

Commissioner Farrar called to order the Budget Workshop of the Lee County Mosquito/Hyacinth Control Districts (LCMHCD) on 08/25/2022 at 8:30 a.m. in the William Opp Training Center at the Districts' headquarters, 15191 Homestead Road, Lehigh Acres, Florida 33971.

PRESENT:

Seat 1- Commissioner Ed Brantley, Secretary/Treasurer

Seat 2- Commissioner Brian Farrar, Chairman

Seat 3- Commissioner Mike Ellis

Seat 4- Commissioner Steve Bowen

Seat 5- Commissioner William Burke, Vice Chair

Seat 6- Commissioner Thomas B. Hart

Seat 7- Commissioner Bruce Scott, not present

Legal Counsel- John Agnew

STAFF:

Executive Director- Dr. David Hoel

Assistant Director- Aaron Lloyd

Deputy Director, Public Information and Education- Eric Jackson

Deputy Director, Lee County Hyacinth Control District- Kevin Watts

Chief Financial Officer- Sean O'Neill

Human Resources Director- Jackie Small

IT Director- Keith Lowe

Senior Program Analyst- Thais Pineda Alfonso

Community Engagement Coordinator- Jamie Fowler

HR Representative- Sabina Vilarchao

VISITORS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The following citizens addressed the Board:

None

LCMCD BUDGET DISCUSSION: Executive Director Dr. Hoel and CFO Sean O'Neill discussed the upcoming fiscal year budget for Lee County Mosquito Control District.

Items discussed:

1. Current millage rate 0.2439

2. Proposed millage rate 0.230
3. Capital Outlay
4. Operating Expenses
5. Communication Services
6. Insurance
7. Repairs & Maintenance
8. Gas/Oil/Lubricants
9. Chemicals
10. Publications and Dues
11. Suggested COLA increase, Flat or Tiered

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS ON LCMCD BUDGET:

Chairman Farrar explained existing sales have slowed down, and inventory for homes have increased. Unsure as to whether or not the Fed rate continues to affect mortgage rates. The prediction is it will rise over time. SWFL usually last ones to be affected and first ones to come out. Suggests 10% flat COLA with 0.230 millage rate.

Commissioner Burke, regarding the 10% and 8% flat COLA- does that factor in the previous 4% COLA? Yes. Suggests 10% flat COLA with 0.230 millage rate. Regarding our fuel- what price is the District projecting for this year's budget? CFO O'Neill stated the price of fuel has slightly decreased. However, we would leave it at \$5.50 per gallon due to next year's uncertainty. Commissioner Burke expressed concern with housing market and tax rates for the coming year.

Commissioner Ellis asked why the 0.230 rate? Answer: it would leave us with 2 million in reserves for any future expenditures or problems that may arise. Commissioner Ellis is opposed to tiered COLA, prefers a flat COLA across the board. Later, if needed, we can evaluate the need to adjust the pay scales. Suggests 10% flat COLA with 0.230 millage rate.

Commissioner Bowen regarding the property assessments- always goes down typically a year after. The revenue that we would receive is based on current assessments. The property values would decrease, and they won't appear until the following year. Commissioner Bowen noted that aside from rent increase, we should also include electric and other housing expense increases. Suggests 10% flat COLA with 0.230 millage rate.

Commissioner Hart was concerned with rolling back because next year could affect us. Secondly, regarding the rental market, do we have an idea how many of our employees rent vs own? Aaron Lloyd mentioned we have about 25 entry level Field Inspectors and most of them currently rent. Suggests 10% flat COLA with 0.230 millage rate.

Commissioner Brantley expressed concern with tiered COLA. Dr. Hoel commented it may cause compression of pay scales at the higher levels. Lastly, regarding the millage rate, Commissioner Brantley suggested we consider lowering the rate, providing our taxpayers a break. Suggesting 8% flat COLA with a 0.230 millage rate.

LCHCD BUDGET DISCUSSION: Executive Director Dr. Hoel and CFO Sean O'Neill discussed the upcoming fiscal year budget for Lee County Hyacinth Control District.

1. Current Millage Rate 0.0235
2. Proposed Millage Rate 0.0225

3. Capital outlay
4. Gas/Oil/Lubricants
5. Chemicals
6. Miscellaneous Supplies
7. Suggested COLA increase, flat or tiered

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS ON LCHCD BUDGET:

Commissioner Hart would like to know what the SonicWall is. Keith Lowe stated it's the firewall that protects our District from intrusion, malware and ransomware. It also allows you to identify and control all of the applications in use on your network. We currently have one, however, we need to increase the efficiency with a newer SonicWall. Commissioner Hart suggested a millage rate of 0.0225 at 10% flat COLA.

Commissioner Ellis asked the Executive team their recommendation for the LCHCD millage rate. Deputy Director Kevin Watts and CFO Sean O'Neill suggested a millage rate of 0.0225.

Commissioner Bowen mentioned last year that we gave a slight millage increase rate of 0.0235 versus new suggested millage rate 0.0225. Estimated ad valorem net increase of \$118,000, while LCHCD budget is considerably less than LCMCD, it shows good faith to the taxpayers. Millage rate 0.0225 seems to fit within our estimated expenditures. Therefore, he suggested a millage rate of 0.0225 at 10% flat COLA.

Commissioner Brantley suggested millage rate of 0.0225 at 8% flat COLA.

Commissioner Burke: Looking at the difference between the ending estimated reserves its only \$18,000, I'm in favor of a millage rate of 0.0225 at 10% flat COLA.

Commissioner Farrar suggested a millage rate of 0.0225 or 0.022 at 10% flat COLA.

No further business, Chairman Farrar made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 9:32 a.m.



Commissioner Brian Farrar, Chairman

Term: December 2018 – November 2022



Commissioner Ed Brantley, Secretary/Treasurer

Term: November 2020 – November 2024