- Planning Support
- Administrative Support

Vice Mayor Denham then stated that under Administrative Functions there are:

- Legal Counsel
- Financial Services
- Administrative Support
- Accounting/Facilities/HR
- MIS/Web Support

Vice Mayor Denham stated that what is represented in the organization proposal allows us to come up with a budget with a \$400,000 reduction/savings. This does fit the budget which is also included in the presentation.

Vice Mayor Denham stated that we have accomplished an organization which is satisfactory at this point. He is not completely satisfied with it, but he is willing to support it. The Executive Director position will be an Interim Executive Director until the end of the calendar year.

Vice Mayor Denham stated that the proposed organization which supports a budget will be presented to the Council.

Commissioner Robinson referred to the key competencies and stated that Sarasota County is in a separate educational district and within Sarasota County, there is USF and State College of Florida. She suggested just listing state educational institutions and entities. Vice Mayor Denham stated that he agrees and also said that this is just a framework and will have additional clarifications and additions as it moves forward.

Commissioner Robinson stated that she feels that the Committee did an excellent job in light of the circumstances and she is very pleased. She then said that her intent in bringing up these issues was not to cause disarray, but to make sure that the Council was operating in a transparent manner and also in a manner where people could get the information that they were requesting. She appreciates the fact that it has now been set on track. This here has been a big step forward and thanked everyone for their hard work.

Vice Mayor Denham stated to Commissioner Robinson that she and other members had pointed out issues where there were some significant weaknesses within the Council. There were some things that were not being handled properly, communications which were not adequate, and he feels that over the last few meetings those issues have been discussed, and speaking for the Chair, he made it very clear that it is the way we deal with each other on the Council and how we deal with the cities and counties, if we are to fulfill our destiny. The Chair made it a point that he was personally going to stay very focused on communications with our partners in the future.

Vice Mayor Denham stated that he feels that it is not incumbent on him to decide on what staff names go where on the organization chart, he believes that is staff's responsibility. He feels that he probably has done a little bit more than what he should've done. But he felt that he needed to drive it to get it on track; however, he is almost ready to step aside and let staff do what they have to do.

Vice Mayor Denham stated that one thing that he felt was very important on the revenue stream was to be very conservative with the Council's revenue. He feels that until the funds are guaranteed it shouldn't be included as revenue. Also, he has had discussions with Ms. Donley and have agreed that it is very important that the Council's financial status is reviewed in detail at the end of each quarter to see if further adjustments need to be made. He then said that every quarter staff should be prepared to prepare a very comprehensive financial report.

Councilwoman Heitmann asked Vice Mayor Denham if the recommendation is to only review the budget quarterly rather than monthly. Vice Mayor Denham stated that if it is the Council's desire to review the budget every month then that is how it will be. He said that he is going to hand it over to someone else to discuss the details of the budget. We will set the budget, but continue to watch it with great care.

Councilwoman Heitmann stated that for clarification the Budget & Finance Committee would meet on a monthly basis because she hears exactly the statements which have been made, with the exception that staff has applied for grants and they are going to be coming in before the first of the year. This is the time to physically watch it on a monthly basis and then move to a quarterly basis, if the Council agrees. Vice Mayor Denham stated that he feels that those recommendations should be made at the next Council meeting.

Vice Mayor Denham stated that Ms. Donley suggested that as additional sources of revenue come in those staff members that are working the shortened work week will be brought back to fulfill the need/requirements. For those employees that are going to have a shortened work week will be brought back on and will have their pay increased in accordance to the number of hours they work to fulfill any additional revenue sources.

Vice Mayor Denham asked Ms. Donley to review the proposed budget which needs to be approved at the next Council meeting. Ms. Donley stated that she would like to have the Committee recommend the budget to the Council and also to the Council's Budget and Finance Committee which will be meeting on Monday to discuss an amendment to the Council's FY2010/11 Budget.

Vice Mayor Denham stated that he is willing to support the proposed budget.

Ms. Holquist asked what the proposed DRI revenue is. Ms. Donley replied \$253,000.

Ms. Donley referred to page 2 of the proposed budget, in the second stand alone box the DRI/Hurricane Evacuation line is \$107,000 which Mr. Dan Trescott identified. There are two projects, one of which was listed on the former budget last month the other one is a new project which he identified. The DRI revenue was increased to \$253,000 based on historic revenue for DRIs. That is one of the revenue sources which we will be watching because they don't come in on a steady stream. There are other projects which have been applied for which she feels staff has a better than 50% chance of being awarded; however, they are not included within the proposed budget.

Ms. Holquist stated that at the last meeting there was a lot of discussion that the DRI revenue was being understated, she then asked Mr. Pokrywa if he was satisfied with the proposed DRI revenue since he was from the public sector. Mr. Pokrywa replied yes. Ms. Holquist stated that Mr. Pokrywa had spoken out in a lot of emails about the revenue component for DRIs. Mr. Pokrywa said that the figure that is being proposed is now consistent with the conservative estimates that he was recommending.

Ms. Donley stated that at this point she would like to thank all of the staff for running the numbers and then running numbers again and also Mr. Trescott for calling around the region and finding these additional projects.

Vice Mayor Denham stated that Ms. Donley had done an outstanding job and thanked her for her support throughout the process.

By general consensus the Committee recommended approval of the proposed FY2011/2012 Budget.

Councilwoman Heitmann thanked Vice Mayor Denham for his efforts.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:39 p.m.