

**REPORT OF THE COUNTY BUDGET TASK FORCE MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2011**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The County Budget Task Force meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 30, 2011, in the Town Council Chambers. On roll call, the following members were found to be present: Chair Gail Coniglio, Carla Cove, Bobbi Horwich, Bruce McAllister, and Jere Zenko. Vice-Chair Erica Elliott and Ken Horowitz were absent.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Coniglio led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

There were none.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. JANUARY 24, 2011, MEETING

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2011, County Budget Task Force meeting was made by Mr. McAllister, seconded by Mrs. Zenko, and was approved unanimously.

b. FEBRUARY 28, 2011 MEETING

Motion to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2011, County Budget Task Force meeting was made by Mr. McAllister, seconded by Mrs. Zenko, and was approved unanimously.

VI. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS (Mayor Gail Coniglio)

Mayor Coniglio welcomed the municipal officials present and introduced them.

Mayor Coniglio summarized the genesis of the Task Force. She stated that only a small portion of an individual's tax dollars collected remain in their municipality. She stated that she hoped that as a partnership of municipalities a voice and coalition could be created to pressure the Palm Beach County Commissioners to reduce taxes.

VII. PRESENTATION BY TAXPAYER ACTION BOARD (TAB) ON PALM BEACH COUNTY BUDGET ISSUES. (Fred Scheibl, TAB)

Mayor Coniglio introduced Fred Scheibl of the Palm Beach County Taxpayer Action Board (TAB) stating that he had done research and analysis on Palm Beach County's budget and offered a pool of resources that small municipalities could not duplicate.

Mr. Scheibl gave a power point presentation on TAB and the Palm Beach County budget. A copy of the presentation was submitted for the record. Mr. Scheibl explained that TAB specifically looked at the County budget including fire-rescue, the Constitutional officers, the Sheriff's Department, and the library system, but not including the school system, Solid Waste Authority, Health Care District, Children's Services Council, or any of the municipalities. He noted that spending at the County level was up eleven times the population growth and three times the rate of inflation. He spoke about the spending increase from Federal grants and the ARRA (stimulus) funds.

Mr. Scheibl shared charts of the overall County spending and the Sheriff's Department and Fire-Rescue spending. He explained that the largest portion of the Sheriff and Fire-Rescue budgets was for personnel services. He stated that the average fireman made \$150,000 with benefits. He reported that the span of control for Fire-Rescue was 2:1, for the Sheriff's Department was 7:1; and for County staff was 14:1. He explained that Fire-Rescue was high because Fire-Rescue requires an officer to be in charge when a piece of equipment is deployed.

Mr. Scheibl spoke about decreasing valuations, millage rates, personnel service costs, reduced grant funding, and the revenue shortfall and its affect on the budget. He reviewed the tentative TAB 2012 proposal:

- Flat millage
- "Smart Cap"
- Online disclosure of Sheriff's budget
- Support Florida Retirement System (FRS) reform
- Modify the Career Services Act, a local bill

Mr. Scheibl referred the group to the TAB website (pbctab.org) for specifics on the proposal. He suggested that people could also register on the website for action alerts and County news. He proposed that working groups could be formed to engage the County government.

Mr. Scheibl answered questions from the audience.

Mayor Coniglio reported that the Task Force had determined it would partner with TAB. She said she hoped that a coalition of municipalities could be formed to embrace some of the positions that had been discussed. She stated that municipality representatives were welcome to attend Task Force meetings and that she would share information with them. She suggested that everyone participate in the County budget meetings on June 13 and 14, July 11 and 12, and the public hearings on September 13 and 27.

Mrs. Zenko suggested that the Town's pension reform plan be shared with the people present. Mayor Coniglio said that anyone interested could receive a copy of the proposed plan.

Stating that it was very important that there be a large attendance at Commission meetings, Council Member William Diamond suggested a hotline be established to inform people of the budget meeting dates. Mr. Scheibl responded that people could sign up on the TAB website or contact him at info@pbctab.org to receive notices of the meetings.

VIII. REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL ADOPTED PRIORITIES FOR THE COUNTY BUDGET TASK FORCE

Mayor Coniglio reviewed the priorities of the Task Force:

1. Maintain a coalition partnership with TAB which facilitates citizen understanding of the Palm Beach budget;
2. Advocate for funding for a Tax Watch Study which would also facilitate TAB's efforts in researching and analyzing the County budget;
3. Develop position papers to be used when attending meetings, sending letters, or talking to the individual Commissioners; and
4. The Mayor to partner with the municipalities.

Mr. McAllister asked about sending a letter from the Task Force to the Town's residents to raise funds for the Tax Watch Study. Thomas Bradford, Deputy Town Manager, replied that there had been some question as to the extent that the Task Force could send letter because of the association of the Task Force to the Town. He said it may be better done by individuals.

Mayor Coniglio explained that Tax Watch could identify a scope of research that might be beneficial to TAB and the efforts of the Task Force. She reported that the funding for the Florida Tax Watch Study could not come from a government entity.

Clerk's Note: The next item discussed was XII. Schedule Meeting for April.

IX. APPROVAL OF A TAXPAYER ACTION BOARD (TAB) RECOMMENDED SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR A FLORIDA TAX WATCH STUDY OF THE PALM BEACH COUNTY BUDGET

Mr. Bradford updated the Task Force on the Florida Tax Watch Study. He reported that Mr. Scheibl and Katie Hayden, Research Analyst and Lead Researcher for the Local Government Studies at Florida Tax Watch, had developed a revised scope of services focusing on the County's reserves, debt, and property inventory. He further reported that the cost for the Study had been reduced from \$40,000 to \$20,000 due to the reduced scope.

Following a brief discussion on funding for the Florida Tax Watch Study, Ned Barnes of the Palm Beach Civic Association stated that the Association would work with Mr. Bradford regarding the mailing of a letter to residents requesting funds for the Study. Mr. McAllister asked if the Civic Association would reach out to other associations in the County to jointly send a letter. Mr. Barnes agreed.

Mr. Scheibl reported he had spoken to Mike Jones with the Economic Council and Bob Gonstead and Tony Gigliotti of SICA (Singer Island Civic Association) regarding receiving the funds, writing the check, and signing the contract with Florida Tax Watch. He asked Mr. Bradford to attend a meeting with them to discuss the idea.

There was discussion on the need to find out who would be receiving the funds and signing the contract prior to a letter being distributed. Mr. Barnes suggested that the Civic Association's Finance and Tax Committee Chair meet with Mr. Scheibl to work out the details.

Motion made to approve the scope of services for Florida Tax Watch was made by Mrs. Zenko, seconded by Mr. McAllister, and was unanimously approved.

X. PALM BEACH COUNTY BUDGET MEETING SCHEDULE

Clerk's Note: This item was included as part of the discussion of VII. Presentation by Taxpayer Action Board (TAB) on Palm Beach County Budget Issues.

XI. MEMBER REPORTS

There were none.

Clerk's Note: Item XII. Schedule Meeting for April, was discussed after VIII. Review of Town Council Adopted Priorities for the County Budget Task Force.

XII. SCHEDULE MEETING FOR APRIL

The County Budget Task Force scheduled its next meeting for Wednesday, April 27, 2011, at 2:30 p.m. in Town Council Chambers.

XIII. ANY OTHER MATTERS

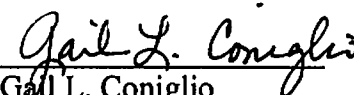
Council Member Richard Kleid reported that the Palm Beach Civic Association and the Citizen's Association of Palm Beach had each contributed \$10,000 to the Palm Beach Centennial Commission.

Mayor Coniglio asked about the possibility of doing telephone attendance at Task Force meetings during the summer months. Mrs. Cove asked about video chat or the use of Skype. Mr. Bradford said he did not believe it was possible. He stated that a Task Force member could attend via speaker phone. He reported that the Town Council had adopted a resolution designating the circumstances that participation by telephone would be allowed. He said he would review the resolution. Mayor Coniglio said this issue would be discussed further at the next meeting.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the County Budget Task Force meeting of March 31, 2011, was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

APPROVED:



Gail L. Coniglio
Mayor