

DRAFT PORTION OF AUGUST 18, 2011 BOARD WORKSHOP

Chairman Fisher inquired what the Board thinks about the letter that went out; stated as elected officials, one of his goals was to bring the Board together because it had many things to work on and there seemed to be too much bickering and arguing among the Board; he has not succeeded in that effort; and he feels Commissioner Infantini will not allow him to in his opinion. He reiterated he has concerns about that letter because he had good friends call him and ask what the deal was with the letter; and he would like to see how the other Board Members feel.

Commissioner Anderson advised he does not judge the work product of the other Commissioners, unless there is something that has to be approved. He added, he does not want the other Board Members to approve or disapprove the letters he sends out, because the Board didn't elect him his constituents did.

Commissioner Bolin stated there is a level of trust and professionalism. Commissioner Anderson advised he agreed with Commissioner Bolin, but he is not going to judge anything; he has never gone to another Commissioner and said he did not like a letter that he or she sent out; and he will never do that. He added, it comes down to whether a person agreed or disagreed with the information Commissioner Infantini put out; there is a perception out there that if it is in the budget, the Board is going to build a community center; maybe that was not clarified to Commissioner Infantini by staff; and that is what she believed when she sent that letter out.

Chairman Fisher stated the letter said it also included a 1,800 square feet community center at Wickham Park. Commissioner Anderson stated that was her perception. Chairman Fisher went on to say, it did not say 'may' it said 'it included' building. Commissioner Anderson reiterated it was her perception. He stated the Board can challenge.

Commissioner Infantini informed the Board it was not false; and advised that is why it is being earmarked and sat aside, not for building today but for tomorrow.

Commissioner Anderson stated he always thinks the best of people, and he does not think it was malice, Commissioner Infantini has serious concerns about the millage rate and what government priorities are there; and that was why she was elected by her constituents.

Commissioner Nelson commented this is supposed to be straight forward, because Commissioner Infantini highlighted and actually bolded that in her letter; it talks about a three percent increase for recapture, and it is one and one-half, so that is wrong. Commissioner Infantini stated everyone only thought it would go up three percent. Commissioner Nelson pointed out, it cannot be tapped danced around; it was not three percent, it was one and one-half percent; and inquired why the Commissioner did not say one and one-half percent. Commissioner Infantini replied it could go up to three percent, depending on what CPI turns out to be. Commissioner Nelson added, the other part that strikes him is Commissioner Infantini said many assessed values have increased, however some with lower property values will go down; the greatest preponderance of tax bills are going to go down; 80-plus percent on the business side; over 60 percent on the residential side are going down; and reiterated that Commissioner Infantini said many are going to go up. He stated Commissioner Infantini is skewing that to her benefit for her political position, because that is exactly what is going on.

Commissioner Infantini stated it is kind of like skewing and telling the public that the Board is not raising its taxes because the revenue will be the same. She added, legally the Board can say, and the Statutes are mandated that the Board can say, it is not raising taxes, but try telling that to someone where the millage rates and the assessed values are going up, tell that to them

those taxes are not being raised.

Commissioner Nelson stated the entire Board swore to follow the Florida Constitution, and the Florida Constitution sets that up, so if Commissioner Infantini wanted to avoid following the Florida Constitution, that is her choice, but he swore he would follow it and that is what he is doing.

Commissioner Infantini stated she is not trying to avoid it, she is trying not to mince words to make sure the public is properly informed. Commissioner Bolin stated she does not think her statements are properly informing the public.

Commissioner Anderson stated last year someone got EEL's, Library people, and deputies all stirred up about something that was not going to happen; just is part of the Board's job; and the other Board Members have the abilities to send out letters as well.

Chairman Fisher stated he has a draft of a letter; he thinks there is confusion; he would respectfully ask for Commissioner Infantini's distribution list; but he would like for it to come from this Board. He read the letter aloud, "You recently received a letter from Commissioner Trudie Infantini that contained a number of inaccurate and misleading statements about your property taxes. The Board of County Commissioners has authorized me to send this letter to advise you of the real facts. First, Mrs. Infantini inaccurately implies that a tax rate increase will result in an automatic tax bill increase for you. The implication is wrong as it is a fact that 88.4% of commercial properties and 76.2% of residential property will see a decrease in their taxable values. Mrs. Infantini inaccurately states that the Board of County Commissioners and the County Manager in making his budget proposal are violating the will of the people who voted for "Save Our Homes Benefit." She again attempts to confuse you by implying that the Board and/or County Manager has caused an increase in the "Assessed Value" of your property. The fact of the matter is that neither the Board nor the County Manager has any control over how the Property Appraiser determines the value of your property. Mrs. Infantini inaccurately states that "many" assessed values have increased and then she implies that you can just add a 3% assessed value increase to the percentage change in the tax rate and determine what the increase will be in your tax bill. It is alarming to the Board that after weeks of budget discussions, Mrs. Infantini does not realize that this year, the increase in your assessed value is limited to 1.5% not 3% if you have a homesteaded property with the Save Our Homes benefit. The Florida property tax system is extremely complex and cannot be explained in this short letter, but very simply your tax bill depends on two factors; the assessed value of your property, which is controlled by the Property Appraiser, and the tax rate which is set by the Board of County Commissioners for Board taxes. Contrary to what Mrs. Infantini alleged in her letter, it is a fact that the majority of property owners will have a significant decrease in their assessed and taxable values and will therefore receive a tax bill decrease from the Board of County Commissioners. Mrs. Infantini ends her letter by advising you that included in the budget proposal are modest pay increase for County employees. I have attached a transcript of Sheriff Jack Parkers' comments on why it is important to provide this increase to the law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other dedicated county employees. The Sheriff does an excellent job in explaining why it is important to do so. Lastly, Mrs. Infantini states that the County is building an 18,000 square foot community center at Wickham Park and does not have the funds to operate the existing centers. Both those statements are untrue. Over the last four years Commissioners Nelson, Bolin, and I, by voting on approval of the County's Annual Budgets, have reduced the County Budget by \$310 million, eliminated hundreds of positions, and reduced the property taxes by over \$50 million. The majority of the Board is working very hard to ensure that your taxes are utilized as efficiently as possible and in the manner voted upon by

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the Brevard Taxpayers. We will continue to rise above the rhetoric and do all we can to ensure that Brevard County is one of the best places in the world to live, work, and play.

Chairman Fisher stated he would like to send that letter out if he has the approval of the Board; he is fine with modified changes if need be; he thinks it is confusing to people Commissioner Infantini's letter went to exactly what the current situation is, and exactly what this Board has done over the years.

Commissioner Anderson stated he does not think there needs to be a motion to send a letter out; Chairman Fisher is a duly elected official. Chairman Fisher stated if he is sending the letter on County letterhead, he would like permission from the Board.

Upon motion by Commissioner Bolin, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, the Board authorized Chairman Fisher to send a copy of the letter to the public. Commissioners Infantini and Anderson voted nay.

Chairman Fisher made a public request to Commissioner Infantini for her to provide the list of everyone she sent her letter to, and he would like to respond. He inquired if it was mailed and emailed. Commissioner Infantini advised there were a couple of emails. She advised the email information would have to be gotten from the IT Department public records. Chairman Fisher inquired if taxpayer monies were used to mail those letters. Commissioner Infantini advised out of her budget she used some money.



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August 18, 2011

Citizens of Brevard County,

You recently received a letter from Commissioner Trudie Infantini that contained a number of inaccurate and misleading statements about your property taxes. The Board of County Commissioners has authorized me to send this letter to advise you of the real facts.

First, Mrs. Infantini inaccurately implies that a tax rate increase will result in an automatic tax bill increase for you. The implication is wrong as it is a fact that 88.4% of commercial properties and 76.2% of residential properties will see a decrease in their taxable values.

Mrs. Infantini inaccurately states that the Board of County Commissioners and the County Manager in making his budget proposal are violating the will of the people who voted for the "Save Our Homes Benefit." She again attempts to confuse you by implying that the Board and/or the county Manager has caused an increase in the "Assessed Value" of your property. The fact of the matter is that neither the Board nor the County Manager has any control over how the Property Appraiser determines the value of your property.

Mrs. Infantini inaccurately states that "many" assessed values have increased and then she implies that you can just add a 3% assessed value increase to the percentage change in the tax rate and determine what the increase will be in your tax bill. It is alarming to the Board that after weeks of budget discussions, Mrs. Infantini does not realize that this year, the increase in your assessed value is limited to 1.5% not 3% if you have a homesteaded property with the Save Our Homes benefit.

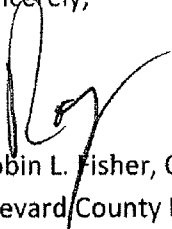
The Florida property tax system is extremely complex and cannot be explained in this short letter, but very simply your tax bill depends on two factors; the assessed value of your property, which is controlled by the Property Appraiser, and the tax rate which is set by the Board of

County Commissioners for Board taxes. Contrary to what Mrs. Infantini alleged in her letter, it is a fact that the majority of property owners will have a significant decrease in their assessed and taxable values and will therefore receive a tax bill decrease from the Board of County Commissioners.

Mrs. Infantini ends her letter by advising you that included in the budget proposal are modest pay increases for County employees. I have attached a transcript of Sheriff Jack Parker's comments on why it is important to provide this increase to the law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other dedicated county employees. The Sheriff does an excellent job in explaining why it is important to do so. Lastly, Mrs. Infantini states that the County is building an 18,000 square foot community Center at Wickham Park and does not have the funds to operate the existing centers. Both those statements are untrue.

Over the last four years Commissioners Nelson, Bolin, and I by voting on approval of the County's Annual Budgets have reduced the County Budget by \$310 million, eliminated hundreds of positions, and reduced the property taxes by over \$50 million. The majority of the Board is working very hard to ensure that your taxes are utilized as efficiently as possible and in the manner voted upon by the Brevard taxpayers. We will continue to rise above the rhetoric and do all we can to ensure that Brevard County is one of the best places in the world to live, work, and play.

Sincerely,



Robin L. Fisher, Chairman
Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

9:00 AM

The Board of County Commissioners of Brevard County, Florida, met in workshop session on July 20, 2011 at 9:00 AM in the Government Center Florida Room, Building C, 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, Florida.

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Call to Order

9:00 AM Meeting called to order on July 20, 2011 at Florida Room, Florida Room, Viera, FL.

Attendee Name Title Status Arrived

Robin Fisher Chairman / Commissioner District 1 Present

Chuck Nelson Commissioner District 2 Present

Trudie Infantini Commissioner District 3 Present

Mary Bolin Commissioner District 4 Present

Andy Anderson Vice Chairman / Commissioner District 5 Present

ITEM III.B. BUDGET PRESENTATION BY BREVARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, J.R. "JACK" PARKER

Jack Parker, Brevard County Sheriff, stated for almost two decades he has been coming to this room to discuss budgets and the desire for everyone to do more with less; the BCSO and the County have consistently discussed through the years that government should operate more like successful businesses do in the private sector; when things get financially tough for private companies they eliminate efficiencies by laying off less essential employees and closing down less productive divisions; but that is just part of the story, as companies also put a tremendous effort in caring for and seeing to the needs of their remaining employees. He stated private companies know their most important resource is not their computer system, it is not their equipment, it is not their facilities, it is their people; companies know more than anything else that their company depends on their employees; and government can learn by continuing to look at the private sector. He stated while government has to make every effort to eliminate unnecessary services and unproductive workers, it must hold its remaining employees in high regard, just as its private sector counterparts do; government cannot continue to put its head in the sand and have an ouremployees- are-lucky-to-have-a-job-philosophy; and if it does, the only thing that will be faster than the rate at which exceptional employees is lost, will be the decline in the quality of services provided.... He stated in the private sector, the loss of an experienced, dedicated employee is a big deal that affects the bottom line; but in the public sector there seems to be much less desire, or interest, in retaining public employees; and he would suggest that although the loss of a public servant may be harder to quantify because government is not evaluated by profit margins, it is equally impacting. He stated in order to ensure success, government must invest in its employees and its future; the best thing he can do as Sheriff is to lead a quality Sheriff's Office that ensures the safety of the citizens while spending as little of their money as possible to do it;... He expressed appreciation to the Board for the opportunity to speak to the Board....