

Budget Committee
Volusia Growth Management Commission

**MINUTES FOR
MEETING HELD
Wednesday, February 26, 2014**

City of Daytona Beach
Room #116
301 S. Ridgewood Avenue
Daytona Beach, FL

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Committee Chairman, Roger Sonnenfeld.

The following Budget Committee members were present: Committee Chairman Roger Sonnenfeld, Timothy Bustos, Debbie Connors, Douglas deLeon, Richard Kane, Jack Lenzen and Sandra Walters. Also present were VGMC Operations Manager Merry Chris Smith, and Commission Chairman Gerald Brandon.

Approval of the Minutes of the August 28, 2013 Budget Committee Meeting:

Richard Kane made a motion to approve the minutes of the Budget Committee meeting held on August 28, 2013 as presented; seconded by Debbie Connors. Motion carried unanimously.

Review 2013-14 Fiscal YTD Expenditures

Chairman Sonnenfeld reported that with the addition of benefits for the VGMC staff person, the commission will see additional expenditures in the salaries budget which were not budgeted. He pointed out that we already have expenses in the retirement account which will continue to increase throughout the balance of the fiscal year. Mr. Sonnenfeld stated that Ms. Smith will be meeting next week with the County Personnel office and will find out how the budget deficit should be handled, including the retroactive contribution to the Florida Retirement System that will occur.

Mr. Brandon discussed how the contract staff invoices are processed. He explained the invoices are submitted to the VGMC office, reviewed by Ms. Smith initially and then forwarded to him for further review and approval. Mr. Brandon stated we coordinate with staff on any questions or concerns with the billing.

Mr. Sonnenfeld stated the performance measures included in the agenda package reflect activity based upon calendar year. He distributed performance measures calculated on a fiscal year basis (attached as Exhibit A to these minutes). He commented that through the first four months of the current fiscal year we have received 20 new applications which is in line with the estimate of 60 new applications to be received.

With respect to the current fiscal year expenses, Mr. Sonnenfeld commented that we are considerably under budget in the contract services account but the other line items appear to be in line with our budget. He suggested the committee look at a reduction in the contract services budget for the 2014-15 proposed budget. Ms. Connors commented that we are just coming out of a bad economy and expects activity to increase in the coming year. Mr. Brandon stated that

any monies not used in the budget are turned back to the County at the end of each fiscal year. He added it is easier to return money to the County than to request additional funding from the County Council during the fiscal year. Mr. Sonnenfeld stated the County reduced our contract service budget by 4% for the current fiscal year, and that the commission voluntarily submitted a 10% reduction in contract services in the preceding fiscal year. Mr. Brandon stated he's had conversations with developers and the commission will likely be seeing more activity in large scale developments which may result in the need for more public hearings.

Mr. Kane stated the current fiscal year expenses appear to be in line with the approved budget. There was a general consensus that the current year-to-date expenses are acceptable and in line with the approved budget with the exception of line item 3400, Contract Services, as pointed out by Mr. Sonnenfeld.

Proposed 2014-15 Budget

Mr. Sonnenfeld stated the salaries portion of the budget is estimated to exceed our current approved budget by approximately \$7,600 with the addition of benefits for the VGMC staff position. In addition, the proposed budget provides for a \$3,000 increase in legal advertising. He also stated the County will likely delete the request for a \$25,000 litigation contingency as they have in years past.

Richard Kane moved to recommend the commission approve the proposed 2014-15 budget as presented; motion seconded by Debbie Connors. Mr. Brandon clarified the committee is bringing it forward to the commission tonight for the purpose of gathering comments. The committee will consider any commission comments at the next Budget Committee meeting and make a recommendation, in the form of a motion and second, to the full commission for consideration and approval at the next regular meeting.

Based upon the reduced contract staff expenses over the past couple of years, Mr. Sonnenfeld suggested the committee look at reducing the contract services proposed budget by 5% which could be used to offset the increase in salaries/benefits and legal ads. He stated the 5% reduction could be applied proportionately among the three staff contracts. Mr. Sonnenfeld further added that he felt the County would likely cut the budget after it is submitted as they did last year, and he suggested the commission consider making that reduction prior to submitting. Mr. Brandon commented that it is better to have more funding than you need than to have to request additional funding latter. He added that the VGMC has historically been very frugal in their expenses and felt that cutting the budget in advance would be a mistake. Ms. Connors concurred.

Mr. Sonnenfeld commented that it may be difficult to justify the proposed contract services budget given the considerable reduction in expenses over the past couple of years. Mr. Kane stated the justification is in the budget estimates we received from our legal and planning staffs. Ms. Connors concurred and stated she would rather over project than have insufficient funding in the approved budget. Mr. deLeon commented that he expects development activity to increase in the upcoming year.

Mr. Lenzen commented that the proposed budget is an increase of approximately 28% over the current approved budget and questioned how that compares to the increase in property values. Mr. Brandon stated we are looking at staff projections to establish the contract services budget.

Mr. Sonnenfeld asked the committee what their desire was in terms of presenting the proposed budget to the full commission. There was a general consensus to move forward with the proposed 2014-15 as presented.

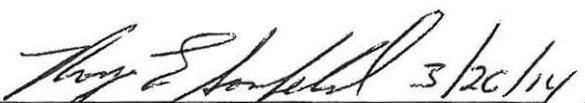
Discussion ensued relating to staff reviewing all comprehensive plan amendments as opposed to only those amendments that have jurisdictional impacts. Ms. Smith stated the Charter requires all comprehensive plan amendments be reviewed and certified as consistent by the VGMC in order to be valid. Mr. Kane commented that we should look further at that. Ms. Walters commented on the relationship and control between the VGMC and its contracted staff. Mr. Lenzen commented he has not had any Council members raise concern to him about the VGMC budget. Ms. Connors commented she felt the commission has been very vigilant with respect to the budget.

There was general agreement by the committee members that the County will likely cut the \$25,000 litigation contingency.

Mr. Sonnenfeld stated he will present the 2014-15 budget as proposed to the full commission for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.


Chairman Date: 3/26/14