

**REPORT OF THE COUNTY BUDGET TASK FORCE MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2012**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The County Budget Task Force meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. on Thursday, March 1, 2012, in the Town Council Chambers. On roll call, the following members were found to be present: Chair Gail Coniglio, Carla Cove, Bobbi Horwich, and Bruce McAllister. Kenneth Horowitz and Jere Zenko were absent. (Mrs. Zenko arrived late in the meeting.)

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Coniglio led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

No one requested to speak.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 2, 2012 CBTF MEETING

Motion to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2012, County Budget Task Force meeting was made by Mrs. Cove, seconded by Mr. McAllister and was approved unanimously.

VI. BUDGETARY MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE PALM BEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE [Ric L. Bradshaw, Sheriff, Palm Beach County]

Mayor Coniglio introduced Ric Bradshaw, Palm Beach County Sheriff, and George Foreman, Deputy Director, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Bradshaw spoke about the cost saving changes he had made since he was elected. He stated that the organization was streamlined and the budget was made lean. He further stated that sworn personnel were not used to do things civilians could do.

Sheriff Bradshaw reported that the \$136 million cost for the jail was driven by the amount of people in jail. He reported that the jail averages 2800-3000 inmates, serves 9,000 meals a day, and provides medical and psychological care, as well as driving the inmates to court.

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Sheriff Bradshaw spoke about his \$464 million budget saying that he does a lot of trimming before presenting it to the County Commission. He said his budget reflects what he needs and any savings is given back to reduce his ad valorem impact to the County. He reviewed the cuts made last year. He reported that health care had been reduced by \$2.7 million by opening a clinic. He explained that if the number of employee claims is reduced, premiums go down. He stated that he had reduced \$18.2 million from his budget to offset contract prices, increases for food and inmate medical care. He reported that when negotiating with the union, there was a zero COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) for the last three years. He noted that the fire department received 3%.

Sheriff Bradshaw said it was disingenuous for the County to say its budget was big because the Sheriff's budget was big and 50% of the County budget. He explained that the \$47.1 million cost for municipal contracts was a wash because the money was received back as revenue. He further explained that the same is true of the \$4.5 million for off-duty permits. He stated there were items in his budget that by State statute the sheriff was not required to do:

- building and operation of the jail (cost almost \$136 million)
- school crossing guards (cost \$4 million)
- courthouse security - outside the courtroom (cost \$5.2 million)
- regional crime lab used by any police department in the County that has narcotics, DNA evidence, fingerprint evidence or other crime lab-related evidence. The State is directed to fund up to 75% but they don't come close to that amount and the County does not fund it. (cost \$6.9 million).

Sheriff Bradshaw reported that he provides the County \$12.1 million in revenues from traffic and collects another \$10.1 million in other revenues. He further reported that if all the items that he had noted were removed from his budget, the net would be \$238 million or 25% of the County budget. He said he felt very strongly that he is doing everything to keep his budget even or below and to help the County with any shortfall. He stated that as a result of the Career Service Bill, he could not control pensions or reduce sworn officer salaries or benefits unless the County is insolvent.

Sheriff Bradshaw gave the history of the Career Service Bill. He reported that 85% of his budget was employee expenses and he had done everything possible to reduce the number of things sworn people do and civilianize. He further reported that he had not been able to hire deputies since 2006. He said his department handles over a million calls for service a year and had gone from 2.6 to 1.3 deputies per thousand calls for service. He said response time is not good.

Mr. McAllister asked if there was a criminal enforcement agency of comparable size that could be used for a cost comparison. Sheriff Bradshaw responded that Broward was the same size or a little bigger and Jacksonville was close. He added that Palm Beach was the fifth largest in the nation. He explained that a lot of factors determine the cost such as demographics and calls for service. He noted that some counties were not fighting gangs and pill mills.

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2 Sheriff Bradshaw spoke about reductions in overtime. He said that he was able to get the
3 Commission to fund a \$180 million technology program over a seven year period
4 because there were no laptops in the police cars. He talked about other programs they
5 were working on to make the department more efficient.

6
7 Mr. McAllister asked how Palm Beach County compared to Broward or other counties as
8 to cost. Sheriff Bradshaw responded that he believed Palm Beach was as good or better.
9 He noted that West Palm Beach had copied the health care program with a clinic and
10 Broward had sent someone to see how the courthouse is managed because Palm Beach
11 does it very efficiently with as few deputies as possible.

12
13 There was discussion regarding the use of ankle bracelets. Sheriff Bradshaw said he was
14 very cautious with that, especially with violent offenders and that it could not be
15 civilianized.

16
17 Mrs. Cove asked what smart business practices the Sheriff was working on and how far
18 he was projecting his budget (3-5 years) in light of the flat property tax. Sheriff Bradshaw
19 responded that his department was lean. He said he gave a five year capital replacement
20 program to the County Commission his first year but now there was no capital
21 replacement money. He said that on larger projects, like the jail expansion, there was a
22 five-year plan. Deputy Director Foreman stated that were some specific items in the
23 budget presentation last year in terms of what would be done to reduce budgets costs,
24 business practices, and contract negotiations. He said he would provide that information
25 to the Task Force and answer any specific questions.

26
27 Regarding transparency, Sheriff Bradshaw stated that his department was reviewed more
28 than any other organization in the County. He further stated that reviews were done by
29 the FBI, other federal agencies, and other state agencies on a constant basis. He said that
30 another question he is asked is why the Sheriff's Department would not be scrutinized by
31 the Inspector General (IG). He explained that it was a constitutional issue as the sheriff is
32 not governed by the County Commission or subject to an ordinance the County may pass.
33 He said the second reason he would not be under the IG was that he was the investigative
34 arm for the state attorney to investigate corruption.

35
36 Mrs. Horwich asked why there are sometimes two Sheriff's cars parked at a home.
37 Sheriff Bradshaw responded that there were a lot of deputies that are married and live
38 together. He explained that the car take home program saves the Sheriff's office money in
39 prep time (moving laptops, biological suits, weapons, and report items) and response time
40 for a savings of about \$9.2 million in overtime. He stated that the gas that is used is
41 charged to the employees.

42
43 Mayor Coniglio asked if there was a way to cut the Sheriff's budget by 7%. Sheriff
44 Bradshaw responded no, that he was fighting to keep at the same budget for the third year
45 in a row, but he did anticipate he would be able to return a substantial amount of money
46 from contracts to the County this year.

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Sheriff Bradshaw stated he had to leave and asked that any further questions be sent to Deputy Director Foreman.

Mr. McAllister commented that the Sheriff's objection to being under the control of the Inspector General because he investigates corruptions and investigates himself internally is why the IG should have jurisdiction.

Fred Scheibl addressed the Task Force saying that the Sheriff probably does get audited by a lot of federal agencies but what is not transparent is that the public can't do it. He stated that most of the Sheriff's budget is in personnel service and that is driven and constrained by the Career Service Bill, which says that the Sheriff cannot reduce benefits and only applies to the Palm Beach County Sheriff. He explained that the Bill was not likely to get repealed because it would have to be a unanimous decision by the 18-member local legislative delegation. He stated that fire-rescue has public meetings on their contract negotiations but the Sheriff's department does not.

Mr. McAllister asked Mr. Scheibl what actions the Sheriff could take to make his budget more transparent. Mr. Scheibl said that the Taxpayer Action Board (TAB) had specifically asked him to put his budget on the internet so the public could look at it. He stated that the Sheriff's answer was that it would not happen.

In response to a question from Mrs. Cove, Mr. Scheibl said that the only way the County could get out of the Career Service Bill would be through an exigent operation necessity. He explained that there was a difference of opinion on what that meant but the County attorney had said that the County would have to be out of reserves and broke. He stated that the County was far from being broke.

Town Councilman Richard Kleid, 2660 South Ocean Boulevard, asked about convincing the Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation members to repeal the Career Service Bill based on the fact local communities are struggling with pensions and benefits. Mr. Scheibl responded that TAB had made that an issue last year. He explained that it was a convention that the Florida legislature uses that a local bill that needs to be repealed or changed in any major way needs unanimous agreement of the delegation. There was further discussion on the Bill. Councilman Kleid suggested maybe the Task Force would be interested in taking up the issue because it was a major part of the budget.

Councilman Kleid questioned the cost savings for the take home vehicle program. Mr. Scheibl responded that it would be hard to disprove the policies and measurements. He said there is nationwide evidence that having identified police vehicles in neighborhoods is a deterrent.

Mrs. Zenko arrived at the meeting.

Mayor Coniglio asked that any questions for the Sheriff be submitted to her or Tom Bradford, Deputy Town Manager.

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VII. ANY OTHER MATTERS

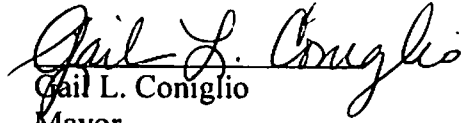
Mr. Scheibl reported that the County Commission would be holding a retreat on March 21 in Boynton Beach to discuss budget and set policy for the year. He suggested that the Task Force may want to send someone to the meeting.

Mayor Coniglio said she believed the major mission of the Task Force was to hold the millage rate flat. She said the Task Force had reached its parameters of investigation with the exception of the Supervisor of Elections and the Property Appraiser. She asked if another meeting should be scheduled. Mrs. Horwich proposed at least one more meeting before the summer.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the County Budget Task Force meeting of March 1, 2012, was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

APPROVED:


Gail L. Coniglio
Mayor