

VALENCIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Emergency Meeting

December 20, 2001

The Meeting was called to order by Chairman Alicia Aguilar at 4:09 P.M.

PRESENT	ABSENT
Alicia Aguilar, Chairman	
Aurelio H. Padilla, Vice-Chairman	
S. T. Frank Pando, Member	
Gary Daves, Member	
Helen Baca, Member	
James Fernandez, County Manager	
Thomas Garde, County Attorney	
Tina Gallegos, County Clerk	
Press and Public	

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Padilla.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Pando made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Padilla seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4-0.

Resolution-County Financial Matters.....County Commission

County Clerk Tina Gallegos read the resolution. Tom Garde, County Attorney, said that at the meeting this past Tuesday, the Board heard from the Department of Finance and Administration in regards to what they recommend that this County do to comply with regards to the 2/12 cash balance at the end of the fiscal year on June 30th. According to Mr. Garde, the Commission heard testimony from the County Manager with regards to recommendations that he would make which basically indicated that the proposal that he made would require that the County live under his recommendation for the next 18 months. So what Mr. Garde did to change the resolution that was presented to this Board, is he added the last sentence which is “The Manager is further directed to proceed to begin the process for budget development for fiscal year 2002-2003 which insures that reserve cash balances are brought up to Department of Finance recommendations.” This would bring the County in compliance with the Director of the Department of Finance. The original resolution pertained solely to this fiscal year and this resolution added language that pertained to the following fiscal year. Commissioner Baca made a motion to approve Resolution 2001-53. Commissioner Padilla seconded the motion. Commissioner Daves told the employees that he cut their hours in 1991 and he doesn’t have the stomach to do it in 2001, on the other hand he is a Commissioner and if he is going to function as a Commissioner he has to interact and not just say no. He went on to say that he would not expect to do this for 18 months, but in 1991 it was for two years. There are two areas in which Commissioner Daves thinks it is of utmost importance that this County looks at in terms of dealing with the budget problems and that is the jail and juvenile detention. He would like to look at renegotiation or termination. Commissioner Daves said the County has an obligation to do a jail under state law and under their own moral consciousness. Commissioner Daves said he would not vote for the resolution if the Extension Service is within it, as he believes the Extension Service and 4H is a utility just like telephones. Commissioner Daves believes that with Extension Service, as it has to be funded as far as he is concerned, the County will not gain as much in its cash balance as soon as it would like. Commissioner Daves said he would like an expression of the Commissioners as far as supporting the Extension Service and removing it from the list that would be deleted as the County Manager recommended.

James Fernandez, County Manager, went over the list of recommendations that he made, as presented to the Board two days ago. Cost saving measures would hopefully, by the end of the fiscal year 2002-2003, put the County in a position of having a balanced budget. The first would be a reduction in hours and workforce, placing employees on 64 hour pay periods with the exception of public safety, and moving five full time and three part time Assessor’s Office employees from the general fund to the reappraisal fund, the cost savings would be \$768,546.00 for one fiscal year. Second, consolidation of senior citizen centers and having senior citizen centers on reduced hours, would result in a \$20,000.00 savings that the County would not have to transfer from the general fund to the Older American fund. Other items would be the elimination of the contribution to the Extension Service in the amount of \$62,800.00 and the elimination of the contribution to Soil Conservation in the amount of \$10,000.00, the elimination of the Jail Monitor’s contract in the amount of \$19,000.00, the elimination of the Community Service Monitor contract in the amount of \$8,840.00, reduced travel and approve only mandatory training from \$10,000.00 down to \$3,000.00 for a savings of \$7,000.00, elimination of take home vehicles with the exception of public safety for an estimated cost savings of \$2,000.00, and utilizing existing County personnel for early voting boards, which will save \$7,300.00. This will total \$905,486.00 for a full fiscal year. In looking at reductions in terms of the specific items for the remainder of this fiscal year, Mr. Fernandez said they are looking at cost savings in the range

of \$375,000.00. Mr. Fernandez had conversation with the Extension Service and the Board was provided copies of a letter from the Extension Service. Mr. Fernandez met with the Extension Service prior to this meeting and they did propose to the County that the County could defer the contribution until the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Fernandez did make the comment that while that is appreciated, that would still put the County in the position of having to come up with not only \$33,000.00 this year, but \$66,000.00 next year, which is roughly \$100,000.00 that the County would have to seek cost savings from some other way and that would be in terms of personnel. Mr. Fernandez believes they are already placing a sufficient burden on the personnel right now and does not believe they need to add to that burden by extending the possible time that they would have to be on 64 hours.

Commissioner Daves asked Mr. Fernandez if he figured out the budget for the fiscal year in 18 months from now. Mr. Fernandez said with these cost saving measures, if carried out for another fiscal year, by the end of the fiscal year 2002-2003, the County should be at a position of having a balanced budget. Commissioner Daves asked if the budget would be balanced if people were put on 80 hours. Mr. Fernandez said at that point they would have to review and see if the funds were available and it could be entertained at that time, but he thinks it will take a full 18 months to get back to a balanced budget. Commissioner Daves asked at the end of 18 months, if they would be able to put people back on 80 hours. Mr. Fernandez did not know. Commissioner Daves believes the fundamental problems of the budget are the large budget items that he mentioned. Commission Chair Aguilar clarified that was part of the direction of the Commission was to look at all programs as far as detention and the jail. Commission Chair Aguilar said Mr. Fernandez would start to look at that immediately. Mr. Fernandez agreed.

Commissioner Pando said he is also prepared to back the resolution but will back it with two conditions, that they don't lay off any people, and also that the County continues to fund the Extension Service. He will vote against it if those things are not put in there. Commissioner Padilla said he would support whatever the County Manager recommends. Commissioner Daves said when he finished his first comments he asked if there would be three Commissioners to support removal of the Extension Service from Mr. Fernandez's recommendations. Mr. Garde said there has been a motion made and the Commission is at the point of discussion on the motion. He went on to say that they have heard testimony for the past five hours and have gone through numerous budget hearings with regards to the budget status and this Commission would be in order to make a decision without public input in light of the fact that Mr. Fernandez has explained to this Commission what options this County has. Commissioner Daves said that at the meeting Tuesday night he did not know that there was a recommendation to delete the Extension Service. He said they could legally cut funding of 4H and they could legally act on this resolution, but he thinks as a matter of good judgment in dealing with the public, there should be opportunity for public input on this resolution. Commissioner Pando said the other day there was also discussion on contractual obligations, but also thinks the Commission has moral obligations and sometimes moral obligations outweigh legal obligations. In talking to elected officials in the House of Representatives and the Senate, they assured Commissioner Pando that they would do everything in their power to try to help the County out with this problem. Commissioner Pando would support this resolution if the two things he mentioned earlier were part of it. Commissioner Baca said as a former County employee, the most devastating thing for her to do is cut salaries, but the money is not there and DFA specifically told the Commission to cut down or they'll be closing the doors. Commission Chair Aguilar echoed that and said these are recommendations that they have to do. Commission Chair Aguilar does not want to cut Soil Conservation, the Extension Service, or employees, but said it must be done. Commissioner Daves said the Commission is making a wrong and a bad decision if this motion passes. Commissioner Pando said there are good staff and employees in the County but staff is not always right. He doesn't want to put the blame on staff and thinks the Commissioners are the ones who need to make this decision and it needs to be a fair decision as their responsibilities are to the taxpayers and employees of Valencia County. Commissioner Baca voted yes. Commissioner Padilla voted yes. Commissioner Daves voted no. Commissioner Pando voted no. Commission Chair Aguilar said she has to back administration and the recommendations of DFA, so she voted yes. Motion carried with a vote of 3-2.

The next Regular Meeting of the Valencia County Board of County Commission will be held on January 2, 2001 at 10:00 A.M. with Executive Session beginning at 9:00 A.M. in the County Commission Room at the Valencia County Courthouse.

Adjournment

Commissioner Padilla made a motion to adjourn at 4:43 P.M. Commissioner Baca seconded the motion. Motion carried.

NOTE: All proposals, documents, items, etc., pertaining to items on the agenda of the December 20, 2001 Emergency Meeting (presented to the Board of County Commissioners) are attached in consecutive order as stated in these minutes.

VALENCIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**ss/
ALICIA AGUILAR, CHAIRMAN**

**ss/
AURELIO H. PADILLA, VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**ss/
S. T. FRANK PANDO, MEMBER**

**ss/
GARY DAVES, MEMBER**

**ss/
HELEN BACA, MEMBER**

ATTEST: ss/

TINA GALLEGOS, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: January 15, 2002