

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES
GILA COUNTY, ARIZONA**

Date: March 31, 2015

MICHAEL A. PASTOR
Chairman

MARIAN E. SHEPPARD
Clerk of the Board

TOMMIE C. MARTIN
Vice-Chairman

By: Laurie J. Kline
Deputy Clerk

JOHN D. MARCANTI
Member

Gila County Courthouse
Globe, Arizona

PRESENT: Michael A. Pastor, Chairman; Tommie C. Martin, Vice-Chairman (via ITV); John D. Marcanti, Member; Don E. McDaniel, Jr., County Manager; Bryan Chambers, Deputy County Attorney/Civil Bureau Chief; Marian E. Sheppard, Clerk of the Board; and Laurie J. Kline, Deputy Clerk.

Item 1 – CALL TO ORDER - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Gila County Board of Supervisors met in a work session at 10:00 a.m. this date in the Board of Supervisors' hearing room. Stacie Allison led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 2 – REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

A. Information/Discussion/Action to approve submission of renewal for Grantee Agreement No. GRA-RC004-14-0616-01-Y2 between the Gila Regional Partnership Council, Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board (First Things First) and Gila County Library District in the amount of \$65,000 for fiscal year July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016.

Upon motion by Vice-Chairman Martin, seconded by Supervisor Marcanti the Board unanimously adjourned as the Gila County Board of Supervisors and convened as the Gila County Library District Board of Directors.

Jacque Griffin, Assistant County Manager/Librarian, stated that this item is an annual grant renewal agreement as described above for the Gila region of the County, and that the amount of the grant has been reduced by \$20,000; consequently, the Gila County Library District will lose temporary part-time liaison workers and the ability to offer subscriptions to Ladybug and Click magazines. There are 1,700 children currently enrolled in this program; however, the goal is to enroll 1,800 children. Every child enrolled in this

program is mailed a free book each month to encourage early learning. The program is provided to children from their birth through age five. Ms. Griffin added that in spite of the reduction in funding, she feels that this program is financially sustainable.

Vice-Chairman Martin asked if the demographics of the enrollees can be determined. Ms. Griffin replied that the number of children enrolled in the program is based on zip codes according to the census and she advised that the census information can be sorted by zip code. Chairman Pastor requested a summary of the information, to which Ms. Griffin replied that it would be provided to the Board. Upon motion by Vice-Chairman Martin, seconded by Supervisor Marcanti, the Board unanimously approved submission of renewal for Grantee Agreement No. GRA-RC004-14-0616-01-Y2 between the Gila Regional Partnership Council, Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board (First Things First) and Gila County Library District in the amount of \$65,000 for fiscal year July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016.

B. Information/Discussion/Action to approve Grantee Agreement No. GRA-RC029-16-0761-01 that is between the San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council, First Things First, and the Gila County Library District, which is a "Community-Based Literacy Grant" in the amount of \$70,000 for the period July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016.

Ms. Griffin advised that this program will be provided to the San Carlos Apache Tribe region and it is identical to the program being provided to the Gila region, as stated in the previous agenda item. This program was implemented at San Carlos last year and Ms. Griffin was pleased to announce that the funding for this program was not reduced for this year. There are 609 children presently enrolled in this program, and 300 children have graduated from the program (by turning 6 years of age). Community liaisons will continue outreach efforts to the parents of children aged birth to five years throughout areas of the San Carlos Apache Tribe region to encourage participation in this early literacy program. Upon motion by Supervisor Marcanti, seconded by Vice-Chairman Martin, the Board unanimously approved Grantee Agreement No. GRA-RC029-16-0761-01 that is between the San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council, First Things First, and the Gila County Library District, which is a "Community-Based Literacy Grant" in the amount of \$70,000 for the period July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016.

Upon motion by Vice-Chairman Martin, seconded by Supervisor Marcanti the Board unanimously adjourned as the Gila County Library District Board of Directors and reconvened as the Gila County Board of Supervisors.

C. Information/Discussion regarding the establishment of "vote centers" and replacing Elections Department equipment needed to conduct elections.

Eric Mariscal, Elections Director, provided an overview of the concerns facing the Elections Department with regard to conducting elections. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to find people that are willing to work during elections and any time someone new is hired, they must undergo training which is an added expense to the County. He also added that Gila County has numerous polling locations; however, the number of people voting at polling locations continues to decline each year. Each polling location must have a certain number of workers and voting equipment. The voting equipment has become outdated and needs to be replaced in the near future.

Mr. Mariscal presented some options, as follows:

- 1) Consolidate polling sites by redrawing precinct boundaries.
- 2) Co-locate more precincts to reduce the number of polling places. (Currently there are 39 precincts that utilize 33 polling sites. The downside to this reduction would be that poll workers would be required to handle different ballots for each of the voting precincts, resulting in the probability of increased human error.)
- 3) Establish vote centers. (The vote center concept would allow Gila County voters, regardless of a voter's assigned precinct, the opportunity to vote at any vote center in Gila County. The advantage of implementing vote centers is there wouldn't be a need to redraw precincts, but it would require the County to purchase new voting equipment.)

Mr. Mariscal then reviewed the benefits of implementing vote centers:

- Cost savings to the County
- Fewer people voting at polling locations
- More people now vote by mail

He explained the difference between urban vote centers and rural vote centers. An urban vote center would be established in the Globe, Miami, Payson and Star Valley areas and each vote center would utilize a ballot on demand printer that would allow any registered Gila County voter to cast their vote. A rural vote center would be the traditional established polling locations, which are in the outlying areas of Gila County to include the Copper Basin, Gisela, Pine-Strawberry, Roosevelt-Sierra Ancha, Tonto Basin, Whispering Pines, Young, Zane Grey, Canyon Day, Carrizo and San Carlos. Preliminary testing for a cellular connection at Carrizo indicated a connectivity issue that may exclude that location as a rural vote center. There wouldn't be a ballot on demand printer at the rural vote centers; however, the voter could use an accessible

voting device known as a “touch screen unit” to cast their ballot if they were not registered in the precinct.

Concerns relating to the implementation of vote centers:

- 1) Many voters are resistant to change because they enjoy voting at their traditional polling location.
- 2) The cost to purchase new equipment as there are ever diminishing County resources, and no federal funding.
- 3) Should the State shift to all mail elections, it would make new polling place equipment obsolete.

Mr. Mariscal proceeded to review the need to purchase new voting equipment as the County’s voting equipment is failing and has reached its shelf life, as follows:

- 1) E-Poll Books (25)
- 2) Accessible Voting Units (25)
- 3) Central Count Unit (1)
- 4) Election Software

Mr. Mariscal stated that if the Board at some future date approved his “wish list” as stated in 1-4 above, the cost would be approximately \$350,000. He stated that due to the foresight of the previous Elections Department Director, the Elections Department has approximately \$275,000 on hand that could be used toward the purchases of items 1-4 above. He then suggested some other possible cost saving measures that could be taken. He suggested that the Elections Department could program the ballots instead of using a vendor. The County would then only need to use a vendor to print the ballots, and for smaller precincts, the Elections Department could also print those ballots.

Mr. Mariscal concluded his presentation by stating that the next step would be for the Board to direct the Elections Department to create a detailed plan of action to include the number and locations of vote centers, and a recommendation of a vendor for equipment procurement with a cost breakdown.

A brief discussion ensued with Vice-Chairman Martin as to the possible vote center locations. She didn’t agree with the suggested number of urban and rural vote centers, so she offered some alternatives. She also expressed a concern for the potential of the State going to all mail ballots because she believes that many voters, who have voted at the same location for many years, would be upset with this change as they want to continue voting at their precinct location. Supervisor Marcanti advised that shifting to all mail ballots was an issue that was discussed at a recent County Supervisors Association meeting. At that meeting it was noted that counties such as Gila, Graham, Apache and Navajo all have Indian reservations. Up to 70% of the voters on

Indian reservations vote at their polling locations versus early voting by mail, so he feels that if the State chose to go to all mail voting, there would be considerable opposition from that population. He thinks there currently there are too many polling locations in Gila County. Mr. Mariscal reiterated that if vote centers were to be established in Gila County, a voter may vote at any of the vote centers. Chairman Pastor also stated that establishing vote centers may be a viable option. On behalf of the Board, Chairman Pastor thanked Mr. Mariscal for the presentation and encouraged him to continue with the “next step” in the process, which is to present a detailed plan of action to the Board of Supervisors at a future Board meeting, which would require Board action.

D. Information/Discussion for the Board of Supervisors to consider the budget data and accompanying information, and budget assumptions and policies developed by staff relative to the development and preparation of the FY16 Gila County budget.

Don McDaniel, County Manager, stated that this is the first time that the listing of budget assumptions, variables and policies has been brought to the Board in advance of presenting the County’s tentative budget to the Board for its adoption, as this level of discussion was historically handled at the staff level. He advised that for the past 6-7 years, the County has had to adjust its budget due to the decrease in property valuations and resulting decline in property tax revenues. In addition, there have been budget sweeps at the State level which have resulted in unfunded mandates. He also wanted to recognize the efforts made by elected officials and department heads to reduce their budgets over the past 6-7 years by reducing staff and looking at ways to improve work processes. He pointed out that this year, in particular, the elected officials and department heads were asked to absorb the increases in salaries that were given to employees as a result of the implementation of the employee classification and compensation study recommendations, which was approved by the Board on June 3, 2014.

Jeff Hassenius, Finance Division Director, stated that the policies and assumptions include developing a structurally balanced budget which maintains the County’s commitments to fund services for employee medical insurance cost increases, employee retirement benefits cost increases, additional costs related to PSPRS (Public Safety Personnel Retirement System) and CORP (Correctional Office Retirement Plan) increases, and employee CPI (consumer price index) and performance salary increases.

He reviewed one of the assumptions, which is to maintain the existing property tax rate as there has been a 16% increase in property valuations that has taken place within the past year, from \$416M last year to \$480M this year, which has resulted in an increased tax levy of \$3M. Mr. Hassenius advised that the County must conduct a public hearing to maintain its current

property tax rate of \$4.19. Don McDaniel, County Manager, further explained that the statutory requirement to have a public hearing is new information that was recently obtained from the Department of Revenue. The current property tax rate is \$4.19, but because the County has a newly adjusted TNT (truth in taxation) rate of \$3.64, which is below the current property tax rate, a public hearing is required. Other assumptions include: 1) Public Works operating within reduced funding levels that are relative to the continuation of the County's ½-cent transportation excise tax; 2) the County will absorb State funding reductions and shifts; 3) elected officials and department heads will manage staffing and salaries to stay within FY15 funding and staffing levels; and 4) the County's public service levels will be maintained in law enforcement, criminal prosecution, judicial services, roads, health service and community services.

The total amounts of the historical impact of State funding shifts, reductions and eliminations existing from FY09-FY16 are as follows:

- Highway User Revenue Funds (HURF) shift to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) \$2,025,475
- State Shared Lottery, \$1,650,105
- Community Colleges, \$1,625,000
- Restoration to Competency, \$1,570,475
- Transaction Privilege Tax on smelter electricity \$600,000
- County Assistance Fund \$275,155
- Justice of the Peace Salary share reduced \$263,774
- ACJC Indigent Defense \$36,435
- DPS Lab, \$23,245

Total FY09- FY16 \$8,067,664

The Board held a brief discussion regarding a few of the aforementioned topics and agreed that the Board needs to have a more detailed discussion in the future regarding the current tax rate, reduction in HURF, and required funding from the County to conduct the upcoming Presidential Preference Election

Vice-Chairman Martin expressed her disappointment in the policy changes that occurred during this year's legislative session, to which Supervisor Marcanti agreed. She would have preferred that the State provided a dollar amount that was required of each county to pay, rather than making policy changes that have long-term and negative affects upon the counties. Chairman Pastor added that there has been recent discussion amongst several counties about conducting the Presidential Preference Election and then shifting that cost to the State or possibly not conducting the election at all.

Mr. McDaniel concluded by stating that because of the hard work of the Board of Supervisors in past years and especially the hard work of John Nelson, former Finance Director, in setting aside financial reserves, the County is in an excellent financial position in comparison to other Arizona counties. The County was able to "weather the storm" in recent difficult years by using \$8M of the reserves and reducing the number of employees each year. He attributed that to the efforts of elected officials during those difficult years. He stated, "We are still providing an excellent level of service; all of the elected officials are providing the kind of services they need to provide to fulfill their elected responsibilities; we are in fairly good shape; and we are going to be able to make it through this year just as well."

Item 3 – CALL TO THE PUBLIC: Call to the Public is held for public benefit to allow individuals to address the Board of Supervisors on any issue within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors. Board members may not discuss items that are not specifically identified on the agenda. Therefore, pursuant to Arizona Revised Statute §38-431.01(H), at the conclusion of an open call to the public, individual members of the Board of Supervisors may respond to criticism made by those who have addressed the Board, may ask staff to review a matter or may ask that a matter be put on a future agenda for further discussion and decision at a future date.

There were no comments from the public.

Item 4 – At any time during this meeting pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.02(K), members of the Board of Supervisors and the County Manager may present a brief summary of current events. No action may be taken on issues presented.

Each Board member presented information on current events. The County Manager had no comments at this time.

There being no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors, Chairman Pastor adjourned the meeting at 11:44 a.m.

APPROVED:


Michael A. Pastor, Chairman

ATTEST:


Marian Sheppard, Clerk of the Board