

July 10, 2008
Special Session
Pine Log Volunteer Fire Department

The Holmes County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session at the Pine Log Volunteer Fire Department on the above date with the following members present: Commissioner Kenneth Williams, Commissioner Monty Merchant, Commissioner Jim King, Commissioner Phillip Music, Commissioner Raymon Thomas, Chairman of the Board.

Mr. Greg Wood, County Administrator, was present.
Angie Jonas, Deputy Clerk, was present and kept the minutes.
Chairman Thomas opened the meeting with the prayer and pledge.

Pursuant to public notice, the Board held a workshop to discuss cost and energy savings for the County.

The Board discussed alternative fuel ideas. Administrator Wood stated that the County has been over budget on the fuel this fiscal year and is in need of suggestions for reducing County expenses for fuel and energy. Citizens speaking regarding this topic were the following:

Mr. Jimmy Conner
Mr. Roger Deal
Mr. Gary Deal
Mr. George Taylor

Mr. Gary Deal suggested the consolidation of Road Department Districts in order to save on fuel by dispatching out of one or two locations rather than five. Mr. Scott Prescott, Fire Chief of Pine Log Fire Department, stated that he would like the Board to consider allowing the fire departments to purchase fuel at the County rate. Administrator Wood stated that the fire departments had been considered while looking into the alternative fuel projects. Commissioner Merchant stated several people had expressed interest in the possibility of a County biodiesel project. Chairman Thomas asked that the names of the interested parties be provided to the Board.

The Board discussed expenditures. Chairman Thomas stated that salaries and benefits comprise a large portion of the expenditures for the County. Citizens speaking regarding this topic were the following:

Mr. George Taylor
Mr. Roger Deal

Mr. Roger Deal asked whether the County Administrator is being utilized to his potential. Chairman Thomas commended the Administrator for the work that he has done thus far, and stated that he has relieved the Board in part by handling several of the day to day County functions.

Chairman Thomas discussed the Board's budget and stated that the budget for next year needs to be reduced by \$1.5 million dollars. He also stated that with the passage of Amendment One, the taxable value for property tax revenue was reduced, which would cause a significant revenue loss.

Chairman Thomas asked the citizens what services they would be willing to give up in order for the County to save money. Citizens speaking regarding this topic were the following:

Mr. George Taylor

Chairman Thomas stated that the County is not required to fund the Ambulance Department, Fire Department, Library, Health Department, Extension Office, Council on Aging and Veterans' services.

Administrator Wood stated that the constitutional officers, specifically the Sheriff, Clerk of Court, and Supervisor of Elections, should "share in the suffering" in regard to budget cutbacks. Citizens speaking in regard to this topic were the following:

Ms. Tink Brown

Mr. Gary Deal

Chairman Thomas stated that CCA was not previously interested in running the County Jail because of its small size and that the Board was not able to operate the facility at the same rate that the Sheriff was able to. Mr. Gary Deal suggested applying for as many grants as possible.

Chairman Thomas stated that a \$5,000.00 grant was received today through Vision Florida for advertisement for the agri-tourism projects.

Chairman Thomas discussed tax base increase. Citizens speaking regarding this topic were the following:

Mr. Roger Deal

Mr. Bobby Sasnett

Chairman Thomas stated that the Development Commission recently sold some property near Smith Lake and since that property had been sold, the Development Commission could now invest in

properties that will be more beneficial to development.

The Board discussed the four day work week. Citizen speaking regarding this topic were the following:

Mrs. Lory Wood

Chairman Thomas stated that the Clerk of Court, Tax Collector and Property Appraiser's offices are not favorable to the shortened work week, and that the only way to have them change would be to change it legislatively. Chairman took a survey of the citizens that were present to see if they would be in favor of a four day work week. The majority of them were in favor.

Chairman Thomas discussed the Recycling Department and its grants. Citizens speaking regarding this topic were the following:

Ms. Tink Brown

The Board discussed trash removal in the County. He stated that other counties have been collecting an ad valorem tax so that separate fees are not charged by separate entities for trash collection. Citizens speaking regarding this topic were the following:

Mr. Jimmy Conner

Mr. George Taylor

The Board discussed the fire assessment. Citizens speaking regarding this topic were the following:

Mrs. Tink Brown

Mr. George Taylor

Chairman Thomas stated that the State requires the County to contribute \$60,000.00 to the fire departments.

Commissioner King excused himself from the meeting.

The Board discussed the dirt hauling practice for the County. Citizens speaking regarding this topic were the following:

Mr. Roger Deal

Mr. Jimmy Conner

Mr. Deal suggested limiting the number of loads of dirt per citizen in order to conserve fuel. Chairman Thomas stated on average cost to the County to haul a load of dirt is approximately \$50.00 -\$60.00.

Chairman Thomas stated that the budget workshops will begin in August. Citizens speaking regarding this topic were the following:

Mr. Bobby Sasnett

Chairman Thomas stated that since public interest was significant at this meeting, the Board will consider doing more meetings away from the Bonifay location.

Ms. Becky Prescott asked how the County advertises meetings. Chairman Thomas stated that the meetings are advertised on the website and in the newspaper.

Mr. Roger Deal suggested the New Hope area for future meetings. The Board thanked the citizens for attending the meeting.

Commissioner Music made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Merchant seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Clerk

Chairman