

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COUNCIL OF MARTIN COUNTY

First Public Hearing

Tuesday, September 13, 2005, 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Attorney Johnathan Ferguson explained the CSCMC By-Laws, as it pertained to a quorum and voting of the Council Members, since Judge Levin cannot vote on the millage but can vote on the budget. The By-Laws refer to voting on the budget with the majority vote of the Council Members, which would be six. All other votes are simply the majority of those present, as long as a quorum exists. A budget can only be adopted with a unanimous vote, due to only six Council Members being present.

Having a quorum, Samia Ferraro, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. and took roll.

Council Members present: Samia Ferraro, Chair
Marian Carpenter
Michael DiTerlizzi
Anthony D George, Jr.
Laurel Hopper
Hon. Steven J. Levin

Absent Council Members: Debbie Crowder, Laurie Gaylord, Karen Ripper, and Dr. Sara Wilcox

Public present: George Nitschke, Martin County Resident

Staff present: Harry A. Yates (Executive Director), Scott Berry (Research Analyst), Rebecca Galante (Executive Assistant), Genevieve Guido (Director of Administrative Services), David Heaton (Director of Planning), Elizabeth Whittles (Director of Program Development), and Johnathan Ferguson (Legal Counsel)

Invocation was given by Marian Carpenter, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A motion was made by Marian Carpenter and seconded by Laurel Hopper to adopt the Agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Samia Ferraro read Attorney Johnathan Ferguson's letter verbatim regarding the Public Hearing to set tentative millage.

Ms. Ferraro also read Genevieve Guido's 09/01/2005 memorandum regarding the tentative budget for Fiscal Year 2006 that was approved at the 08/01/2005 Council Meeting, which included a proposed millage rate of .3337 (same as current millage) and a proposed budget of \$8,872,201 for Fiscal Year 2006.

Samia Ferraro opened the floor for public comment; it was determined that the resident in attendance wanted to attend the Martin County Budget Hearing on 09/14/2005 instead.

After the public comment was heard, Ms. Ferraro closed the public hearing.

Genevieve Guido reviewed the comparative budget information, where the majority of the proposed budget will be used to fund additional program enhancements and new services in line with the Council-approved 5-year plan. Council questions were answered.

A motion was made by Marian Carpenter and seconded by Laurel Hopper to adopt the millage rate of .3337. (3) Council Members voting in favor of the motion included Samia Ferraro, Marian Carpenter, and Laurel Hopper; (2) Council Members opposed to the motion included Tony George and Michael DiTerlizzi; Hon. Steven Levin abstained from voting according to CSCMC By-Laws. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Laurel Hopper and seconded by Marian Carpenter to adopt a budget of \$8,872,201.00 for October 1, 2005, through September 30, 2006, for Fiscal Year 2006. (4) Council Members voting in favor of the motion included Samia Ferraro, Marian Carpenter, and Laurel Hopper, and Hon. Steven Levin; (2) Council Members opposed to the motion included Tony George and Michael DiTerlizzi. Attorney Johnathan Ferguson announced that the motion died because a unanimous vote is required, as the CSCMC By-Laws state that a majority of the Council Members must vote in favor of a motion for the budget, not a majority of those present.

Mr. Ferguson reported that, because only six Council Members were present, a compromise must be reached with a unanimous consensus, regarding the budget with a 6-0 vote. If this does not happen, the preliminary public hearing would have to be rescheduled with a continuation notice published in the newspaper in accordance with TRIM. A detailed Council discussion ensued regarding the millage rate adopted that provides a set amount of funds, which in turn is used for the budget. In answer to Council's question, Mr. Ferguson stated that the process is to discuss the budget prior to the millage vote in the event that there is a reduction or change in the budget. The budget drives the millage; once the millage is adopted, Council has to figure out what to do with the generated funds.

Michael DiTerlizzi discussed that he would change his vote on accepting the budget, as the millage was adopted by the majority of the Council Members, and the amount generated by the millage must be allocated in the new budget.

Marian Carpenter requested that, prior to our final budget hearing, clarification is given on where the extra money will be used.

Tony George stated that he is not tossing his dissenting vote without an explanation. He will support the budget tonight as an interim step with the understanding that he will probably not be supporting that budget or millage at the final hearing. Mr. George had three issues of concern of which two are left. Originally, he had a very large concern about the fact that we had over a million dollars sitting off of this public budget. Mr. George does not believe that CSCMC has the providers available to absorb these revenue increases. His third concern, where he has taken a sit-back approach, is money that we are calling "building reserve." He feels that, as time plays out, the Council will realize that this money keeps sitting there and growing, while high property rates and construction costs in this county prohibit CSCMC from getting its own building.

Michael DiTerlizzi disagreed and firmly believes that CSCMC should be looking for a permanent location to own, and he feels that an opportunity exists to co-locate with other county operations. Also, if we use county-owned property, CSCMC would not have to buy land. As he agrees with Mr. George, land is too expensive to buy. Another thing that Mr. DiTerlizzi is concerned about is reduced the Fund Balance Unreserved because we will need as much of that money as possible to contribute to a new building. Mr. George does not believe that a reduction in Fund Balance Unreserved will occur because, at the end of this budget year, we will have lapses of program expenditures, interest generated from unspent dollars, and if his theory is right that our growth and budget exceeds the capacity of providers, we will have unutilized funds

A motion was made by Laurel Hopper and seconded by Marian Carpenter to adopt a tentative budget of \$8,872,201.00 for October 1, 2005, through September 30, 2006, for Fiscal Year 2006 as presented by staff. The motion passed unanimously.

Samia Ferraro stated: (1) it was never her intention that this estimated Fund Balance Unreserved would be called a building fund; a discussion simply took place about investigating that possibility and the account name has never been changed; and (2) she is personally relying on staff's expertise in knowing that there are providers out in the county who can meet the gaps in services that exist; staff prepared this budget and know this community best. Therefore, in her personal opinion, Ms. Ferraro believes that we are going to be able to provide additional services to the children in our community and meet our 5-year plan.

As no further discussion existed, the first public hearing was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.