



Indian River County, Florida

Draft Meeting Minutes

Board of County Commissioners

Indian River County
Administration Complex
1801 27th Street
Vero Beach, Florida 32960
indianriver.gov

*Joseph Flescher, District 2, Chairman
Deryl Loar, District 4, Vice Chairman
Susan Adams, District 1
Joseph H. Earman, District 3
Laura Moss, District 5*

*John A. Titkanich, Jr., County Administrator
Jennifer W. Shuler, County Attorney
Ryan L. Butler, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
Shauna James, Deputy Clerk*

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

9:00 AM

Commission Chambers

Budget Workshop

1. CALL TO ORDER

Present: 5 - Chairman Joseph Flescher
Vice Chairman Deryl Loar
Commissioner Susan Adams
Commissioner Joe Earman
Commissioner Laura Moss

2.A. A MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

2.B. INVOCATION

Commissioner Susan Adams

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Joseph E. Flescher, Chairman

4. GENERAL OVERVIEW SESSION

Chairman Flescher announced a public hearing on the Solid Waste Disposal District (SWDD) at 1:30 p.m. The Budget Workshop meeting would be temporarily suspended to address a Special Assessment Resolution for the SWDD. Additionally, during the Budget Workshop meeting, a three-minute speaking limit would be in effect for anyone wishing to discuss budgetary items.

John A. Titkanich, Jr., County Administrator

County Administrator John Titkanich opened the Budget Workshop by discussing the challenges of creating the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 budget in an uncertain economic climate. He expressed concerns about a possible economic slowdown and upcoming reforms that could affect local government funding. With a significant decline in real estate values impacting revenue from building permits and new construction, he emphasized the importance of fiscal prudence to ensure the County could maintain essential services. The proposed budget totaled \$597,623,132, reflecting a 10.9% decrease from the previous year's amended budget but marking a 13.9% increase compared to last year's approved budget. Major highlights included an 8.8% rise in the Countywide Tax Roll and a \$14.6 million funding request from the Sheriff's Department. Additionally, costs for retirement increased by \$4,199,834, excluding Constitutional Officers, and Workers' Compensation increased by \$1,078,523, excluding Constitutional Officers, accompanied by a recommendation to add 26 full-time positions. Administrator Titkanich discussed tax reform, including a proposed reduction in sales tax, as well as the repeal of the business rent tax and local option sales tax. The estimated impacts to the following funds were anticipated: Optional Sales Tax (\$1.5 million) and General and MSTU funds (\$383,971). He voiced concern about potential rollbacks and exemptions, particularly regarding a proposed Homestead Exemption. Administrator Titkanich stated that the Office of Management & Budget would report revenue trends at their quarterly meetings and evaluate any necessary budget adjustments.

5. GENERAL FUND

001-101	BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
001-102	COUNTY ATTORNEY
001-103	GIS TRANSFER
001-107	COMMUNICATIONS/EMERGENCY SERVICE
001-109	MAIN LIBRARY
001-112	NORTH COUNTY LIBRARY
001-113	BRACKETT LIBRARY
001-118	IRC SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
001-119	LAW LIBRARY
001-201	ADMINISTRATOR - OPERATIONS
001-202	COMMUNITY SERVICES
001-203	HUMAN RESOURCES
001-204	PLANNING
001-206	VETERANS SERVICE
001-208	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
001-210	PARKS
001-211	HUMAN SERVICES
001-212	AG EXTENSION
001-215	CONSERVATION LANDS
001-216	PROCUREMENT
001-220	FACILITIES MANAGEMENT
001-229	OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
001-230	FACILITIES & FLEET SERVICES
001-237	FPL GRANT EXPENDITURES
001-238	EMERGENCY BASE GRANT
001-241	IS/TELECOM TRANSFER
001-246	INSURANCE PREMIUMS
001-249	ANIMAL SERVICES
001-250	COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL
001-251	MAILROOM/SWITCHBOARD
001-283	LAGOON

County Administrator Titkanich provided an overview of the General Fund's financial metrics, highlighting a significant increase in taxable value from \$29.2 million to \$31.8 million. This included \$606.9 million from new construction, representing a 9.56% decrease compared to the previous year's figure of \$665 million. He recommended maintaining the millage rate at 3.5475 mills for the sixth consecutive year, which was one of the lowest rates in the State of Florida. The projected ad valorem revenue for fiscal year 2026 was set at \$194.6 million.

The Land Acquisition Bond related to voter-approved environmental debt decreased from 0.0639 mills to 0.0610 mills, resulting in a slight reduction in the countywide millage subtotal. The Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) rate of 1.1506 mills and

the Emergency Service District rate of 2.3531 mills were proposed to remain unchanged, leading to a minor overall reduction in the aggregate millage.

A breakdown of General Fund expenses was shown, revealing that 72.4% of these expenses were state-mandated, covering essential services such as Administration, the State Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) program, and the Medical Examiner. The State funds these services, and the County pays a proportionate share for the services that residents receive from these state agencies. Notably, the Sheriff's Office alone accounted for 52.3% of these expenses. Revenue sources were primarily comprised of 39.5% from taxes, with other sources and charges for services making up the remainder. The remaining expenses accounted for approximately 27.6%. Based on these figures, \$149,921,000, or 60% of the General Fund, was allocated to fund the Constitutional Officers.

The unincorporated residents previously paid an MSTU of \$338.55, with a proposal to increase it to \$350.44. This translated to an increase of \$11.89, or 3.51%. For the entire unincorporated area, overall taxes increased from \$2,093.55 to a recommended \$2,166.15, reflecting a total increase of \$72.60, or 3.47%.

In relation to property values, the Save Our Homes program allowed the value of homesteaded properties to increase by either 3% or the rate of inflation, whichever was lower.

Examining the General Fund overview, the projected increase in ad valorem tax roll was estimated at 8.8%, resulting in approximately \$8.68 million in additional revenue, assuming a 95% collection rate at the same millage rate. Historical trends indicated that this collection rate was likely to remain consistent.

The millage rate remained unchanged from the previous year, at 3.5475. Constitutional officers experienced an added cost of \$4,692.64, representing a 5.2% increase. Additionally, funding for Children's Services was projected to rise by \$421,144, or 13.8%, a figure based on an increase in value from the prior year, which reflected a one-year lag.

Moreover, the State-Mandated retirement rate saw an increase affecting all areas, including Constitutional Offices, amounting to \$2,567,074, or 17.5%. The Workers' Compensation rate related to the General Fund was expected to increase by 27.9%, resulting in approximately \$337,444, excluding Constitutional Offices.

In terms of staffing, plans included adding a net of 9.25 additional full-time positions. Of these, 1.25 positions were associated with a Constitutional Office, while the

remaining eight fell under the Board of County Commissioners' Administration Department, with a total cost of \$744,217.

Administrator Titkanich continued the presentation by highlighting line items on the General Fund expenses and budget adjustments across departments.

- The Human Resources budget increased by 6.1% due to rising personnel costs.
- The Board of County Commissioners budget decreased by 22.8% after removing a \$400,000 allocation for the Humiston Boardwalk.
- The County Attorney's Office budget rose by 2.3% due to the transfer of a land Acquisition Specialist funded by multiple sources.
- The Emergency Services Communication department saw a reduction by 44.1% after completing microwave system upgrades.
- The Main Library faced budget cuts and decreased by 7.2%, and the North County Library's budget decreased by 2.4%.
- Community Services increased by 14.1% to support additional salaries and benefits, following reduced funding from the State Housing Initiative Program.
- Veteran Services reported increased part-time salary and benefits for a Veteran Service Officer, with plans to expand services and improve efficiency.
- Animal Control increased to 8.3% or \$87,000, for a total of \$1.3 million. The contract with the Humane Society was set to expire, and Animal Control Officers were frustrated with the limited capacity and service issues they faced when handling calls for feral or wild animals.

The total for the General Fund expensed for this year was \$33,813,939, with a proposed increase of \$1.7 million to reach \$35,520,722, a 5% rise.

6. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

001-500	PROPERTY APPRAISER	WESLEY DAVIS
001-300	CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT	RYAN L. BUTLER
001-400	TAX COLLECTOR	CAROLE JEAN JORDAN
001-700	SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS	LESLIE R. SWAN
001-114	VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD	
001-600	SHERIFF	ERIC FLOWERS

County Administrator Titkanich continued the presentation, outlining the proposed budgets for all Constitutional Officers, totaling \$98,862,218, which represented a 6.1% increase over the previous year's initial budget.

The Property Appraiser's request for the fiscal year was \$5,638,119, which marked an increase of \$348,101 from last year's budget of \$5.29 million. This allocation included provisions for employee raises.

The Clerk of Circuit Court submitted a budget request that reflected a modest 2.3% increase, raising their budget from \$1,526,345 to \$1,561,100, an increase of \$34,755. This additional funding was intended to accommodate cost-of-living adjustments and support 1.25 new full-time positions, as well as criminal justice financing software.

For the Tax Collector's budget, which was due on August 1, 2025, staff estimated a significant 10.4% increase, amounting to approximately \$448,823, bringing the total budget from \$4.29 million to \$4.74 million.

Supervisor of Elections requested a 6.9% increase of \$155,736, raising their budget from \$2.26 million to \$2.42 million, primarily driven by the need for an additional GIS specialist and rising costs associated with new legislation.

The Value Adjustment Board's budget was also set to increase from \$64,809 to \$70,000, reflecting additional costs for contractual services for outside legal assistance.

He noted that the Sheriff's current budget was \$78,911,955, with a recommended increase to \$83,646,672, which amounted to \$4.734 million or a 6% increase.

The Chairman called for a recess at 9:49 a.m. and reconvened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. with all members present.

Property Appraiser Wesley Davis acknowledged the County's financial challenges but highlighted his success in maintaining a steady workforce of 39 full-time employees since 2010, despite budget cuts. The budget was fully funded for current positions, with an emphasis on leveraging technology and managing rising contract costs. Mr. Davis anticipated returning nearly \$300,000 to the County at fiscal year-end and maintained a cautious hiring approach based on available talent.

Chairman Flescher commended Mr. Davis for his innovative and fiscally responsible strategies that have preserved departmental efficiency without overburdening taxpayers. Commissioner Earman noted the successful collaboration between county staff and the Property Appraiser's office, citing a reduction in public inquiries about tax bills since 2020 as a sign of progress.

Clerk of Circuit Court and Comptroller Ryan Butler noted his budget proposal reflected cost reductions achieved through collaboration with the County's IT department. Despite this, the Clerk's office faced ongoing IT funding challenges due to state mandates that financially burden counties. Diminishing surpluses from IT trust

funds indicated that by 2028, counties may need to fully fund their IT needs. However, an increase in surpluses this year offered some hope for temporary relief.

Supervisor of Elections Leslie Swan emphasized the importance of collaboration in maintaining election integrity in Indian River County amid rapid growth. A fourth Early Voting site would be added at the Intergenerational Recreation Center (iG), with funding included for voting equipment and supplies. The budget also accounted for hiring a Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist to manage electoral maps. A new law, House Bill 1201, significantly increased the costs of notifying individuals about valid initiative petitions.

Administrator Titkanich provided an overview of the Sheriff's Office budget history, highlighting the Board's allocation of \$21,865,155 over the previous four years to support Law Enforcement, Corrections, and Court Services. The Sheriff had requested a budget of \$14.6 million, which was deemed unattainable. Administrator Titkanich recommended a budget increase to \$83,646,672 and ruled out raising the millage rate due to state initiatives aimed at lowering property taxes. The presentation showed that without new revenue, substantial budget cuts and service reductions would be insufficient to meet the Sheriff's request. The proposed budget for the Sheriff's Office accounted for 52.3% of the overall budget. The slides also highlighted the current millage rates allocated to the Sheriff's Office and other County services.

Administrator Titkanich provided an overview of the Sheriff's budget request for 2025/2026, highlighting several key points regarding personnel and operational expenses.

Training expenses: \$141,554 or 46.75% requested increase for a total training budget of \$444,314

Operational Expenses Breakdown: The total requested increase in operating expenses was \$4,812,441 or 32.88% of the total increase. Individual categories saw significant increases, including:

- Contracted services: \$2,778,243 (30.2%)
- Operating supplies: \$1,084,677 (37.47%)
- Operating equipment: \$363,261 (148.47%)

Travel/Transporting Prisoners: \$126,393 requested increase, totaling \$589,490, noting that FY 24/25 expenses to date were \$206,977.

He stated that this information pointed to significant increases in various budget categories. He noted there were discrepancies in the Sheriff's calculations and a need for clarification regarding anticipated versus actual attendance for training and travel.

Chairman Flescher emphasized the need for a balanced approach that considered the entire community's needs, advocating for support of the Sheriff's office while remaining within practical budget limits and opposing tax increases.

Sheriff Flowers addressed the financial challenges facing his office, emphasizing the overtime costs associated with staffing shortages. He proposed increasing starting salaries for deputies as a necessary step for recruitment and retention. Additionally, he pointed out that current personnel funds only covered salaries, leaving operational expenses inadequately funded.

Sheriff Flowers referenced Florida Statute Section 30.49, Chapter 4, indicating that if the Board decided to decrease his funding request, they would be required to provide a detailed written notice of any proposed changes to his budget. He spotlighted the soaring operational costs, ranging from essential items like tires to healthcare in the jail and meals, insisting that law enforcement should never have been a last priority in budget considerations. He passionately argued that without proper funding, every aspect of the operation would inevitably falter.

He also noted the presence of community members at the meeting, who sought to address critical issues. Sheriff Flowers confidently asserted that if he had mismanaged funds, his staff would have held him accountable. He concluded by reiterating his request for written details on any cuts to his budget should the Board decide to support an amount differing from his proposed budget, emphasizing the necessity of clarity and transparency in prioritizing public safety.

A discussion among Commissioner Adams, Sheriff's Office CFO Ms. Aimee Cooper, and Sheriff Flowers examined the allocation of \$770,000 for training. Ms. Cooper pointed out that this amount included a \$119,000 increase in overtime related to training and a \$256,000 adjustment to the sworn officer pay scale. Commissioner Adams sought clarification to determine whether this allocation represented an increase of \$29,000 per deputy, for a total of 26 deputies. Additionally, the conversation aimed to clarify how the training wage budget was allocated to provide additional wages for the deputies.

Sheriff Flowers recommended that Ms. Cooper have a brief meeting with Budget Director Kristin Daniels to review the relevant spreadsheet. In order to address these questions more effectively.

Commissioner Adams sought clarification on the Sheriff's budget statements, noting possible inconsistencies in funding for raises over the past four years. She referenced State Statute 30.49, Chapter 12 which allowed the Sheriff to transfer budget funds

after approval, raising concerns about transparency. Commissioner Adams highlighted the need for a clear understanding of salary increases, questioning the sustainability of last year's 5.8% raise and the justification for a 14% increase this year. She emphasized the importance of understanding budget proposals to prevent discrepancies between intended outcomes and actual results.

Due to time constraints, Chairman Flescher proposed that the Board move on to the Municipal Service Taxing Unit (M.S.T.U.) and postpone the discussion with the Sheriff until after the lunch recess. This would allow Ms. Cooper and staff to review the allocations in question during that time.

[Clerk's note: After reconvening at 2:00 p.m. discussion resumed with the Sheriff's budget and was placed here for continuity.]

Chairman Flescher stated that before the meeting was suspended, concerns had been raised about discrepancies in budget figures between the Sheriff's Office and the Office of Management and Budget. Sheriff Flowers acknowledged an issue with the classification of crossing guards as full-time instead of part-time, which led to an estimated budget overstatement of about \$8 million. He stressed that the information they had provided was accurate from their perspective and noted differences in how it had been interpreted when compared to the County Administrator's spreadsheets.

Sheriff's office CFO Aimee Cooper pointed out that the numbers on the County Administrator's spreadsheet had legitimate differences. This included discrepancies in positions between fiscal year 2025 and fiscal year 2026. The numbers provided were accurate and reflected the differences between those two years. She suggested that they might have been looking for a simple average of the differences based on the number of positions. While they might not have reached the same target, that did not imply that the numbers themselves were inaccurate.

Sheriff Flowers expressed strong dissatisfaction, reiterating that he had requested \$14 million for the budget, emphasizing the importance of public safety and the rising costs of operational necessities. He criticized the ongoing budget discussions as ineffective, asserting there were zero new positions in his budget and stressed the need to retain current staff. Sheriff Flowers stated that he would be forced to make cuts, which would hinder the department's ability to address community concerns effectively. He insisted that past budgeting practices had not met the needs of the Sheriff's Office and called for a more substantial financial commitment to support public safety initiatives.

Further discussion centered on the County Administrator's proposal to increase deputy salaries from \$50,000 to approximately \$59,381, in order to match the pay of

firefighters. A suggested average raise of \$3,500 for civilian employees was deemed insufficient and rejected by the Sheriff. The Sheriff emphasized the critical need for adequate salary funding due to financial difficulties faced by staff.

Chairman Flescher invited public comment.

The following people spoke:

Renee Reya

Lisa Boisvert

Catherine Gipson

James Dick

Serenity Marsh

Steve Aguirre

Michael Marsh

Lydia Davis

Paul Zelno

Tony Consalo

Baris Fanning

Thomas Lowther

Bob Sunkel

Bob Lindsay

Dr. Angela Jones

Trinity Marsh

Gordon Michael

Matt Redstone

Paul Godier

Joan Johnson

Deputy Park

John Clark

John Tobaya

There was a strong consensus among community members and former law enforcement officials regarding the urgent need to improve compensation and support for the Indian River County Sheriff's Office and its civilian staff. Many residents,

students, and local leaders voiced their support for increased funding for the Sheriff, underscoring the crucial role these resources play in maintaining public safety.

Concerns were raised about how funding was prioritized, particularly regarding the allocation of resources to non-essential expenditure such as Sandridge Golf Course

and the Chamber of Commerce, rather than the salaries of Deputies, who play a vital role in ensuring community safety. Several speakers cautioned that neglecting the budgetary needs of the Sheriff's Office could spark a workforce crisis, jeopardizing

both safety and operational effectiveness. This situation could lead to a mass departure of Deputies seeking better pay elsewhere. Community members expressed concerns about the welfare of law enforcement personnel and the impact of budget decisions on public safety. They emphasized the need for fair compensation, recognition of the contributions made by civilian staff, and sufficient support for law enforcement. The speakers urged a reevaluation of budget priorities to ensure sufficient funding for both law enforcement and community programs, highlighting the importance of these measures for the safety and well-being of both personnel and the communities they serve.

Chairman Flescher remarked that it had been suggested that the Board had not adequately addressed needs over the years. He, however, had a very different memory and a strong recall of what had occurred during the last few budget cycles, in the interest of public awareness and for the benefit of the Board, as well as those who spoke. He requested that the County Administrator review the numbers that had been tracked over the past few years, specifically regarding the sheriff's salaries. He noted that the Sheriff had the discretion to allocate the budget as he saw fit and was not required to direct funds strictly to where they were requested. Therefore, within his approved budget, he could make adjustments.

In response to the public's feedback, Administrator Titkanich discussed the golf clubhouse at Sandridge, which operated as an exclusive, self-sustaining business funded solely by golfers. Additionally, he pointed out that the funding for the Chamber of Commerce included a \$1 million allocation, alongside an additional \$350,000 designated for Sebastian. Moreover, \$2.3 million collected from Tourist Development Taxes supported various tourism initiatives. Recent changes in legislation may have opened the door for utilizing these funds for lifeguard services at County beaches, which could save about \$1.2 million over the following two years.

In response to Chairman Flescher, County Administrator Titkanich discussed the Sheriff's office budget and salary trends for 2022-2025, highlighting a significant funding increase from \$57.8 million to \$79.6 million. For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, civilians received a 5% raise, while details for sworn personnel remained uncertain due to the implementation of a new pay step plan. Concerns arose about sustaining budget increases, particularly since expected tax revenue growth did not meet the Sheriff's request.

To manage costs, Administrator Titkanich proposed a multiplier for expenses associated with sworn officers, resulting in about \$6.1 million needed to address salary concerns. Strategies to mitigate costs included deferring capital expenses and trimming specific budget items, such as funding for the animal shelter. However, this

potentially would result in safety concerns for the community. Additionally, Road Maintenance, which would not be able to address the backlog being experienced. He also discussed the Mental Health Court's funding needs, suggesting collaboration with human services while emphasizing the importance of maintaining mental health services to alleviate pressure on the criminal justice system.

Administrator Titkanich addressed the topic of the 28 County positions under discussion, noting that five of these positions were funded by the General Fund, while the others were supported by various funds and not through ad valorem taxes. He emphasized that it would not be appropriate for utility customers to fund a general fund employee, nor was it fair to use the general fund to supplement the sheriff's funding. He pointed out that residents in unincorporated areas and MSTUs were already paying for services provided outside their regions, creating a need for a balancing act in funding decisions.

Administrator Titkanich expressed optimism about rounding up the funding to \$6.1 million but maintained a cautious approach, considering the Sheriff's substantial operational demands. The proposed increases warranted careful evaluation, as some were significant enough that their implications were clear at a glance, without requiring a detailed examination.

Administrator Titkanich highlighted growing concerns over the past three years regarding whether these funding increases would translate into employee raises. Two years prior, he had addressed these concerns by agreeing to \$5.7 million increase, with the Sheriff's assurance that there would be no reversal of that commitment. Feedback from the community at that time indicated clear support for the Board's decision, entrusting the Sheriff to manage the allocated funds as promised. He noted that the exceptional provision allowing fund transfers within the Sheriff's Office did not extend to other Constitutional offices.

When discussing reserves, Administrator Titkanich clarified that the belief in having \$600 million was mistaken. The combined total from the MSTU and the General Fund was approximately \$102.5 million, with a significant portion restricted, non-spendable, or committed, leaving only a small amount unassigned. He compared the situation to continually withdrawing from a savings account, warning that prolonged usage of reserves could lead to severe service cuts, as had happened in other communities across the state.

Administrator Titkanich discussed preparations for the future, particularly the years 2027 and 2028. While he acknowledged ongoing residential developments and new construction projects, he noted that building permit revenues had decreased by

approximately 19%, alongside a decline in impact fees. He stressed that expert economic forecasts had not accounted for potential changes in how the State Legislature and the Governor might alter local funding mechanisms, with factors such as tariffs adding to financial uncertainties. He stated that preparedness was essential, which justified the allocation set aside to avert issues encountered in the past. He noted that an initial funding request had fallen short, but an additional \$1.3 million had been secured beyond the original recommendation, although this amount was still considered inadequate.

Administrator Titkanich mentioned that raising salaries to \$60,000 would be achievable with a budget of \$6,079,000. He proposed a salary increase of \$9,381, applying a multiplier to cover benefits, and estimated approximately \$5.28 million for sworn officers and \$831,000 for civilian positions. Overall, he acknowledged the complexities in addressing these salary needs without delving into specific line items of the Sheriff's budget.

Chairman Flescher highlighted the significant funding allocated to the Sheriff's Office over the past three years, amounting to nearly \$18.92 million. He discussed the Sheriff's focus on addressing issues like pay compression, starting salaries, and cost-of-living adjustments for law enforcement personnel. Chairman Flescher acknowledged the challenge of retaining staff due to competition from other jurisdictions, emphasizing the need for a strategic plan to improve salaries while also considering the local economy. He voiced concerns about changing the millage rate, suggesting that it would negatively impact the community, and called for alternative solutions to enhance compensation for law enforcement to retain experienced individuals.

Vice Chairman Loar raised concerns about the employee benefit package, specifically regarding health insurance. Administrator Titkanich confirmed that health insurance costs per employee had remained stable for several years and highlighted the competitive nature of their package, which included vision and dental care, long-term disability benefits, and access to a free employee health clinic for basic care and prescriptions. Vice Chairman Loar also addressed concerns about salary compression issues, stating that there would be no such issue since each grade would receive an additional \$10,000. He emphasized that the formula used for salary adjustments had been generous, proposing a \$10,000 increase for sworn law enforcement and a \$3,500 increase for civilians, all without raising the millage rate.

Sheriff Flowers expressed frustration over ongoing underfunding, noting that public dissatisfaction was increasing due to the neglect of key community issues like traffic management and safety. His anger escalated as he emphatically made his points

before walking out in exasperation.

Commissioner Moss inquired about the timeline for finalizing the budget, specifically regarding the setting of the millage rates necessary for tax notices. Administrator Titkanich responded that the deadline would be September 10, 2025. He explained that while the millage could be lowered, it could not be increased once set.

Commissioner Moss expressed concern about rising property values leading to tax increases, particularly for individuals on fixed incomes, and highlighted the additional financial burden from increased water and sewer rates. She acknowledged the importance of maintaining essential services but emphasized the challenges faced by those on fixed incomes. Commissioner Moss reflected positively on Sheriff Flowers' previous initiatives and performance since taking office in 2020. She expressed a desire to identify additional areas within the budget where spending could be reduced to further support the sheriff's budget, showing commitment to both fiscal responsibility and public safety.

Commissioner Earman raised concerns about low starting salaries for law enforcement personnel, noting that, despite budget increases over four years, starting pay remained stagnant at \$50,000. He compared this to rising salaries in fire rescue, which reached \$60,000 for Paramedics. Commissioner Earman expressed disappointment that salary compression issues had not been adequately addressed and questioned where the budget increase had been allocated. He highlighted the difficulty in securing taxpayer support for budget increases and emphasized the need for a structured approach to salary adjustments. Commissioner Earman concluded by advocating for higher wages and the importance of collaboration in finding solutions.

The Chairman called for a recess at 3:56 p.m. and reconvened at 4:06 p.m. with all members present.

Chairman Flescher emphasized his commitment to supporting law enforcement personnel and acknowledged the Sheriff's identification of three critical issues that need to be addressed. He noted that it would be more effective to tackle these issues one at a time to avoid complications. Chairman Flescher praised the Sheriff for managing compensation and prioritizing law enforcement needs while considering the broader impact on the community of over 170,000 citizens. He expressed optimism about collaboration between the Sheriff and the County Administrator, and reminded everyone of the upcoming budget hearings. Commissioner Flescher emphasized the importance of proactive discussions and finding solutions without increasing the millage rate, although he acknowledged the challenge of meeting the request for over \$14 million. He mentioned that while achieving this might be difficult, progress could still be made. He concluded by emphasizing the Board's commitment to ensuring first responders were supported.

7. MUNICIPAL SERVICE TAXING UNIT (M.S.T.U.)

004-104	NORTH COUNTY AQUATIC CENTER
004-105	GIFFORD AQUATIC CENTER
004-108	RECREATION
004-115	INTERGENERATIONAL FACILITY
004-116	BEACH PARKS
004-161	SHOOTING RANGE
004-204	PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
004-205	COUNTY PLANNING
004-207	CODE ENFORCEMENT
004-231	NATURAL RESOURCES
004-400	TAX COLLECTOR

County Administrator Titkanich presented the Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) budget, which covers the unincorporated area of Indian River County.

Administrator Titkanich provided the millage history for the MSTU. He recommended maintaining the millage rate at 1.1506 mills, which was the same as the previous year's rate for the sixth consecutive year. Notably, this rate was 6.09% higher than the rollback rate. Although the millage rate was recommended to remain unchanged, it was legally considered a tax increase. In summary, the total expenses for the MSTU department decreased by \$1,734,079 or 12.7%.

8. TRANSPORTATION FUND

111-214	ROAD AND BRIDGE
111-243	PUBLIC WORKS
111-244	COUNTY ENGINEERING
111-245	TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
111-281	STORMWATER

Administrator Titkanich provided an overview of the Transportation Budget, highlighting the challenges related to rising costs, particularly in retirement expenses. Workers' Compensation costs were projected to increase by \$55,306 or 13.5%. Along with retirement costs \$15,801 or 1.1%.

The Gas Tax Revenue stood at \$2,656,000, showing a decline of about 1.1% or \$29,000.

Transfers from the General Fund and MSTU fund accounted for 77.2% of the total revenue and were expected to increase by \$1,028,839, or 5.1%. Funded expenses covered essential areas, including Road and Bridge maintenance, Public Works, County Engineering, Traffic Engineering, and Stormwater Management.

Collaborating closely with various departments, the total funding allocated for all transportation-related departments was projected to decrease from \$27,091,654 to \$25,254,518, marking a reduction of \$1,837,136 or 6.8%.

9. EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT

114-120	FIRE RESCUE
114-240	LIFE SAFETY

Administrator Titkanich reviewed the Emergency Services District (ESD), noting an 8.6% increase in the ad valorem tax, which was projected to raise \$4,627,408 with a millage rate remaining at 2.3531, unchanged for the fifth consecutive year. Three new Captain positions at \$372,997 were being funded mainly through a Core Grant for the first two years, while retirement contributions to the Florida Retirement System (FRS) were expected to rise by \$1,509,544, or 15.2%.

The overall budget decreased by 11.9%, with salaries and benefits set to increase by 6.5% and 9.4%, respectively. Capital expenditure dropped significantly by 80.1%, though \$3,758,153 was still allocated for projects. The total Fire Rescue budget decreased from \$83,019,519 to \$73,051,810.

10. NON-DEPARTMENTAL STATE AGENCIES

001-106	NEW HORIZONS OF THE TREASURE COAST, INC.
001-106	STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT
001-110	TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
001-110	IR LAGOON NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM COUNCIL
001-110	DEPT. OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
001-111	MEDICAID
001-252	ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL BOARD
001-901	CIRCUIT COURT ADMINISTRATION
001-901	GUARDIAN AD LITEM
001-903	VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
001-903	STATE ATTORNEY
001-904	PUBLIC DEFENDER
001-907	MEDICAL EXAMINER

County Administrator Titkanich reported on the recent budget requests received from various agencies. He stated he had held meetings with multiple stakeholders, including the Court Administrator, who provided insights regarding the Guardian ad Litem program, the Victim's Assistance Program, the State Attorney, the Public Defender, and the Medical Examiner. Each agency submitted its budget for examination. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council also submitted a revised budget based on its membership.

Notably, New Horizons requested a significant funding increase of approximately 77%, asking for \$725,000, despite currently receiving only \$45,000. They justified their request by citing rising operational costs and the need for additional mobile response units. Ultimately, the Board could only support an increase of \$44,563, bringing New Horizons' total budget to \$450,000.

The Health Department proposed a budget that reflected a 7% increase to support staffing, amounting to \$56,464. The Treasure Coast Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) estimated a 10% increase, while budgets for the Teen Court and Indian River programs remained unchanged. Anticipated Medicaid changes would increase to \$179,422, or 11.6%, but were closely monitored due to potential federal changes.

The Court Administration budget was one of the most significant increases, totaling \$762,950, representing an 85.2% rise from \$895,000 to \$1.65 million. The Guardian ad Litem program saw a modest increase of \$2,4113, or 3.7%, while the Victim Assistance Program received a slight increase of \$1,945, or 1.6%. The State Attorney's budget decreased by \$3,879, or 0.8%, whereas the Public Defender's budget increased by \$7,128, or 6.7%.

The Medical Examiner's budget rose by \$261,284, reflecting a 32.3% increase primarily due to salary adjustments. Overall, funding for state agencies was projected to increase by 22.7%, driven by State Mandates, necessitating the Board's allocation of the required funds.

11. NON-DEPARTMENTAL

001-110	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
001-128	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
001-137	SEBASTIAN COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA
001-137	FELLSMERE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA

County Administrator Titkanich presented the non-departmental budgets. For Economic Development, the budget was managed through a contractual arrangement with the Chamber, which had seen a reduction over time. The requested amount was \$245,885, reflecting an increase of \$7,160 or 3%.

Regarding the Children's Services Grants, he noted that their budget was one year behind in terms of the revenue used for expenses. For 2024, the budget was set at \$3,058,348, representing an increase of \$421,144, totaling \$3,479,492, a 13.8% increase.

Additionally, there were two Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Agencies. The

County partnered with these municipalities that had established redevelopment agencies. There was a Tax Increment Financing Redevelopment Trust Fund, and the portion for the City of Sebastian increased by 11.8%, totaling \$339,892. For the city of Fellsmere, the increase was significant, at 81.8%, totaling \$119,790.

Chairman Flescher asked if anyone from the public would like to comment on the Transportation Fund, Emergency Services District, Non-Departmental State Agencies, or the Non-Departmental portions of the workshop.

Resident John O'Connor requested an explanation regarding the 10% decrease in operating expenses for the Emergency Services District. Administrator Titkanich explained that the overall reduction was \$1.1 million. Of this amount, \$174,000 was related to expenses from Hurricane Milton. There was also a rollover from the previous year of \$45,000 that would no longer be included. Additionally, building maintenance costs decreased by \$100,000 due to issues that were addressed during the current fiscal year. Fuel expenses decreased by \$13,000 based on recent trends. He noted that the previous year, the District had purchased hybrid suits, costing \$512,000. Furthermore, supply costs declined by \$150,000. Lastly, the PEMT (Public Emergency Medical Transportation) grant, totaling \$318,000, was rolled over and removed from the budget. All these factors combined accounted for the total reduction of \$1.1 million.

Additionally Mr. O'Connor inquired whether anything had been removed from the Fire Chief's proposed budget. Budget Director Kristin Daniels explained that the most significant change had been a reduction of \$4 million in the Capital line. She noted that while some items had been postponed to a subsequent year, they also had the option to shift some expenses to an optional sales tax to alleviate the burden on the tax fund. Therefore, although the budget reflected a decrease, the funds had simply been reallocated to the optional sales tax rather than being eliminated from the district budget.

A discussion took place between Steve Aguirre, a resident of Vero Beach Highlands, and Administrator Titkanich regarding the Emergency Services District. Mr. Aguirre pointed out that the slide listed an increase of 99.4%, which was likely a typo and should have been 9.4%. He also mentioned that the section on "other uses" showed a 66.8% increase and asked what the increase was for. Administrator Titkanich confirmed the misprint and explained that the 66.8% increase was meant for contingency and transfers. Mr. Aguirre also asked about three new positions in the Emergency Services District budget, each offering a salary of \$121,000. Administrator Titkanich clarified these roles were for Captains. Although these positions were included in the budget, they were not funded through the millage rate

because their revenue came from grant funds. As a result, there would be no financial burden on taxpayers for these three positions, along with two vehicles and their equipment.

Ms. Daniels noted that the grant allowed for multi-year spending, but it had a finite total that could be impacted by the pace at which the funds were utilized. There was some flexibility to cover salaries in the second year, although not for all three positions, and the District ultimately needed to take on these costs afterward. Looking ahead to the following year, funding concerns were anticipated to rise, with the potential for requesting additional funding that remained uncertain. A proposal to extend the funding over a couple of years was under consideration. The forecast suggested support for about two and a half years, given the current price levels, even though the grant had initially been designated for three years.

Matt Redstone, on behalf of the Deputies Association, stated that they stand in solidarity with the firefighters and support their request for additional pay.

12. NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

001-110 MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
001-110 UNITED AGAINST POVERTY (fka HARVEST FOOD)
001-110 211 PALM BEACH/TREASURE COAST
001-110 CTC-SRA-SENIOR SERVICES

County Administrator Titkanich stated that, according to the funding policy for outside agencies, increases were capped at 2%, reflecting the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for April of that year. Although each agency had requested more than a 2% increase, only a 2% increase was recommended for the upcoming fiscal year.

13. QUASI NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

001-206 VETERANS COUNCIL OF INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, INC.
001-110 COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR (SRA)
001-110 COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORD. GRANTS (SRA)
001-110 GIFFORD YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT CENTER, INC.
001-110 PROGRESSIVE CIVIC LEAGUE OF GIFFORD
001-110 HUMANE SOCIETY OF VERO BEACH, FL
001-110 TREASURE COAST HOMELESS SERVICES COUNCIL, INC.

County Administrator Titkanich presented the Quasi-Nonprofit Organizations, starting with the Veterans Council, which proposed a 10.2% funding increase. The Council reported an increase in requests for services from the Veterans Association (VA) and sought additional funding to meet these growing demands. Furthermore, the Community Transportation Coordinator (SRA) requested a 10.6% increase in

matching funds for grants related to vehicle purchases. The Gifford Youth Achievement Center was capped at a 2% increase, while the Progressive Civic League received no increase in funding, remaining at its current level. The Humane Society sought a 10% increase, which was contingent upon the contract extending beyond November 2025, based on staff estimates. Lastly, Treasure Coast Homeless Services had been recommended to receive an additional 5% increase. Although they initially requested a substantial 38% increase, budget constraints led the County Administrator to recommend a more modest 5% increase instead.

Chairman Flescher invited anyone from the audience to speak on non-profit organizations.

Phil Cromer, CEO of the Mental Health Association, expressed his gratitude for the support received during challenging times marked by economic uncertainty. He highlighted the rise in anxiety, anger, and depression among individuals, emphasizing the importance of funding for services in Indian River County. The demand for psychological services, screenings, and suicide risk assessments increased, and the association's psychiatric services expanded. Mr. Cromer noted positive outcomes from implemented initiatives, including zero Baker Acts, indicating improved internal crisis management and resource savings.

Ty Barnes, CEO of 211 Palm Beach and Treasure Coast, highlighted the organization's service to Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, and Okeechobee counties, as well as the importance of funding for their community impact. Operating a 24/7 helpline focused on suicide prevention and crisis intervention, they provided various public programs and maintained a comprehensive resource database. In Indian River County in 2024, they logged over 4,000 community contacts, including 91 related to suicide, handled 988 National Lifeline calls, and made over 6,100 referrals to other agencies. Mr. Barnes expressed his gratitude for the continued support.

The Chairman called for a lunch recess at 12:01 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 1:30 p.m. with all members present. The Budget Workshop continued with Item 18, Time Certain Public Hearing for the Solid Waste Disposal District.

NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENT CHARGES

14. STREETLIGHTING DISTRICTS

179	OCEANSIDE
180	OSLO PARK
181	GIFFORD
182	LAURELWOOD
183	ROCKRIDGE
184	VERO HIGHLANDS
186	PORPOISE POINT
188	LAUREL COURT
189	TIERRA LINDA
190	VERO SHORES
191	IXORA PARK
192	ROYAL POINCIANA
193	ROSELAND ROAD
194	WHISPERING PINES
195	MOORINGS
196	WALKER'S GLEN
197	GLENDALE LAKES
198	FLORALTON BEACH
199	WEST WABASSO

[Clerk note: This Item was heard following the Solid Waste Disposal District (SWDD) public hearing]

Commission Moss read aloud the rates for all of the Streetlighting Districts in the County. All rates remained unchanged except for the following:

Tierra Linda: \$55 per parcel acre (increasing to \$56, a \$1 increase), and Whispering Pines: \$25 per parcel acre (increasing to \$31, a \$6 increase).

These rates would be in effect for the upcoming fiscal year.

15. OTHER M.S.B.U.

171	EAST GIFFORD STORMWATER M.S.B.U.
185	VERO LAKE ESTATES M.S.B.U.
Other Assessments	North County Water Assessment

Administrator Titkanich presented information on the Municipal Service Benefit Units (MSBU) and other assessments. For Vero Lake Estates, the MSBU assessment was \$50 per parcel acre. The proposal for fiscal year 2025-2026 was to maintain this rate at \$50. The East Gifford Stormwater MSBU assessment was \$10 per parcel acre, and it was proposed to remain the same for the fiscal year 2025-2026. For the North County Water Assessment, the current fee was \$ 290.53 per parcel acre. The proposal was to reduce this rate by \$7.31, bringing it down to \$283.22

16. ENTERPRISE FUNDS

418-221	GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE
418-236	CLUBHOUSE
441-233	BUILDING DEPARTMENT
471-218	UTILITIES – WASTEWATER TREATMENT
471-219	UTILITIES – WATER PRODUCTION
471-235	UTILITIES – GENERAL & ENGINEERING
471-257	UTILITIES – SLUDGE OPERATIONS
471-265	UTILITIES – CUSTOMER SERVICE
471-268	UTILITIES – WASTEWATER COLLECTION
471-269	UTILITIES – WATER DISTRIBUTION
471-282	UTILITIES – OSPREY MARSH
471-292	UTILITIES – SPOONBILL MARSH
474-235	UTILITY WATER IMPACT FEES
475-235	UTILITY SEWER IMPACT FEES

Administrator Titkanich presented the Enterprise Funds Budget. The proposed budget for the golf course was \$5,130,104, reflecting a 7.1% increase or \$339,655. This increase was primarily attributed to a rise in the contract for maintaining the greens, which was set to increase by \$219,000.

The proposed budget for the Building Department totaled \$7,713,641, representing a 10% increase. This budget included nine new positions proposed for the Building Division. However, the department managed to reduce supplemental Building Inspection Services by \$500,000 due to the addition of the new in-house positions.

The proposed budget for Utilities was \$65,151,757, reflecting a 3.8% decrease. This decline was mainly due to fluctuations in capital expenses from year to year. The plan included adding one full-time position and reclassifying another. The Board was aware that utility rates would increase by 12% starting October 1, 2025. This rate hike, combined with new growth, was expected to bring in an additional \$8.6 million to the utilities revenue budget.

Lastly, the proposed budget for Water and Sewer impact fees was also presented. The budget for water impact fees was \$876,256, reflecting a decrease of \$320,744. This decrease was due to the fact that this was the first year the impact fees had been separated into two funds, necessitating adjustments to match actual expenses. Similarly, the proposed budget for sewer impact fees was \$1,109,807, showing a significant decrease of 29.6%.

17. INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS

501	FLEET MANAGEMENT
502	RISK MANAGEMENT (SELF INSURANCE)
504	EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE
505-103	IT - GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS
505-241	IT - INFORMATION SYSTEMS & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

County Administrator Titkanich presented the proposed budget for the Internal Service Fund, highlighting several key areas. The budget for Fleet Management was set at \$4,656,014, reflecting a 1.6% increase primarily due to rising costs for subcontracted repairs that could not be performed in-house.

The proposed budget for Risk Management/Self Insurance totaled \$10,381,272, representing an 8.5% increase. For the Employee Health Insurance Fund, the proposed budget totaled \$35,202,730, representing a \$1,719,082 increase, or 5.1%. This increase was largely attributed to the rising costs of pharmaceuticals, particularly those related to GLP-1 medications. Furthermore, a proposal was made to allocate an additional position in this budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Lastly, the proposed budget for Information Technology was \$7,158,169, indicating an increase of \$931,668, or 15%. This rise was linked to additional software and hardware expenses expected in the forthcoming fiscal year. Florida's Cybersecurity Grant could mitigate some of these costs, and was projected to contribute approximately \$450,000, although this amount was subject to variability based on vendor negotiations. Administrator Titkanich expressed satisfaction that the consultants had secured this grant during a leadership transition.

Clerk's note: Chairman Flescher paused the Budget workshop for the 1:30 p.m. Special Call Meeting to discuss the Special Assessment Resolution for the Solid Waste Disposal District.

The Board of County Commissioners reconvened as the Board of Commissioners for the Solid Waste Disposal District. The minutes will be approved at an upcoming Solid Waste Disposal District meeting.

18. 1:30 P.M. (PUBLIC HEARING) SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL DISTRICT (S.W.D.D.)

PROOF OF PUBLICATION FOR THIS HEARING IS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK TO THE BOARD.

411-217	SANITARY LANDFILL
411-255	RECYCLING

County Administrator Titkanich informed the Board that they had previously voted to adopt Universal Collection. The budget presented incorporated the rates that had already been approved, excluding the universal collection assessment. Regarding the landfill, he highlighted a significant budget change resulting from new contracts secured with Republic Services. The Landfill costs were projected to increase from \$19,804,640 to \$32,166,317, representing a \$12,361,677 increase, or 62.4%. In terms of recycling, although the increase was lower at 29.8%, it still indicated a \$3,604,409 increase. Overall, the total expenses for the Solid Waste Disposal District (SWDD), excluding capital expenses, amounted to \$42,047,435, marking a \$13,159,720 increase, or 45.6%. Administrator Titkanich reminded the Board that the details for Universal Collection had already been approved the Residential and Commercial Waste Generation Units, along with the Readiness-to-Use fee. For Universal Collection, the annual assessment was noted to be \$181.70.

The Chairman opened the public hearing for comments. There being none, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

The Board of Commissioners adjourned the Solid Waste Disposal District meeting and reconvened as the Board of County Commissioners of the Budget workshop meeting beginning with Item 14, Streetlighting Districts.

19. MISCELLANEOUS FUNDS

102	TRAFFIC IMPACT FEES
103	ADDITIONAL IMPACT FEES
104	TRAFFIC IMPACT FEES 2020
108	RENTAL ASSISTANCE
109	SECONDARY ROAD CONSTRUCTION
112	SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT
117	TREE ORDINANCE FINES
119	TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND
120	911 SURCHARGE
121	DRUG ABUSE FUND
123	IRCLHAP/SHIP
124	METRO PLAN ORGANIZATION
127	NATIVE UPLANDS ACQUISITION
128	COASTAL ENGINEERING
130	NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION 3 PLAN
133	FLORIDA BOATING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
135	DISABLED ACCESS PROGRAMS
136	INTERGOVERNMENTAL GRANTS
137	TRAFFIC EDUCATION PROGRAM
138	ARP – AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN
139	CARES ACT & COVID-19 RESPONSE
140	COURT FACILITY SURCHARGE FUND
141	ADDITIONAL COURT COSTS
142	COURT TECHNOLOGY FUND
145	LAND ACQUISITION SERIES 2006
147	OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS
155	LAND ACQUISITION SERIES 2024

County Administrator Titkanich presented the budget for various Miscellaneous Funds, highlighting key changes for the upcoming fiscal year. Traffic Improvement Fees were no longer collected, resulting in a proposed budget of zero. The budget for Additional Impact Fees decreased to \$1,904,483 due to capital project fluctuations. Traffic Impact Fees saw an increase to \$14,691,920 owing to Capital Projects.

Other notable budgets included Rental Assistance, decreased to \$3,993,330; Secondary Road Construction, increased to \$8,849,930; and a zero budget for the Special Law Enforcement Fund. The Tourist Development Fund proposed an increase to \$2,243,900, anticipating a rise in revenues.

Several funds experienced significant changes: the 911 Surcharge Fund decreased to \$1,627,750 due to grant funding, while the SHIP funding was set at \$1,950,058, reflecting a decrease. The Coastal Engineering Fund also saw a reduction to \$10,400,329, and funding for the Disabled Access Programs and Intergovernmental

Grants was proposed at zero.

The Court Facility Surcharge Fund had a slight decrease to \$120,824, and the Court Technology Fund increased to \$300,000. Meanwhile, the Opioid Settlement Funding would be managed through budget amendments due to variability. Lastly, the newly established Land Acquisition Bond Series 2024 was approved for \$24,780,742, with remaining funds expected to roll into the next fiscal year. Overall, the budget reflected adjustments resulting from changes in revenue, project completions, and the impact of grant funding across various funds.

20. DEBT SERVICE/CAPITAL PROJECTS

204	DODGER BONDS
255	LAND ACQUISITION BONDS 2024
308	JACKIE ROBINSON TRAINING COMPLEX
	(fka CAPITAL RESERVE FUND)
315	OPTIONAL ONE-CENT SALES TAX

Budget Director Kristen Daniels presented the details of the Debt Service and Capital Projects budgets. The proposed budget for the Dodger Bonds Fund was \$500,000, which was allocated for the debt service payment funded by the State each fiscal year.

Next, the Land Acquisition Bond Fund, which covered the debt service for the Land Acquisition Bond Series 2024 had a budget set at \$1,843,432. This amount accounted for the principal and interest on the bond, referenced earlier, at an annual rate of 0.061%.

The proposed budget for the Jackie Robinson Training Complex (formerly known as Dodgertown Capital Reserve) stood at \$424,768. This figure represented their lease obligation for capital maintenance at the Complex, which increased annually in accordance with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The increase stemmed from this adjustment, although they also experienced a decrease due to the funding of extra projects beyond their typical capital maintenance obligations, which were nearing completion.

The Optional One-Cent Sales Tax Fund had a proposed budget of \$53,870,236, reflecting a decrease of \$34,263,675. This fluctuation was attributed to variances in capital projects. Any of the outstanding \$88,139,911 that remained at the end of the fiscal year would roll over into the next fiscal year.

The Chairman called for a recess at 1:53 p.m. and reconvened at 2:00 p.m. with all

members present.

21. AGGREGATE MILLAGE

AGGREGATE MILLAGE RATE IS 6.1158.

Administrator Titkanich stated that the proposed Aggregate Millage rate was 6.1198. The rolled back millage rate was 5.7442, while the proposed rate was 6.1158, resulting in a difference of 0.3716. It was important to note that this figure represented an average and did not reflect what every individual would pay.

22. RECAP - TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET AND PROPOSED MILLAGE RATES

JOHN A. TITKANICH, JR., COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

The discussion between the Board and staff focused on the proposed budget and the importance of properly advertising the millage rate, as emphasized by Ms. Daniels. She pointed out the difficulties in not knowing the fund amounts prior to the preliminary hearing and suggested scheduling an additional workshop in August for further discussions.

Commissioner Adams noted that the Board was not fully prepared to make decisions at that moment but was open to holding a special meeting to address any concerns. Administrator Titkanich recommended reevaluating certain positions within the General Fund to identify potential savings and emphasized the need to exercise caution in budget decisions for future years.

He presented a slide showing how the County could potentially achieve a \$6.1 million funding increase for the sheriff by reallocating funds from other areas, such as: \$500,000 from Animal Services funding, \$247,507 from the Facilities Master Plan, \$151,994 from Court Administration, \$125,000 from the Gifford Neighborhood Plan, and \$240,000 from a mile of road paving. The goal was to increase the Sheriff's budget request by an additional \$1.4 million over the proposed amount.

Commissioner Adams inquired about the removal of certain funds, while Vice Chairman Loar emphasized the importance of the Gifford Neighborhood Plan, noting its delays. Administrator Titkanich expressed agreement and highlighted the value of having an independent consulting team to enhance the Gifford Neighborhood Plan's effectiveness for the community and the County overall.

Administrator Titkanich recapped that the proposed overall budget was

\$597,623,132, reflecting a decrease of \$73,305,111 from the amended FY 24/25 budget. The General Fund millage was set at 3.5475, marking a 6.69% increase over the rollback rate, which was considered a tax increase by law. The General Fund budget was proposed at \$156,920,503, an increase of \$196,559.

For the unincorporated area, the proposed millage was 1.1506 mills, a 6.09% increase over the rollback rate. The MSTU budget was proposed at \$54,969,931, showing a decrease of \$2,285,375. The Transportation Fund budget was proposed at \$27,295,785, a decrease of \$1,386,172.

The Emergency Service District had a proposed millage of 2.3531, a 6.25% increase over the rollback rate, and its budget was \$73,585,471, which was \$9,992,199 less than the previous year. Lastly, the Land Acquisition Bond Series 2024 proposed millage was 0.0610, and the proposed budget was \$1,843,432, representing an increase of \$65,340. Discussions regarding the proposed millage rates and potential budget changes would be held individually with the Commissioners.

Chairman Flescher emphasized the importance of being proactive and fiscally disciplined, taking into account economic concerns and potential revenue challenges. He noted the need for continued essential services while preparing for a possible economic downturn. He thanked staff, particularly Kristen Daniels and Elise Kriss, for their hard work on the budget despite staffing challenges, as well as other departments and employees for their contributions. Chairman Flescher also announced the schedule for the Preliminary Budget Hearing on September 10, 2025, and the Final Budget Hearing on September 17, 2025, expressing the need to prioritize scheduling a Special Call August workshop.

A motion was made by Commissioner Earman, seconded by Chairman Flescher, to approve the proposed millage rates as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Chairman Flescher, Vice Chairman Loar, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Earman, and Commissioner Moss

There being no further business the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.