



## EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS

## EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS SUBMITTED TO ADMINISTRATION

### I. Employee Pay, Work Hours and Benefits

1. Freeze vacation and sick leave plans in place for those who have accumulated the maximum leave time allowed and lower maximum allowed for remaining employees.

**Administrative Action:** Will be considered in future. This suggestion does not have an immediate impact on reducing operating costs but could reduce the County's future potential financial liability. This change would have to be negotiated as part of our Collective Bargaining agreement.

2. Lower maximum leave time and require all amounts above this maximum to be taken this year or allow a one-time movement into deferred compensation plan.

**Administrative Action:** A portion of this suggestion will be considered as noted above. However, for employees to be allowed to move a one-time payment into deferred compensation, the Human Resources Director has indicated the entire group of employees would have to agree to it. In addition, County operations may be significantly impacted if employees were required to take all excess amounts of vacation time in one year.

3. Allow personal leave without pay. Per the City of Jupiter, employees may request up to 15 unpaid work days per fiscal year. Exempt employees must request unpaid leave in one work week for exempt employees. Non-exempt employees may request unpaid leave in one day increments.

**Administrative Action:** No action. Alternative approach being recommended. See #4.

4. Use furlough days instead of pay cuts, all employees are furloughed on the same days which are coordinated around weekends or holidays. Closing down on the same days provides additional savings in utilities and coordinating furlough days around holidays and weekends makes them less difficult.

**Administrative Action:** In process. The County Administrator is recommending 24 furlough days (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays) and 10 unpaid holidays to the Board. In cases where it is not feasible to close services, an equivalent pay cut will be implemented.

5. Change County work schedule to four 9-hour days or four 9.5-hour days. A 36-hour work week would save 10% on payroll. A 38-hour work week would save 5%. A 30-minute lunch break would be fairly painless. We could return to a 40-hour work week when the economy improves. This would be better for morale because everyone would get a 3-day weekend and it would be very democratic and fair. Everyone would be treated equally.

**Administrative Action:** In process. See #4 above.

6. Instead of using Kelly Services or Manpower, hire St. Lucie County staff who have been laid off.

**Administrative Action:** No action. Former St. Lucie County staff can be hired now through Kelly Services or Manpower. If the County hired these employees directly, the County would be required to pay all the Worker's Compensation, Unemployment Compensation and FRS contributions after a six-month period.

## II. **Cost Saving Measures**

1. Change email and print font to Century Gothic which uses about 30% less ink than Arial.

**Administrative Action:** No action. This suggestion was tested by the Information Technology (IT) Division. Results indicate that Century Gothic did use less ink but it took up more space on the page, resulting in increased paper use. Based on internal testing of five different fonts, IT recommends using Calibri 11 pt, which is the default font in Office 2007.

2. Instead of having a courier for interdepartmental mail to and from the Administration building, use supervisors and other employees that are in the field to drop off and pick up mail.

**Administrative Action:** In process. The courier service provides greater efficiency than use existing staff to make mail deliveries. With additional staff reductions, it is unlikely that remaining staff will be able to efficiently provide pick up and drop off mail services. However, OMB is currently considering a reduction in the cost of courier service by combining this service with a part-time staff person.

3. Purchase fewer 4-wheel drive (4WD) vehicles. Far more 4WD vehicles, which are more expensive to operate and repair, than actually needed in fleet.

**Administrative Action:** In process. The majority of 4WD vehicles in the fleet are older. The purchase of larger vehicles, including 4WD vehicles, must be justified by each department prior to purchase. Data indicate that the newer 4WD vehicles get significantly better gas mileage than the older models.

4. Purchase more fuel-efficient compact and sub-compact cars

**Administrative Action:** In process. Purchase of more fuel-efficient vehicles has been implemented, although fewer vehicles have been purchased due to budget reductions. Ford Escapes, a more fuel-efficient, sub-compact vehicle, and a hybrid vehicle have been purchased. In addition, Central Services is focusing on moving older, less fuel-efficient vehicles out of use or reducing their use to pool vehicles.

5. Reduce the General & Administrative (G&A) charge to departments and other funds.

**Administrative Action:** In process. Reduction in G&A charges has been requested by several departments with Enterprise Funds. However, this will not result in a cost savings

to the General Fund as these charges are deposited into the General Fund to reimburse the County for indirect costs of operating these special funds. A reduction in G&A charges will increase the budget gap in the General Fund.

### III. Revenue

1. Charge a minimal fee of approximately \$1 per 30-minute computer session at the Library. At 500 sessions per week for 50 weeks on 80 PCs, it would raise approximately \$2,000,000 per year. (Two employee suggestions for charging for Library internet use)

**Administrative Action:** No action. If charges for computer sessions were imposed, the County would no longer be eligible for State Aid Grant funds which include funding for construction of new libraries. The County would also no longer be eligible for the Federal e-rate which provides an 80% discount on internet service. Finally, addition, the County would no longer be eligible for many foundation grants that are focused on expanding internet access to all citizens, especially those in low socio-economic groups. For example, many of the computers in our libraries were purchased through the Gates Foundation which prohibits charging for use. If we began charging for computer use, it is likely the County would have to refund all or a portion of the grant award. Even if the revenue generated by charging for internet access exceeded the grants and E-rate discount, the decision to proceed would require a policy decision of the Board

2. Charge 10 cents to check out a book at the Library.

**Administrative Action:** No action. Charging to check out books will create the same impacts as charging for computer use as explained in #1 above and would also require a policy decision by the Board.

3. Sell advertising space on county fences that border highways and main roads.

**Administrative Action:** No action. This type of signage is prohibited by the Cities of Fort Pierce and Port St. Lucie and by St. Lucie County.

4. Sell bonds to get the Geoplasma plant on line and use profits for the general fund.

**Administrative Action:** No action. The County is not investing any funding in Geoplasma. The purpose of establishing a plasma arc gasification system (at no cost to the taxpayers) is to produce renewable energy and reduce the size of our landfill.

## **EMPLOYEE BUDGET REDUCTION WORK GROUP SUGGESTIONS**

### **May 2010 Update**

In October 2009, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) met with an Employee Work Group representing each County department to solicit suggestions for budget reductions. In January 2010, a response was provided to the BOCC and Employee Work Group on those suggestions that were Administrative in nature. Please find below an update to those status of those suggestions.

#### **1. Centralize supply orders**

In the past, the County operated a central supply program which included office supplies. This program was closed over 10 years ago. Most governmental agencies have moved away from a centralized supply distribution warehouse for a number of reasons:

- Efficiency of ordering materials on an as-needed basis. A centralized supply system would require acquiring and maintaining an inventory of supplies and materials to fulfill orders. Some supplies, like printer and copier toner cartridges, are widely varied throughout the County and would be difficult and expensive to maintain in inventory.
- Ability to utilize purchasing cards to place orders over the phone or internet.
- Many suppliers will deliver orders, eliminating the need for staff to leave their work location to pick up materials and supplies.
- Ability to obtain special and/or reduced pricing from national retail warehouse-type suppliers such as Staples, Office Depot, Home Depot, etc.
- Maintaining a central supply warehouse requires additional staff, space and administrative costs. A vehicle and courier must be supplied if delivery is preferred to employees leaving their work locations to pick up supplies.

At this time, County Administration does not recommend re-establishing a centralized warehouse for supplies and materials.

**Administrative Action: None**

#### **2. Buy in bulk**

Even though there is no centralized material and supply warehouse used by all County departments, many County departments buy frequently used items in bulk. For instance, Central Services purchases gasoline, paper goods, cleaners (usually in concentrate form), glue and mineral spirits as well as freon and air conditioning filters in bulk. Information Technology purchases cables and connectors in bulk and Road & Bridge and Mosquito Control purchase chemicals in bulk.

**Administrative Action: Implemented. Department Directors and Purchasing will continue identifying appropriate bulk purchases.**

### **3. Buy Local**

The County has emphasized purchasing locally whenever feasible and, as of December 10, 2009, 137 contracts totaling more than \$17 million have been approved. In addition, 396 purchase orders totaling more than \$56 million were issued to St. Lucie County businesses and another 144 purchase orders for more than \$11 million were issued to Treasure Coast businesses.

Most recently, a Library of Local Vendors was established for use by departments and divisions obtaining informal and formal quotes. Any vendor can submit the information form to be included in this Library which clearly identifies local vendors and the goods and services they can provide the County.

The Board has also adopted the Local Preference Ordinance which provides local companies with preference in the selection process for bids, Requests for Proposals and Requests for Qualifications.

**Administrative Action: Implemented.**

### **3. Utilize IRSC internships for office assistance/ management.**

The County Administrator asked the Human Resources Department several months ago to establish a program with Indian River State College (IRSC) to provide interns. The guidelines for this program are currently being developed.

**Administrative Action: Implemented.**

### **4. Implement IT policy of shutting down computers at night rather than sleep mode.**

As a result of the recent Green Government certification process the County has undertaken, IT has determined that shutting down computers at the end of each work day will be more energy-efficient. Computers will need to remain on over weekends so that appropriate updates can be loaded. A memo to all BOCC employees with the revised IT procedure was issued December 31, 2009.

**Administrative Action: Implemented.**

### **5. Monitor credit card use to ensure not overpaying for items and taking advantage of discounts**

The County has very strict guidelines regarding the use of purchasing cards, including ensuring that payments are processed in a timely manner to take advantage of any available discounts. In addition, statements are reviewed and signed off by a purchasing card reviewer who has the responsibility to examine purchases and identify those that appear to be inconsistent with County policies which are currently focused on prohibited uses of the card.

The purchasing manual is being updated and Administration will include a new policy related to cost of purchases and maximizing discounts. The use of purchasing cards helps the County balance the cost of staff time, fuel and other resources to complete a project with the cost of the materials.

**Administrative Action: Implemented. Additional language regarding cost of purchases and maximizing discounts has been included in revisions to purchasing manual.**

**6. Mandate 76 degree temperature in all offices; Install motion sensors for lights, Upgrade to LED lighting.**

The Board is committed to exploring innovative and practical ways to reduce the County's energy costs. Over the last five years, Central Services has implemented numerous energy savings projects including upgrading fluorescent lighting in County buildings, upgrading or replacing many air-conditioning (a/c) systems, and completion of a water conservation project at the jail, which is a large consumer of energy. In addition, the Parks & Recreation Department is pursuing the replacement of standard athletic field lighting with "green lighting".

County building thermostats are generally set for 74-76 degrees, depending on the functionality of the a/c system, building construction and orientation and employee(s) comfort levels. In addition, numerous buildings have been programmed to reach higher temperatures during non-work hours such as after 6:00 PM and on weekends. For buildings with manual thermostats, Central Services could work with the appropriate directors and managers to designate staff to re-set thermostats at the end and beginning of each work day. In addition, a review of County a/c systems, controls and settings is ongoing.

Recognizing the numerous opportunities to reduce energy costs and the complexities of sorting through the technologies and approach appropriate for more than 55 County buildings, the Board recently approved the reclassification of the Economic and Sustainability Coordinator position to the Energy & Water Manager. This position will be responsible for developing an energy and water conservation plan for County buildings and for implementing the projects that result from the plan, as funding is available. The feasibility of installing motions sensors and LED lighting in County buildings will be considered during the development of the plan.

In addition, the Board is establishing an Energy Savings Work Group, in partnership with the Cities of Fort Pierce and Port St. Lucie and the St. Lucie County School Board. The work group will identify energy saving projects which can be accomplished through performance contracting or similar strategies that do not require significant funding.

**Administrative Action: In process by Central Services.**

**7. Reduce telephone costs by paying a bulk rate and discontinuing lines that are not being used.**

The Board is actively enrolled in a discounted bulk rate agreement that includes both voice and data communication costs, providing substantial savings each year.

Over the last year, the Information Technology (IT) and Finance departments have been working with our vendors on an extensive audit. The goal is to identify all voice communication costs, simplify & correct billing errors and reduce lines that are no longer active while still preserving the County's ability to activate new lines and maintain internal 4-digit extension dialing. This includes a thorough review of contract obligations, termination fees and vendor recommendations. A recommendation by Information Technology Department is forthcoming upon completion of the audit.

During the past year, the IT Department did reduce communication cost by \$38,000 via an RFP for phone maintenance cost. Additional \$20,000 savings in long distance charges are projected by accepting a new agreement with Verizon Long Distance. Long-term objectives potentially include a grant-funded multi-agency shared fiber network that would provide additional cost savings with the benefit of increased communication capabilities.

**Administrative Action: Bulk rate implemented. Audit complete and Phase 1 to remove unnecessary phone lines was completed in April.**

**8. Reduce paper trails and utilize electronic system for work orders in Central Services; expand IT electronic work order system to other departments.**

Central Services will begin implementing changes to the work order system to allow requests via email. However, at this time, field supervisors are not able to access work orders electronically. Additional discussions with IT will begin on the cost and feasibility of implementing a fully-electronic work order system.

IT and OMB have been discussing the cost and feasibility of implementing electronic approval of requisitions, purchase orders and other processes. The County is also implementing an electronic agenda process for Board meetings and Growth Management is in the testing stage of a program that will allow applicants and the general public to monitor the status of various development applications. The County recognizes the need to update our internal and external processes to incorporate the use of electronic and internet technologies in these austere budget times.

**Administrative Action: In process. Central Services has purchased the work order program software and is in the process of fully implementing it. IT and OMB will be implementing a pilot of the electronic approval process for requisitions, purchase orders, etc. with a department this summer.**

**9. Consolidate offices and utilize available space to cancel leases.**

Central Services has been implementing numerous office relocations recently due to the opening of the new Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the reduced work force. These include the relocation of Media Relations studio from the Morningside Library to Administration (freeing up needed space at this library) and relocation of IT offices to the former EOC. The Supervisor of Elections' lease does not expire until 2013. Depending on the staffing levels and anticipated available space at the time, it is Administration's intent to recommend the Supervisor of Elections offices be relocated to existing office space.

Since the January report, the Building, Zoning and Code Compliance programs have been consolidated into the new Planning & Development Department. As part of the consolidation, additional layoffs have occurred. Central Services and the Planning & Development Department are working together on consolidating all the offices in one location in the Administration Building.

**Administrative Action: In Process. Central Services is working with the Planning & Development Department on consolidating offices in one location in the Administration Building.**

**10. Educate employees on department budget.**

This is an excellent suggestion. Department Directors will be asked to work with the OMB staff to present an overview of County funding and the department budget to department employees.

**Administrative Action: Ongoing.**

**11. Stop/reduce providing electricity and water at parks like Museum Point Park.**

Most County parks do not provide access to electricity or water. Of 77 parks and preserves, only 29 provide electricity or water. Of these, seven are beach parks which provide showers, two are campgrounds (Fairgrounds and Savannas) for which utilities are paid by the customer and three are regional parks which provide water fountains. There are only 17 parks which provide electricity and/or water for general public use, including Museum Point Park.

Capping and/or locking electrical and water outlets and removing water fountains at County parks would result in cost savings. However, before moving forward with this recommendation, an investigation to determine the potential savings versus the impact on recreational users would need to be made. Since most of these outlets are not individually metered, it is likely that an estimate would have to be made of the potential annual savings and, if warranted, a discussion held with the Board.

**Administrative Action: In process. The exterior electric outlets at the Marine Center in Museum Point Park have been disconnected and capped. Additionally, staff has collected all of the site data to create a GIS database**

**identifying all water and electric service available to the public at county parks and facilities to determine where future disconnections of water and or electric can occur.**

## **12. Four-day work week**

Most studies confirm that the greatest savings in implementing a four-day work week come from reduced utility costs. This can only be achieved if the related offices and services are actually closed one day per week. Providing a four-day work week but rotating staff such that offices remain open five days per week will not generate budget savings in utility costs. The City of Wilton Manors has a four-day work week (10 hour days) and has seen a slight reduction in utility bills. Gulf County has a four-day work week (10 hour days), closed on Fridays. Gulf County has seen a 20% drop in utilities and fuel costs.

There has been some evidence that there are savings in overtime costs that result from field crews working four-day work weeks. However, the County has removed overtime from most department and division budgets so the anticipated overtime savings would not be generated. There may be some work efficiencies gained by reducing the number of times a crew must be mobilized but these would not likely result in budget savings.

At the direction of the Board, Administration will evaluate the potential savings from implementing a four-day work week if all County offices closed one day per week.

**Administrative Action: To be discussed with the Board at Strategic Planning.**

## **13. Use of trustees and C.O.R.E.**

The County works with the Sheriff's office to utilize a crew of approximately 10 inmates, supervised by a Deputy, for maintenance of environmental lands and the County's plant and tree nursery. There is no cost to the County for use of the inmate crew but they must be scheduled in advance as they also perform work for other governmental entities and nonprofit organizations.

The County also contracts with the Florida Department of Corrections for two crews of state inmates, one in Environmental Resources and one in Parks & Recreation. Each crew consists of approximately five inmates plus one Corrections officer who supervises the crew. The County pays the State \$56,485 per year for each crew, which cover the cost of the Corrections officer. The State inmates are used weekly by the Environmental Resources Department and the Parks & Recreation Department for manual labor projects.

The County utilizes CORE on a limited basis when appropriate. CORE is responsible for assigning community service work to those who must complete a specific number of hours as part of their sentencing. Since CORE does not provide a supervisor for community service workers, they must be supervised and their time tracked by County staff who must report absences, tardiness and leaving the work

place to CORE. As such, use of CORE workers is preferred on an individual or limited basis.

**Administrative Action: Implemented.**

**13. Reduce or eliminate some employee benefits, including sick incentive program and car allowances. Consider cost reduction measures such as furlough days.**

As a result of the projected budget gap, County Administration is reviewing the reduction or elimination of a number of employee benefits, including the sick incentive program, car allowances, leave accrual rates and longevity pay. In addition, County Administration is reviewing such alternatives as mandatory furlough days and pay reductions.

**Administrative Action: To be discussed with the Board at Strategic Planning.**

**14. County vehicle service schedule**

Central Services has agreed that servicing most County light fleet vehicles can be extended from every 3000 miles to every 5000 miles. These services are provided by a vendor at a cost of \$16 and would reduce most the number of times vehicles are serviced to once or twice per year, depending on the vehicle. Estimated savings are approximately \$3800 annually.

**Administrative Action: Implemented.**

**15. Weekly generator testing**

Central Services indicates that the County owns 31 generators at various locations throughout the County that are started weekly to ensure they are in good working order for emergencies. In many cases, these weekly starts are required to maintain warranties, contracts and/or government certifications for critical facilities. Most of the generators are on automatic timers to minimize the impact on County staff.

**Administrative Action: None.**

**16. Administration & Management staffing**

Overall, the County workforce has been reduced by 252 positions or approximately 1/3 since FY 2006/07. Of those positions, 115 have been management and professional-level positions. These administrative and management reductions have occurred at all levels of the operation, including Administration. Since 2004, the County has had two Assistant County Administrators. Unless directed otherwise by the Board, the County Administrator does not plan to fill the Assistant County Administrator position that is currently vacant.

That said, in anticipation of the projected budget gap, County Administration will be developing a restructuring of the organization which will likely include a further reduction of administrative personnel and consolidation of divisions and departments.

**Administrative Action: The reorganization plan was approved by the Board and implementation is in process. The plan consolidated 18 existing departments to nine new departments, reduces the number of divisions and includes the elimination of vacant positions as well as staff reductions. The reorganization process is being conducted parallel to the budget process which will likely result in further staff reductions and elimination of some programs and services.**

## **17. Consolidation/cooperation with cities on services**

Recent research has indicated that consolidation of city and county services does not usually result in the anticipated cost savings that often initiate these proposals. However, there are studies which confirm that selected services, particularly those that are capital-intensive, are better delivered through a consolidated approach.

The Board has been discussing regionalization of utilities for many years and the Community Services Department has always provided construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing throughout the County.

Recently, the City of Fort Pierce rejected a proposal to consolidate their police department with the Sheriff's Office. However, the City of Port St. Lucie has indicated that budget issues may force them to consider elimination of law enforcement. While this action might result in a reduction in the city's millage, the County would be required to find additional funding to provide law enforcement services to the city. The consolidation or cooperation for providing fleet services has not been discussed but will be explored by the Central Services Director.

**Administrative Action: Fleet services review complete. Comparison of estimated costs indicate that a consolidation of City and County fleet services does not generate cost savings for the County and that County Fleet and indicates the County fleet operation is more efficient.**

## **18. School Resource Officers**

As originally established in 1985, the School Resource Officer program was a joint effort of the School Board, the County and the Cities of Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce. Law enforcement officers are currently located in six high schools and 13 middle schools. The 19 elementary schools are also visited by officers on a rotating basis. When school is not in session, the deputies complete required training and work in the court, civil or patrol units.

The current cost of the program is \$3.1 million which provides three supervisors (at a cost of approximately \$330,000) and 35 Sheriff's deputies for the program. This

year, the City of Port St. Lucie (PSL) is providing two supervisors and ten officers, a reduction of seven officers from the previous year. PSL has indicated that additional officers will be cut from the program in January 2010. The City of Fort Pierce no longer participates in the program, having cut their three officers last year. In addition, the School Board informed the County last year that they would be unable to provide the 50% funding for FY 09/10 as they have in prior years. The County agreed to provide one-time funding to cover the School Board's portion.

Continuation of funding for this program will be a policy decision of the Board and has been an ongoing discussion item at budget, informal and Strategic Planning meetings.

**Administrative Action: To be discussed with the Board at Strategic Planning.**

#### **19. Televised Commission meetings**

The Board has televised Commission meetings since 2003. Web streaming of Board meetings has been available since 2005. Any change in televising Commission meetings would be a policy decision of the Board.

**Administrative Action: None**

#### **20. Staffing at Savannas Park**

It is important to note that the County's Savannas Park is open year-round. However, camping in the summer has been discontinued. As a result, one staff position at the park was eliminated, three were reduced to seasonal positions and the supervisor now also oversees the Fairgrounds as additional duties. The Fairgrounds Manager position was eliminated.

**Administrative Action: None.**