

CITRUS COUNTY COUNCIL
Minutes Of General Meeting -- June 9, 2010

CALL TO ORDER: *President Theodora Rusnak*, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

GUEST SPEAKER: *School Superintendent Sandra "Sam" Himmel* gave an in-depth report on the school year from an administrative standpoint. Supt. Himmel explained the millage tax issue that will appear on the next ballot: In past years the state legislature authorized school districts to levy 2 mills for capital expenditures, i.e. building & equipment maintenance, repair, and renovation. Two years ago, the legislature reduced that amount to 1.75 mills, the amount currently being collected. This last legislative session, Tallahassee reduced the amount to 1.5 mills. With decline in property values, a further reduction in the millage designated for maintenance, repair and renovations could be seriously impacted. The ballot issue will be to retain the current millage rate of 1.75. Supt. Himmel was emphatic that, if approved, this did not result in a tax increase; instead, it kept the taxing rate at the same level as the last 2 years. Consequences of not approving the ballot issue, and therefore retaining the current levy rate, would be cuts in maintenance programs, and a possible lowering of the districts borrowing rate.

Another issue to be appearing on the ballot is the Class Size Amendment. This change would mean that the class size standard would no longer be based on the per school average, but that each individual class was measured and held to that separate and discreet standard. This would result in the district hiring 60+ new teachers.

E-Rate. However, as a participant in an active lawsuit, there was little that Supt. Himmel could comment on other than to say she went to Alabama to testify. The company wants to settle for \$100,000, and is still in business. The School Board has a law suit against Region's Bank in federal court. Supt. Himmel stated that the telecom reimbursement filing activities originally contracted out to E-Rate are now being handled in-house.

On other matters in the district: The future of Crest School was raised. The state wants it eliminated and have all students mainstreamed with special education needs addressed through the practice of differentiated learning techniques. On another matter, Supt. Himmel reported that the district is using technology to a greater extent to enhance student learning through greater usage of I-Books, CDs and Skype. Skype would be used to efficiently offer classes on subject matter that appeals to a relative small number of students scattered throughout the district via teleconferencing as used in business and distance learning applications. The dropout rate (excluding the small number of students at Crest School) declined from 4.1 to 1.8 and reflects a high school graduation rate of 90%. Upon graduation this year, 12 students were 'dual grads,' i.e. they received both a high school diploma and an AA degree from college of Central Florida (formerly Central Florida Community College). The state has recognized Citrus County School District as a "high achieving district."

ROLL CALL: *Treasurer Carl Simpson* called the roll of Associate Members and Member Organizations. A quorum was established.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: It was moved and passed that the minutes from the May 2010 General Meeting are accepted as published. There was no correspondence.

TREASURER'S REPORT: *Treasurer Carl Simpson*, reported the balance as of June 9, 2010, as \$749.05.

COUNTY STAFF:

Sgt. Chris Evan, Sheriff's Office - absent.

Jenette Collins, Development Services, reported that the county Administrator, Brad Thorpe, is reorganizing the Development Department. Kevin Smith will now be in charge of the Development Planning Division, and Ms. Collins will head the Land Development Code Division. These changes will reflect a return to an earlier, and more traditional, organization. A new Director of the reorganized Department is being sought. In regards to new development projects, Ms. Collins reported that Comprehensive Plan Amendments 10-04 & 10-05 will be reviewed once again by the PDRB. These two CPAs involve land currently identified as agriculture between Pine Ridge and Crystal River. If approved, the land use change could allow in excess of 2000 new homes to be built. County planning staff recommend denial.

Chuck Dixon, Director, Planning & Growth Management, CCSD, due to the length of Superintendent's presentation, there was no additional report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Education Committee: *Bob Dougherty* – absent

Sunshine Committee: *Lorrie Volda* read a note from Lee and Pat Cloward, stating their inability at present to attend meetings. Brief update on the Valentino family's health problems and Michelle's condition, and Bob Bennett's continuing problems.

Environment and Natural Resources: *Chair Gus Krayner* – absent. *Al Grubman* reported on the Chronicle article regarding his comments to the BoCC on the matter of a plan presented at the previous Withlacoochee Regional Water Services Authority (WRWSA). The plan and accompanying map portrayed a series of wells and pipelines that could be used in the future, or so it appeared, to pipe water out of Citrus County and down into Hernando County. Mr. Grubman requested at the BoCC meeting that the three commissioners who serve on the WRWSA vote "no" when the Authority meets to approve the subject plans. Mr. Grubman also asked for a showing of Council members at the WRWSA meeting, Wednesday, June 16, in Ocala.

Governance Committees: *Chair Tom Mize* – *Filed a written committee report.* Additionally noted that the regular monthly meeting of the Governance Committee would be at his home on June 21 – the 3rd Monday – rather than on the 4th Monday. The change in date was for the month of June only. Delegate discussion of recent events within the county included: *Jim Bitter* raised the issue of the BoCC approving use of a \$750,000 community Development Block Grant-Economic Development to be used to offset infrastructure costs to enable Wal-Mart to build a Super Store at the intersection of Cardinal and US 19 in Homosassa. Wal-Mart, Mr. Bitter noted, was already getting a \$2 million waiver of impact fees, and the opening of this super store would likely drive out of business another dozen or more independently owned businesses in the area. After extensive supportive discussion by the assembly, Mr. Bitter moved that the Council President write a letter of opposition to the CDBG Program Manager at the Department of Community Affairs. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. (Note: a copy of that letter is included with these minutes.)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: *None*

NEW BUSINESS: *President Rusnak* announced that Rosella Hale resigned as Secretary for the Council, and in accordance with Council by-laws, the Executive Board appointed, for the remainder of her 2010 term, Carl Simpson as Secretary, pending approval of the membership. It was noted that the by-laws allow for the position of Secretary-Treasurer to be combined and held by the same person. *Jim Bitter* moved Mr. Simpson's acceptance; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The Executive Board thanks Mrs. Hale for her past services as secretary and extends its gratitude to Mr. Simpson for his willingness to take on additional duties.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 A.M.

Submitted,
Carl Simpson, Secretary