

**REPORT OF THE COUNTY BUDGET TASK FORCE MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2011**

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The County Budget Task Force meeting was called to order at 2:37 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27, 2011, in the Town Council Chambers. On roll call, the following members were found to be present: Mayor Gail Coniglio, Carla Cove, Bobbi Horwich, Bruce McAllister, and Jere Zenko. Member Kenneth Horowitz was absent. Vice Chair Erica Elliott had resigned.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Coniglio led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS (3-minute limit, please)**

No citizens requested to speak.

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. McAllister, seconded by Mrs. Cove, and approved unanimously.**

**V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MARCH 30, 2011 CBTF MEETING**

Motion to approve the minutes of the March 30, 2011, County Budget Task Force meeting was made by Mr. McAllister, seconded by Mrs. Cove, and approved unanimously.

**VI. REVIEW OF DRAFT COUNTY BUDGET TASK FORCE POSITION PAPER AND TALKING POINTS (Thomas G. Bradford, Deputy Town Manager)**

Mayor Coniglio stated that the mission of the Task Force included working with TAB (Taxpayer Action Board), but she said there may be points where the municipalities go in another direction. She asked that the audience comment as the Position Paper was reviewed.

Thomas Bradford, Deputy Town Manager, distributed and highlighted the Town of Palm Beach, County Budget Task Force, Position Paper. He explained that the first two pages were a narrative of the Task Force as it relates to the Town of Palm Beach and the next section included issues on which TAB had been working. He stated that the Paper concludes with what the Task Force was requesting long-term and short-term. He asked the Task Force members and audience to be sure it was reflective of their feelings on the

1 issues. He questioned the wording of the long term goal of privatization. Mr. McAllister  
2 responded that he believed that the advocacy of privatization meant where it was  
3 reasonable and served the residents of the municipalities. He stated that he supported that  
4 goal without change. Mrs. Zenko agreed with Mr. McAllister suggesting that an  
5 adjective, such as where necessary or as needed, could be added.  
6

7 Mayor Coniglio reviewed the proposals for fiscal year 2012. She said she would put the  
8 "Smart Cap" on the longer term wish list. She stated that retaining the millage rate is  
9 number one and the County cannot deplete the reserves to accomplish it.  
10

11 Fred Scheibl of TAB reported that the County staff had been directed to begin the budget  
12 process at flat millage and show things that were cut in order to achieve it.  
13

14 Commissioner Milton Block, Town of Jupiter Inlet Colony, suggested amending the  
15 longer term goal to read: Significant privatization of county services on a cost benefit  
16 basis. He explained that everything would be evaluated in terms of its cost and potential  
17 benefits.  
18

19 Pat Cooper, 261 Sanford Avenue, expressed his concerns with the Position Paper:

- 20 • The Task Force should not get lost in the specifics but take positions that are  
21 macro and work from those macro positions.
- 22 • The County Budget Task Force should stay autonomous and be a task force of the  
23 Town rather than an equal partner with TAB.
- 24 • How would the Task Force communicate its points of view, through TAB or by  
25 itself?
- 26 • The County may pass federal and state mandates down to the municipalities.
- 27 • The Sheriff had said his budget was \$230 million for law enforcement and  
28 everything else was add-on given to him by the County. He would be willing to  
29 give the add-ons back including the jail, courtroom security and transport.
- 30 • Know the net dollar amount that will result in ad valorem tax reductions as a  
31 result of overall property valuations and is holding the line a realistic goal.
- 32 • Don't get lost in the detail of the proposals for fiscal year 2012.  
33

34 Mr. Bradford pointed out that there was a mistake on page 1, bullet one, the second  
35 sentence. He explained that a municipality that has a higher tax rate than the Town of  
36 Palm Beach would pay more total taxes than a property owner in Palm Beach, but if they  
37 have a higher tax rate, their percentage of taxes paid to the County would be less than the  
38 Town, not more. He suggested the words "even greater" be deleted and add the word  
39 "less." (For a municipality with a higher tax rate than the Town, which currently has a  
40 3.2512 millage rate, the percentage of taxes paid to the county is less.) He referred to the  
41 fifth bullet in "What we Want" saying if a person's taxable property value is less than the  
42 market value and if the state issues the Save Our Homes increase, which is based upon  
43 the increase in population of the State of Florida and the increase in the growth in  
44 personal income over the prior year, there would be a tax increase for a large number of  
45 property owners. Mrs. Zenko asked how the bullet point could be reworded to eliminate

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1 the problem. Mr. Bradford replied the millage rate would have to be reduced by the  
2 percentage increase in the Save Our Homes number. Following a brief discussion, there  
3 was consensus it was better to keep a statement to keep the millage rate flat.  
4

5 Mr. McAllister reported that the school district comprises 45% of the county budget. He  
6 asked to add a long term goal of bringing the school district into the goals the Task Force  
7 was trying to accomplish. Mayor Coniglio expressed concern with diluting the work of  
8 the Task Force. Mrs. Zenko agreed with Mr. McAllister saying that there is a new  
9 superintendent who would be making some changes and the timing was right to add the  
10 school district. Mrs. Cove proposed the Task Force be mindful of the school board but  
11 keep it separate as a long term goal. Mr. McAllister agreed.  
12

13 Mayor Coniglio asked for agreement on the various sections of the Position Paper.  
14

15 There was general agreement on the statement at the top of page 3 and the three  
16 categories of Core Services.  
17

18 Regarding the Additional Strategies to Consider, Mayor Coniglio expressed concern that  
19 the Task Force was getting into too much detail with bullet seven, "Determine where  
20 cooperation with local governments can eliminate duplicate services such as code  
21 enforcement, licensing, etc." Mr. McAllister responded that these provide flexibility and  
22 were merely suggestions. Mrs. Cove proposed it be made more broad by eliminating the  
23 words "such as code enforcement, licensing, etc." and delete the words "biennially rather  
24 than annually" in the next bullet. Mr. McAllister disagreed, saying that in talking about  
25 capital budgets, planning year by year crushes initiative. Commissioner Block said he  
26 believed the specifics were a helpful roadmap in achieving a goal. Mayor Coniglio asked  
27 about including a ten-year financial plan as a strategy or as a proposal for fiscal year  
28 2012.  
29

30 Town Council Member William Diamond asked if the state legislature had been  
31 requested to require caps for county governments. Mr. Bradford replied that the State of  
32 Florida has a 10 mill cap. He reported that there was talk at the state level and Mr.  
33 Scheibl had suggested a Smart Cap be developed locally that would be based on increase  
34 in population and/or inflation.  
35

36 Mrs. Zenko said she believed that a ten year study is of vital importance.  
37

38 There was consensus to leave the Additional Strategies to Consider as written.  
39

40 No changes were made to page 4 of 6.  
41

42 Page 5 of 6 was reviewed. There was discussion regarding the sheriff's budget. Mr.  
43 Scheibl stated that a charter change had been suggested as a way to get more  
44 transparency from Palm Beach Sheriff's Office (PBSO).  
45

1 Mrs. Horwich asked for a list of the \$100 million in capital projects. Mr. Scheibl  
2 responded that the Tax Watch Study would look at capital projects.

3  
4 There was consensus on the verbiage on page 5 of 6.

5  
6 Regarding page 6 of 6, the fiscal year 2012 proposals, Mayor Coniglio asked about the  
7 focus when going before the County Commission. She also asked if retaining the millage  
8 rate was the number one goal. Mr. Bradford questioned if the ten-year plan would be  
9 added to the proposals for fiscal year 2012. Mr. McAllister replied that he saw no reason  
10 to defer any of it.

11  
12 Mayor Coniglio asked if a charter change for the school board should be added. Mr.  
13 Scheibl answered that the charter did not apply to the school board, only for the County.  
14 Mr. McAllister said that to bring the school district to any control other than the school  
15 board would require a change in Tallahassee. He stated that he believed the Task Force  
16 wanted the school board budget to meet a similar matrix to the County budget, which is  
17 growth over time but under proper circumstances. Following further discussion, there  
18 was consensus to add the school board as a long term goal.

19  
20 Commissioner Block of Jupiter Inlet Colony and Mayor David Levy of Palm Beach  
21 Gardens each spoke about long term planning. Mayor Levy expressed concern with a  
22 Smart Cap. Mayor Coniglio proposed the word "impose" be discussed in the bullet  
23 dealing with the Smart Cap. Mr. Scheibl explained that the Smart Cap being discussed in  
24 Tallahassee was based on a population and inflation measure. He spoke about the  
25 proposed cap at the County level. There was further discussion on the Smart Cap. Mayor  
26 Levy asked about a Smart Cap based on the actual first year projections but never allow a  
27 millage rate over 5% a year. Mr. Scheibl responded that at the County level, the more  
28 complicated you make the Smart Cap, the more susceptible it could be to a constitutional  
29 challenge. He said he would defer Mayor Levy's suggestion to an attorney to see if it was  
30 constitutional. Mayor Levy suggested language be added to the charter amendment to  
31 encourage fiscal responsibility. Mayor Coniglio asked if the language regarding the  
32 Smart Cap should stay in, be moved to long term, or add the verbiage suggested by  
33 Mayor Levy for a rate under the cap. Mr. Bradford suggested the verbiage "with  
34 disincentive to spend up to the cap" be added. There was consensus on the change. Mayor  
35 Levy stated that it would provide stability in the millage rate which would help the  
36 businesses in their planning.

37  
38 In response to a question from Mrs. Horwich, Mayor Coniglio stated that the first  
39 proposal would be the millage rate and the rest would follow as listed. She further stated  
40 that development of a ten-year financial plan would be included in the proposals.

41  
42 Councilman Mike Dahlgren of the City of Atlantis suggested the word "defer" in the first  
43 bullet be changed to "freeze." He also suggested a budget responsibility audit be  
44 included. He explained that if a major expenditure comes in less than the budget, the  
45 difference comes off the table. Commissioner Dan Comerford of Jupiter Inlet Colony

1 agreed with Councilman Dahlgren. He said that the idea of deferring raises is the same as  
2 doubling up in the next year and it would be better to give bonuses because it is not  
3 building on the raise every year. Mr. McAllister responded that he believed that  
4 designing a bonus system would be getting the Task Force too deep into the detail. He  
5 said he liked the word "defer." Following further discussion, there was consensus to  
6 leave the wording as printed.

7  
8 Mayor Levy asked about including in the proposals a bullet to read: Expenditures not  
9 realized in the budget process should be placed into the general fund to reduce the  
10 millage rate for the next year. Mr. McAllister expressed concern with limiting the ability  
11 of management if money is frozen and can't be moved without asking permission or  
12 waiting a year. He said it was too technical and too specific. Mayor Coniglio agreed.

13  
14 Commissioner Block spoke about the disparity in Fire-Rescue salaries. He suggested that  
15 the next contract should have a wage freeze regardless of the length of the contract.

16  
17 There was consensus on the longer term proposals with the addition of a bullet regarding  
18 the school board.

19  
20 Mayor Coniglio asked everyone to adopt a position they could take when addressing the  
21 County Commissioners. Mr. Scheibl reported that prior to the June 12 County budget  
22 meeting, TAB expected to receive something from the County on the budget. He said he  
23 would include summaries on the website and suggested that the Task Force do the same.  
24 Mayor Coniglio said she would coordinate with the Task Force members on the issues  
25 and attendance at the meetings. Mr. Scheibl spoke about the importance of speaking as  
26 one voice.

27  
28  
29 **VII. UPDATE ON FUNDING FOR A FLORIDA TAX WATCH STUDY OF THE PALM  
30 BEACH COUNTY BUDGET (Thomas G. Bradford, Deputy Town Manager)**

31 Mr. Bradford reported that the Palm Beach Civic Association had agreed to be the  
32 contracting agent for the Tax Watch Study. Ned Barnes of the Palm Beach Civic  
33 Association stated that Civic Association had agreed to donate \$10,000 and Jere Zenko  
34 was fund raising for the remaining \$10,000 cost for the study. He further stated that the  
35 Civic Association had received the contract on Friday, made suggestions which had been  
36 accepted in principal, and were moving ahead in good faith. Mayor Coniglio asked if it  
37 would be a sixty day completion. Mr. Bradford replied it was structured for sixty days.

38 Robert W. Ganger of the Florida Coalition for Preservation stated that the Gulfstream  
39 Civic Association, along with the Florida Coalition representing the towns of Manalapan,  
40 Ocean Ridge, and Briny Breezes to Delray would like to make a contribution to the Tax  
41 Watch Study so it was understood that it was not just Palm Beach. He said this was the  
42 first step in a longer process to get more people interested in what the Task Force was  
43 trying to accomplish. He suggested that someone from the inland communities be  
contacted to get involved. Mayor Coniglio suggested that personal phone calls be made

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1 to representatives of the inland communities. She thanked Mr. Ganger and the Florida  
2 Coalition for their participation and support.  
3

**VIII. COUNTY BUDGET TASK FORCE MEMBERS TELEPHONE ATTENDANCE (Thomas  
G. Bradford, Deputy Town Manager)**

4  
5 Mr. Bradford informed the Task Force that former Mayor Jack McDonald had spoken to  
6 the Town Council about allowing the Task Force to have telephone attendance because it  
7 is an ad hoc committee. He said the original concern was that it was unfair that a standing  
8 committee have a board member voting on a project who was unable to see the  
9 presentation. He stated that either he or Mayor Coniglio would write to the Town Council  
10 and inform them that it is the position of the Task Force that it is okay to have telephone  
11 attendance. He reported that the Town Attorney had informed him that the previous  
12 policy of the Town Council regarding telephone attendance was that a quorum had to be  
13 physically present at the meeting in order for it to take place. There was consensus to take  
14 the request for telephone attendance at meetings before the Town Council.  
15

**IX. APPOINTMENT OF A VICE CHAIR TO SERVE IN THE ABSENCE OF THE MAYOR**

16  
17 Mr. Bradford reported that Vice Chair Erica Elliott had to resign from the Task Force for  
18 personal commitments. He asked about appointing a vice chair to run the meeting in the  
19 absence of the Mayor. There was consensus to discuss it at the next meeting.  
20

**X. MEMBER REPORTS**

21  
22 Mr. Zenko reported that she had spoken with Nancy Bolton, Palm Beach County Human  
23 Resources, who had negotiated with their unions. She further reported that the County did  
24 not do as well as they hoped for the recovery rate for health care. She stated that the  
25 County conducted a hard audit and were able to eliminate 325 dependents that were self  
26 reported or deemed ineligible. She further stated that all the plan design changes were  
27 implemented.  
28

29 Mayor Coniglio requested that as the Task Force receives the presentation from Mr.  
30 Scheibl, that they critique it and email their considerations to Mr. Bradford. She asked  
31 that if Task Force members would be unable to attend the June 13 County budget  
32 meeting, that they consider writing letters consistent with the long-term goals in the  
33 Position Paper or designate someone to attend the meeting.  
34

35 Mrs. Zenko reported that she and Mr. Scheibl had attended a meeting with Paulette  
36 Burdick and had some results from the meeting.  
37  
38  
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**XI. SCHEDULE MEETING FOR MAY**

Following discussion, there was consensus to not schedule a regular meeting for May but have the Mayor call a meeting if necessary.

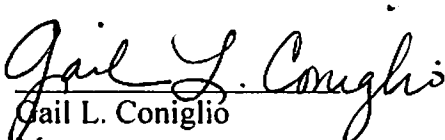
**XII. ANY OTHER MATTERS**

There were none.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the County Budget Task Force meeting of April 27, 2011, was adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

APPROVED:

  
Gail L. Coniglio  
Mayor

County Budget Task Force agenda BackUp Documents