

How would you propose to equalize fire and emergency services funding between North and South Walton?

This issue is one which has no easy resolution. While the citizens of South Walton opted to create an independent special taxing district financed with additional ad valorem taxes to enhance fire services south of the Bay, such decision does not provide for any exemption from county wide ad valorem taxes. I do not disagree that this matter is worthy of discussion and consideration, however, it must be approached very carefully.

Past county administrators and a county consultant have done in-depth analyses and concluded that extracting the north Walton fire budget from the county budget, charging north Walton properties equivalent fees or additional ad valorem taxes, would be prohibitive. This is based on north Walton median income and property values. However, funding options for north Walton fire and attempts to find equitable solutions must continue. This is an issue I will address with a new County Administrator.

Do you favor or oppose requiring owners of vacant or farm land to pay for fire protection?

_____ Favor _____ Oppose

I think this question could be better stated as: "should vacant and/or farm lands be subject to fire protection assessments"

We should consider a much lower assessment than for developed or occupied properties for such land, contingent on the ability to respond and provide services.

a. Do you favor or oppose placing the TDC Executive Director under the County Administrator?

_____ Favor _____ Oppose

There is merit to each side of this question. Without details regarding organizational structure, it is difficult to support or oppose this initiative. However, I do believe that the TDC, regardless of the organizational structure, should comply with all County policies and procedures. Accountability to the BCC and the citizens of Walton County is paramount to each and every County department, and the TDC is no different. I am certain that this will be a topic of discussion and analysis when a new county administrator is hired.

b. Do you believe the TDC Board should have more authority over TDC decision-making? If so, would you favor or oppose changing the statute to enable this?

Authority _____ Favor _____ Oppose Statute _____ Favor _____ Oppose

As the TDC board currently exists, no. The BCC is the governing body of the TDC, and has the final say on all decisions regarding the TDC. Given that relationship, the TDC Council should remain in an advisory capacity only. The TDC Council plays a vital role when deciding issues regarding the TDC, and we must maintain an open line of communication between them and the BCC. However, we can look at how the TDC board is currently operating in making these recommendations and discuss any changes if necessary.

c. Do you favor or oppose allowing the TDC Board to decide the number of Board meetings each year?

_____ Favor _____ Oppose

It is my understanding that the TDC Board is required by Florida Statute to have a minimum of four meetings each year, with the ability to have more if they deem necessary.

d. Do you favor or oppose requiring the BCC representative to the TDC Board be a Commissioner representing a South Walton District? If in favor, will you vote to require same?

_____ Favor _____ Oppose _____ Yes _____ No

Considering that there are now three Commissioner Districts which represent a portion of South Walton, I support the idea of one of those Commissioners representing the BCC on the TDC Board.

e. Do you favor requiring the TDC to have public workshops as is finally to be done in the proposed "Discovery Center" as a necessary prerequisite to any engagement of outside agencies/contractors as was already done in the present case?

X Favor _____ Oppose

Do you favor or oppose the use of TDC funds for use north of the Bay? Please explain your answer.

_____ Favor _____ Oppose

Part of the mission of the TDC is to "put heads in beds" throughout the jurisdictional boundaries of the Council. If there are instances when the use of TDC funds north of the Bay provides a means to attract business to the Bed Tax Collectors, then I feel that is an appropriate use of those funds. Under the

statute, recommendations for the use of bed tax funds fall under the advisory council. I would look to them to bring those suggestions to the BCC.

g. Do you favor or oppose requiring that all documents produced in the conduct of TDC business, including specifically those produced by and in the custody of outside contractors such as advertising and marketing firms, should be made publicly available in their entirety monthly?

_____ Favor _____ Oppose

All records and documents generated in the conduct of TDC business deemed by state statute as public records should be available to anyone seeking them.

h. Do you think the TDC operates with too much independence, about the right amount of direction, or not independently enough?

_____ Too much _____ About Right _____ Not Independently Enough

The TDC is a County department, and the BCC must maintain an active role in its operations. However, the TDC is uniquely different than most departments because of its mission and statutory guidelines. There is a level of autonomy that the TDC operates with, but it must never be to the detriment of transparency, accountability, and communication.

a. Should Commissioners have individual discretionary accounts for unbudgeted discretionary expenditures?

If so, why?

Personally, I believe that there is greater transparency in requiring all expenditures to go through the budget process; however some may argue to allow, on a very limited basis, budgeted, discretionary accounts for Commissioners. I am not interested in pursuing any change at this time, but am open to the discussion and would weigh my decision on the merits of the arguments.

b. Should Commissioners micromanage county employees, or restrict their role to policy-making, budgeting and oversight of management?

It is the commission's role to make policy, to approve a county budget that is responsive to its citizens in providing services, and to provide oversight of the management of those services. On the occasion that a constituent requests a Commissioner to replace a missing street sign, for instance, a Commissioner should have the ability to call the appropriate County personnel and ask that the sign be replaced.

c. Have the numerous early terminations of department heads and administrators have been a good thing for Walton County? Please explain.

There is not a blanket answer to this question. Each individual has departed the County for different reasons. As a general rule, employee turnover should be kept to a minimum. However, such turnover must be viewed from two standpoints; organizationally and individually. Organizationally to determine if there is a culture within the organization which fosters a less than favorable work environment and individually to review the circumstances surrounding a particular individual's separation? Whether an employee's separation is a good thing for the county is ambiguous.

d. Do you favor or oppose allowing the office of the County Attorney re-organizing both itself and various county procedures and policies as exemplified by the recent proposals by Toni Craig? If opposed, please explain.

The County Attorney reports directly to the Board of County Commissioners, having the Board as their sole client. The County Attorney is responsible for managing the office of the County Attorney and certainly has latitude to do so in the most effective and efficient manner. The development of County policies and procedures are a function of the BCC with the implementation regulated to staff. In this instance, the County Attorney has the ability to implement policies and procedures internal to the office of the County Attorney, but should rely on Board direction for those which are external to that office.

e. Do you favor or oppose using in-house legal vs outsourcing? If opposed, please explain.

Due to the magnitude and diversity of legal matters handled by the County Attorney, a combination of in house counsel and outside counsel is the best alternative. In house counsel to manage the office and handle the numerous, routine matters that come before the board and outside, or special, counsel to deal with the more specialized legal matters.

f. Do you favor or oppose in-house or outsourcing for road building and maintenance?

Road building and road maintenance is market driven; therefore, it is difficult to state that one is better than the other. It is imperative that the County be in a position to assure the most efficient and effective means to protect our assets, among those being roads and bridges, thus it is important to retain sufficient staff to provide such needed maintenance on a regular and timely basis. There are certainly times when outsourcing to build roads might be the most effective and efficient and the County should take advantage of those opportunities. This question requires thorough analysis and comparison of costs to assure the best decision possible is made for the taxpayers as well as the beneficiaries of our roads.

g. What other changes would you make to improve county government and the role of the BCC?

Governing is a fluid process. As times and circumstances change, so should the governing process, however, government is instituted for one and only one reason, to serve the citizenry. Each day brings new opportunities for improvement and as Commissioner I am committed to considering each of those opportunities and working to implement those which provide for a more effective and efficient County Government. Commissioners are tasked to run the county for the benefit of its citizens. I believe that listening to citizens is the best way to achieve this end.

h. How would you improve transparency in Walton BCC processes

President Theodore Roosevelt once warned, “Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledges no responsibility to the people.” I believe the best way to uncover the “invisible government” is for the people of Walton County to be involved. We, as Commissioners, serve you. The best ways to improve transparency is more community involvement, better communication, and open government.

Would you support term limits for Commissioners?

I am of the opinion that there are currently term limits. If a Commissioner is not doing the will of the people, the people will not elect them to subsequent terms. The danger with implementing artificial term limits is that they restrict the voice of the people.

j. Would you support an encompassing code of ethics and appropriate penalties, including suspensions as necessary, for Commissioners? Would you include the public in that process, and if so, how?

There is no authority granted, either constitutionally or statutorily, which provides that Commissioners may police one another. Such authority is granted to the Florida Commission on Ethics for ethical issues and the Florida State Attorney for legal issues.

a. Do you favor a Balanced Budget Resolution which keeps reserves off-limits except in emergencies?

Favor Oppose

I assume this is relating to unrestricted reserves, which I agree should be off limits except in emergencies. Having said that, it is important to manage unrestricted reserve balances to assure that we are not just accumulating money in a reserve account, that we define “off limits” and define

“emergency”. There are times when it is feasibly and financially responsible to utilize reserve funds on a temporary basis, to be replenished at a particular point in time with anticipated revenues.

b. Do you understand “Zero Based” budgeting. Please detail your experience In budgeting.

I do understand zero based budgeting. I have 35 years of experience relating to school budgets and four year’s experience working with County Budgets.

c. Do you favor zero based budgeting and public input?

Zero based budgeting certainly has merit and should be considered in all budgeting instances. It is difficult to offer a blanket opinion of whether it should be instituted fully without a detailed plan of such implementation. The public currently has, and should continue to have input into the formation of all County budgets. If zero based budgeting helps our individual departments to run more efficiently and to be more accountable, certainly it has merit.

d. Do you favor or oppose internal auditing of all BCC departments?

Internal auditing is a fundamental component of transparency and accountability. Transparency and accountability are fundamental tenants to open government, therefore I support these concepts. It is important to note that all aspects of BCC departments be audited for efficiency and accountability, not simply the financial, budgetary aspects.

e. If projected revenues are exceeded by projected expenditures, do you favor raising taxes or cutting proposed expenditures?

The only time projected expenditures should exceed projected revenues is when either revenue falls short of projections or emergency situations, creating unexpected expenses.

f. What are your most important priorities in budgeting?

There are several areas that would be considered priorities:

Value - Is a dollars worth of service delivered for every dollar spent?

Efficiency - Are we provided needed services in the most efficient manner?

Discretionary - What do we *have* to fund and what do we *want* to fund?

Impact - What are the financial impacts on the taxpayers?

Fair - Are revenues generated in the most fair and just manner?

Alternatives - Are there alternative means and methods of funding/achieving desired results?

g. Do you support development of a strategic plan and annual reviews thereof for planning for the organizational and financial planning needs of the county?

Strategic plans are important as guiding principles for organizational and financial planning. Such plans should be fluid and not static, having the ability to be amended as the needs and direction of the County change.

a. Please list in order of importance your priorities for infrastructure development in Walton County.

Facilitating economic development

Supporting and enhancing our tourist industry

Roads and bridges

Recreational facilities

b. What recreational facilities for residents and guests do you believe Walton needs? How would you pay for them?

Recreational facilities are near to my heart because I strongly believe that Walton County's uniqueness should always provide a place for raising families and protecting our environment for generations to come. "Natural free entertainment" is the most favorable to residents and guests of Walton County and with our exceptional beaches and forestry we are able to bring this provision. We have developed state of the art ball parks, playground equipment, splash pads, beach walk-over's and more. We have numerous natural trails within our forestry including bike paths, walking and riding trails that enhance exploring and environmental education. We have partnered with E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center for educating our young people and providing natural entertainment and education for our guests as well. We have even partnered with Alaqua Animal Rescue to provide a park for our canine family members. Currently, most improvements and creation of our parks and recreation is all being done without using Ad Valorem taxes and I believe we should continue to pursue private and federal grants to create and improve all of our recreational facilities.

a. What ideas do you have for economic development in Walton County?

Sustain and diversify.

It is vitally important to sustain our current economic engine, which is tourism. Many years of hard work have gone into making Walton County a special destination. We must continue to work to enhance that concept while continuing to support investment into our community. Some state that we are “over-regulated” and while there may be some merit to that argument, many of those regulations have allowed us to create that “special place”, fostering a unique destination. We should constantly review such regulations, supporting those which maintain or enhance the things that are important to us and working to amend or eliminate those which do not.

Diversification of our economy is challenging, yet vitally important. We must work to create an atmosphere that encourages economic feasibility and success for investor, including incentives, expedited permits, and locations. One of the projects which I initiated, and is identified for the BP fine money, is an underwater plant and fish hatchery, which will provide many more jobs for our area. With the recent passage of the RESTORE Act, we will have perhaps the greatest opportunity one could ever imagine to move this effort forward. We need to pursue industries/businesses to provide jobs that won't interfere with protecting our natural assets.

Please list the 10 most important issues you think you need to address as a Commissioner.

- Continue to streamline county government to be more efficient on less money
- Keep taxes low while providing necessary county services
- Diversify the economy
- Create more jobs
- Encourage community and citizen involvement in government
- Improve county government and the public's perception with honesty and integrity
- Protect our unique environment
- Provide a family-friendly atmosphere
- Plan for future generations

- Continue to protect our scenic corridors