

**Institute for Senior Professionals
Northwest Florida State College
100 College Boulevard
Niceville, FL 32578-1295**

Walton County Budget Project Summary Report

May 26, 2011

PREFACE

In January 2011 Walton County Commissioner Ms. Sara Comander asked for ISP help in reviewing the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) budget proposals to recommend actions to keep the budget within projected revenues. The Acting County Administrator Mr. Lyle Seigler sent the request to ISP Chairman Darrell James. The request was approved by the membership in a regular meeting on February 15, 2011. On that same day there was a meeting with BOCC Division Directors and County staff to define the project. At the request of Walton County Commissioners Cecilia Jones and Kenneth Pridgen the Walton County Taxpayers Association (WCTA) was invited to participate. WCTA participation has consisted of sharing information and suggestions for areas to research. Michael Flynt volunteered to lead the project and Pat Hollarn graciously agreed to participate. The BOCC Divisions submitted their Fiscal Year 2012 budget proposals to the Administrator who shared them with the ISP Team. At about this time Mr. Seigler was named Walton County Public Works Director and Mr. Gerry Demers took over as Acting County Administrator. Team research has consisted of publications review and several iterations of questions posed to the Divisions, Division responses and Team clarification questions. Questions and answers were exchanged in face-to-face meetings with Walton County Directors and staff in their workplaces. Because of the limited time available for the project, including an overseas work trip, the Team focused on the recommendations of a similar project for Okaloosa County done in 2010 for their Fiscal Year 2011 budget. This report attempts to help the Walton County Board of County Commissioners overcome an overall eight to ten percent reduction in revenues to balance their budget with no tax increases.

RESEARCH

Publications: The ISP Team consulted previous Walton County budgets, the annual Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR) for 2009 and 2010 published by the Clerk of the Court and available on line at www.co.walton.fl.us. , The Team also used the *Analysis of County Spending Patterns 1999-2006, March 7, 2007*, prepared for the Florida Association of Counties by Fishkind & Associates, Inc., of Orlando, Florida. The “Fishkind Study” is available online on the FAC webpage at http://www.fl-counties.com/Docs/Property%20Taxes/2007/fishkind_study.pdf.

Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) Division Budget Proposals. The Team shared the format used by Okaloosa County Administrator James Curry for the 2010 ISP “Budget Scrub” project with the Walton County Interim County Administrator Lyle Seigler. Mr. Seigler, who was in the process of introducing a Program Budgeting system similar to the one in Okaloosa County, took the format, modified it for Walton County and required the Divisions to use it for their FY2012 budget proposals.

Division Director and Staff Member Meetings. The team began meeting Division Directors on February 15, 2011 at a Director’s Meeting in Walton County Administration. In the meeting the new Budget Proposal formats were discussed and a general agreement reached on the purpose and the method of this ISP Project and the WCTA participation. Complete Budget Proposals were due by March 29, 2011 for a series of meetings between the Directors and the ISP Team. Some of the proposals were complete and others not. The Team has had a series of subsequent meetings for discussion of late proposals, requests for additional information, and responses to those requests.

DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

Board of County Commissioners: Staff Size.

- Issue: The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) staff is large compared to other counties.
- Discussion: It is not likely any county of this size has such a large staff.
 - There is no logical reason for any part-time commissioner (See Fla. Constitution) to have an aide plus secretary and more.
 - Renting or leasing office space when there are County buildings north and south of Choctawhatchee Bay adds additional expense to the large staff.
 - Consolidation of BOCC staff under the County Administrator would allow for equitable support incurring less expense.
 - The BOCC and staff and the Administrative Division projects more than \$1.1 million in the FY12 request.
 - Reduction of one Executive Assistant and one Administrative Assistant could save more than \$100,000 while retaining one helper for each Commissioner.
 - Providing office space in County Buildings north and south of the bay would eliminate the expense of rented offices.
 - Commissioners sharing a single administrative assistant in each of the north and south County offices would reduce the staff by three positions saving approximately \$110,000 annually.
 - A substantial reduction in overhead cost for the County will be a positive example to the County that the BOCC intends to control expenditures.
- Recommendations:
 - Consolidate all BOCC and Administration staff under the County Administrator and eliminate two positions.
 - Provide Commissioners office space in County-owned buildings north and south of Choctawhatchee Bay and provide one shared assistant in each location.

Board of County Commissioners: County Attorney.

- Issue: Walton County has retained two attorneys and their services might be fulfilled by a Staff Attorney.
- Discussion: The slowed pace of development in Walton County has simplified and even reduced the need for external legal counsel. The need for specialized counsel is already covered by one time contracts with qualified attorneys. The County has two attorneys on retainer for a total of \$180,000 per year. A staff

Attorney could cover approximately 75% of the work currently provided by the Attorneys on retainer. With a reduction in the need for their services it appears that the County could let the retainer contract expire, use local counsel on an *ad hoc* basis, and hire a Staff Attorney to fill the vacant Paralegal position and save approximately \$85,000 per year.

- Recommendation: Do not renew the retainer contract for legal services and hire a staff attorney to fill the vacant Paralegal position.

Administration Division: Early Separation (Buyout) Program.

- Issue: An Early Separation Plan for retirement eligible employees can significantly reduce Employee Expenditures to Reduce Expenditures by Eliminating Positions.
- Discussion: Early Separations for employees eligible for retirement has helped Walton County downsize its total number of employees, shifting expenses to the Florida Retirement Program.
 - The Assistant County Administrator is producing a new Early Separation Program proposal for FY12. Its objective is to encourage employee decisions on early separation as early in the fiscal year as possible in order to gain the maximum reduction in expenses.
 - Estimation of expense reduction is problematic because of unknowns:
 - How many employees will participate is unknown.
 - The amount made by employees who participate is unknown.
 - Whether there is still a substantial number of employees interested after the many separations last year is unknown.
- Recommendation: Put an early separation program in place by October 1, 2011.

Administration: Assignment of Cell Phones.

- Issue: Reduction of the number of cell phones will save on equipment and telephone service provider expenses.
- Discussion: Cell phone service provides a convenience to some employees, but the devices are expensive to operate and easily used for unofficial purposes.
 - There is County policy on how cell phones are to be used, but no County-wide policy on who should be provided one.
 - Currently cell phones are put in Division budgets and the devices are assigned to employees by Division Directors.
- Recommendations:
 - Establish a County policy on how cell phones are to be assigned and used.
 - Reduce number of assigned cell phones by 10-25%.

Corrections: Expense Off-set.

- Issue: Possibility of housing inmates from other jurisdictions to offset local expenses.
- Discussion: The Walton County Jail has an unoccupied pod that could house inmates from other jurisdictions.
 - Housing inmates from other jurisdictions could offset Corrections expenses if the charge to other jurisdictions exceeds the total cost of the additional inmates.
 - Corrections is a very well run organization by our observation and would be able to open the pod and operate it effectively if it makes economic sense.
 - Certain conditions would have to be assured to make this recommendation work for the County:
 - Most important - Assurance of a minimum number of inmate days per year is needed because,
 - Opening the second pod would be expensive (additional personnel, building maintenance, utilities, etc) and because
 - Inmate care expenses would rise (Medical care, uniforms, etc.) and they would have to be housed at a predictable daily rate.
- Recommendation: Consider housing inmates from other jurisdictions in the County jail if commitment for sufficient inmate population and payments can be assured.

Public Works: Assigned County vehicles.

- Issue. Number of Four-Wheel Vehicles Assigned for Personal Transportation: Even after previous year reductions in fleet size, the County still operates 119 four-wheel vehicles (sedans and trucks).
 - Rising fuel costs and reduction of County Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions suggests that the real need for such vehicles has grown smaller and is a potential area for budget reduction.
- Discussion: The County has Public Works procure and maintain vehicles for individual transportation of all BOCC Division members. There is no adopted policy for assigning the vehicles to the Divisions and their use is controlled by Division Directors. There is County policy on how vehicles are to be used. In the past when funds were available, it appears the scheme for vehicle assignment to Divisions became a tradition. There was no compelling reason to review and limit the number of vehicles operated. Changed conditions makes it important to carefully examine how and why vehicles are assigned, then eliminate the 10% or 20% vehicles that are most expensive to operate and have authorized users share the remaining vehicles. At \$500,000 per year to operate Fleet Operations,

a mere 10% reduction in the fleet expenses would give a \$50,000 budget reduction.

- Recommendation: Reduce the number of four-wheel vehicles operated by 10-20% after a careful examination of why and to whom vehicles are assigned.

Public Works/Capital Improvement Program: Paving Projects.

- Issue: Paving projects are a major expense item at approximately \$5 million to \$6 million annually. Reduction in the 8-10 miles planned for paving could save a substantial amount on expenditures.
- Discussion: Public Works estimates that the total cost of an average mile of new pavement is \$275,885.
 - Right of Way expense is no issue because paving occurs only on rights of way donated to the County.
 - Potential savings depend on amount of “dirt to pave” projects are delayed by a year.
 - At the same time the County has 1900 lane miles of roads and 209 bridges that require maintenance.
 - Maintenance is less expensive than paving.
 - Maintenance expenses will grow if paving is not done, but there should be a significant savings on the bottom line.
 - Shifting Public Works emphasis from new paving projects to maintenance of existing roads:
 - Reduces the cost of operations significantly,
 - Does maintenance work that needs to be done anyway, and
 - Keeps the Public Works crews intact to resume paving when budget conditions allow.
- Recommendations:
 - Reduce new paving projects by 50% and overlay projects by 25%.
 - Place Road Crew emphasis on needed road and bridge maintenance,
 - Establish a prioritization policy on selection of paving projects, then set and maintain a prioritized list of paving projects.

Public Works: Mosquito Control Drainage Ditch Expenses.

- Issue: Public Works Operations does Mosquito Control drainage ditch maintenance using Operations budget.
- Discussion: Public Works road crews do drainage ditch maintenance in support of North Walton Mosquito Control (NWMC).
 - Public Works receives no funding for NWMC work.
 - NWMC receives state funding for operations.

- Unused NWMC state funds are rolled back to a Mosquito Control fund earmarked for Walton County.
- The rollover fund has a substantial positive balance.
- Recommendation: Use state mosquito control rollover funds to pay for PW drainage ditch work when it is done as a mosquito control measure

Public Works: Delay purchase of heavy equipment.

- Issue: Certain heavy equipment scheduled for replacement can be kept in service an additional year. .
- Discussion: Two six-yard wheel end loaders purchased in 1999 and 2006 are scheduled for replacement in FY12.
 - Older heavy equipment is expensive to maintain and maintenance takes it out of service.
 - The 2 six-yard loaders can be safely kept in service another year.
 - Replacement cost is \$340,000 each for a total of \$680,000.
- Recommendation: Delay replacement of 2 six-yard loaders for a year.

Support Services and Planning & Development: GPS/GIS Capability:

- Issue: Reduce overhead administrative costs and operational costs for offices providing similar GPS and GIS services.
- Discussion: Both Support Services and Planning & Development Divisions have departments using similar kinds of technology to provide geographic information system service to the County.
 - Equipment and software are similar but not identical.
 - Duplicate management exists for two departments with similar services and technology.
 - Consolidation in one department will allow reduction of an overhead position or positions.
 - Planning & Development is concerned that the database in the Support Services GIS/IR is not reliable enough to meet need of providing legally sound documentation.
 - Situation is well taken and must be solved before sharing of databases.
 - Elimination of one supervisory position could save approximately \$40,000.
- Recommendations.
 - Combine all GPS and GIS services into one Department serving all County needs. Eliminate one, perhaps two administrative positions.

Support Services: GIS/IR Staff:

- Issue: GIS/IR is functioning with a vacant position.

- Discussion: GIS/IR is performing its functions with a vacant GIS Technician II position.
 - A filled GIS Tech II position is paid \$17.22/hour.
 - Not filling the position will save approximately \$50,861 annually.
- Recommendation:
 - Do not fill vacant GIS Technician II position.

Multiple Divisions: Laptop Computers (Simplify and Rationalize Computing Equipment Assigned to Individuals).

- Issue: Reduce operations costs to the County by simplification of computing technology and judicious use of new technology.
- Discussion: The County Management Information Systems (MIS) Director is converting desktop computing to a system involving common servers and desktop remotes for normal operations.
 - Stand alone systems (including laptops) are gradually being replaced.
 - The new desktop system is less expensive to operate.
 - Only a certain number of individuals will need expensive laptops for use while traveling.
 - Public Works has gotten Blackberries for project foremen for use in the field.
 - Blackberries access plans and databases for reference on the job site.
 - Previously, the foreman had to travel back to PW offices if the needed documentation was not in his vehicle.
 - This technology is less expensive to buy and saves on travel time and vehicle expense.
 - All communications on public devices is subject to Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, regarding retention of documentation and public access.
- Recommendations:
 - Stop automatically replacing laptop computers. Use networked desktops (cloud computing) in offices.
 - Assign laptops only to those who require them for use away from their work locations.
 - Provide Blackberries for those who need access to databases in their Divisions (PW Project Managers on site).
 - Establish a standard method to record all required records on laptops and other portable technology (including internet messages, and Internet sites visited) to comply with Chapter 119, Florida State Statutes (The Public Records Act).

Support Services: Employee Health Insurance.

- Issue: Reduce Employee Health Care Insurance expense by negotiating premiums with multiple underwriters and by increasing employee contributions.
- Discussion: The annual Walton County employee health care premium for Blue Cross/Blue Shield is \$6.6 million.
 - Health care insurance coverage for County employees and families is critically important. Changes to the plan must carefully balance taxpayer needs with those of County employees.
 - Walton County Human Resources is seeking a more affordable health care package.
 - Increases in health care costs make the possibility of rate reduction on quality health insurance problematic.
 - Nonetheless, a 2% to 5% premium decrease would result in savings of approximately \$132,000 to \$330,000.
 - Premiums charged for health insurance are affected by the amount of co-pays and deductibles charged to the employee.
 - Premium reductions of 2% to 5% based on increased employee co-pays and deductibles could save \$132,000 to \$330,000 each year.
- Recommendations:
 - HR to continue working with multiple providers (not just Blue Cross/Blue Shield) to negotiate less expensive options.
 - Include reasonable changes in employee contributions to health care insurance to maintain the best value in coverage.

Support Services: Employee Health Insurance.

- Issue: Encourage employees to use health care insurance from other organizations thus removing liability from the County.
- Discussion: Some County employees have health care insurance from other sources and do not need County insurance.
 - Retirees working second careers with Walton County may have paid health care insurance from previous employment.
 - Family members of County employees may have health care insurance paid by their employer.
 - Monthly cost for employee health insurance in Walton County is approximately \$700 per employee.
 - Each employee using other health care insurance saves the County about \$700 per month.
 - Employees might be willing to use other health care insurance if offered a portion of the premium the County would otherwise pay.

- Recommendation: Consider offering County employees who choose to use other health care insurance an allowance based on a percentage of premium the County would otherwise have to pay.

Support Services: County Liability Insurance.

- Issue: Reduce the annual Florida Association of Counties Trust liability insurance premium by raising the deductible paid by the County.
- Discussion: Insurance rates are set by actuarial rates that estimate probably claims.
 - Deductibles directly affect the premium that must be charged to cover the number of claims based on actuarial tables.
 - With a low loss ratio (number of claims exceeding the deductible) it is possible to raise the deductible used to set the premium without excessive exposure to losses.
 - The current liability insurance deductible for the County is \$25,000.
 - Raising the deductible to \$50,000 or more could save considerably on the premium – the exact amount to be negotiated with underwriters.
 - A rate reduction of 5% to 15% would not be unreasonable.
 - Walton County annual premiums for General Liability and Practice Wrongful Employer Protection total \$385,139.00.
 - Premium reductions of 5% or 15% would save \$19,257 to \$57,770 per year.
- Recommendation: Raise the current deductible from \$25,000 to \$50K or \$75K whichever gains the best value on the annual premium. Request bids for best options.

Support Services/Human Resources: Employee Furloughs:

- Issue: Unpaid vacation or furloughs can reduce personnel expenses without laying off personnel.
- Discussion: Personnel expenses are a major part of the County budget.
 - A reduction of expenses spread among all County employees can yield significant savings.
 - One alternative is to put employees not in emergency services on a furlough/unpaid vacation for a number of days in the year.
 - Saves on personnel expense.
 - Full benefits to be maintained during the furlough period.
 - Timing of furloughs should take employee convenience into consideration, but inconvenience to the public must also be a consideration as much as possible.

- Employee sensitivity must be addressed and the details explained fully.
- To protect the employees least able to afford a reduction a furlough plan should include provision to furlough only employees making above some annual salary set by the Commissioners.
- Alternative could be elimination of positions.
- Five days of furlough could save approximately \$370,000.
 - Assume 860 employees, 2/3 are non-emergency (645).
 - Average annual salary of \$30,000, 260 workdays/year give approximately \$115/day salary.
 - $5 \times \$115 \times 645 = \$370,875$.
- Recommendation: Consider a five day furlough (unpaid vacation) of non-emergency employees who make more than some salary base decided by the Commissioners to reduce County expenses approximately \$370,000.

Support Services: Human Resources:

- Issue: Vacant positions in Human Resources (HR).
- Discussion: There are two vacant positions in HR (Benefits Coordinator and Administrative Assistant).
 - Staff has adjusted to the vacancies.
 - Both could be eliminated at an annual saving of \$88,608 assuming a hourly rate of \$15.00.
 - Eliminating just one position will save approximately \$44,304 annually.
- Recommendation: Do not fill vacant Personnel Specialist and Administrative Assistant positions.

Support Services: Animal Services.

- Issue: There appears to be some duplication in the Office Manager and Clerk positions.
- Discussion: Animal Services is a fairly small operation located in just one building. Elimination of one position by combining Office Manager and Clerk positions can save approximately \$43,000 annually.
- Recommendation: Combine Office Manager and Clerk positions into one position in Animal Services.

Planning & Development Services: Code Enforcement.

- Issue: Staffing in Code Enforcement may exceed the need.
- Discussion: Code Enforcement has been placed in a reactive mode by Board of County Commission action.

- Code Enforcement staff has been operating with a vacant Officer IV position for some time.
- Not filling the Officer IV position in FY12 would save approximately \$67,253.47 in salary and benefits.
- Recommendation: Do not fill the vacant Officer IV position.

Finance Division: Central Purchasing:

- Issue: Automotive Clerk position in Purchasing.
- Discussion: A staff member who supports operations in another Division is working in Finance/Central Purchasing.
 - Elected officials have described to the ISP Team the purchase of lowest cost equipment for Public Works that required replacement after just one season of use.
 - Early replacement of equipment is an unnecessary expense.
 - Working in direct contact with Fleet maintenance operations teaches the ability to specify items that provide best value (price + performance).
 - Working with the Naviline control system being adopted in Public Works will help control parts and service records for each vehicle and piece of equipment.
 - Anomalies such as high use rates for spare parts will be readily apparent in routine records reporting.
 - Personal responsibility of the Inventory Clerk will help prevent diversion of parts and materials for personal use and theft.
 - Purchasing expertise in the right location can avoid waste involved with purchasing inferior or unsuited equipment.
- Recommendation: Move the automotive Clerk position or another buyer position to Public Works where that person will be in touch with detailed requirements and will be able to write specific requests for items with the best value (price + performance) to send to Central Purchasing.

Finance Division: Central Purchasing:

- Issue: Reduce requirement for buyers for routine items that can be bought by Divisions.
- Discussion: The ISP Team was told that Central Purchasing was established in response to diversion or theft of County purchased equipment and supplies.
 - Lack of inventory control and employee avarice were apparently to blame.
 - Avarice is here to stay, but effective inventory control by designated individuals in each Division is possible.
 - Placing inventory control with a designated individual in the Division or Department administration will mitigate against theft and waste.

- Prepare a vetted list of suppliers and approved prices for the most common items purchased to require Divisions to use those suppliers.
 - Use County credit cards for purchases and require a simple purchase report to be accompanied by the credit card receipt.
- For large or one-time-purchase items one or two experienced buyers can support the Divisions to comply with the law and procure needed equipment and supplies
- Elimination of the two junior buyer positions will save approximately \$89,376 per year.
- Inventory control by County Division Directors should be able to keep the cost of pilfering and theft below \$89,000 per year, giving the County a net savings.
- Recommendation: Eliminate two Buyer positions.
 - Authorize Divisions to purchase routine supplies from vetted vendors using purchase orders from the Division administration office. Provide reports to reconcile all purchase orders and purchases.
 - Retain most qualified Central Purchasing personnel to be responsible for major purchases and to vet local vendors and prices for Division purchase of routine items.

Citizen Services: Libraries:

- Issue: Fee for use of Internet connections.
- Discussion: In FY2010 communications services, including Internet connections will cost the library system more than \$13,000.
 - Library construction grants require free circulation of books in the library.
 - Use of electronic service is not encumbered by grant stipulations.
 - A small fee would encourage productive use of library computers, especially in times of intense usage.
- Recommendation: Charge a fee for internet connection on library computers to recover at least half of the connection fee.

Citizen Services: Libraries:

- Issue: Keeping libraries open during times of consistently low patronage.
- Discussion: Focusing library hours on times of most patronage will serve the public while closing during times of least usage will save on staff expense.
- Recommendation: Analyze patronage patterns to identify times of least use at each library and adjust open hours to reduce staffing expense.

Citizen Services: Libraries:

- Issue: The Gladys Milton Branch reports limited circulation, raising the question of whether the Branch is needed.
- Discussion: Based on reported circulation and computer use, the Branch is little used.
 - The Branch is open five days a week.
 - Circulation of library holdings varied from 55 to 72 items per day in the last reported year.
 - Keeping the Branch open requires 1.5 Full Time Equivalent Employees (FTE). Personnel cost including benefits for the full time person is approximately \$32,000/year.
 - Utilities and communications services (including Internet access) cost approximately \$11,000/year.
 - Closing the Branch could save approximately \$43,000/year.
- Recommendation: Consider closing the Gladys Milton Branch with for a savings of approximately \$43,000/year.

Citizen Services: Libraries:

- Issue: Bookmobile patronage is small.
- Discussion: Is the Bookmobile needed with such low usage?
 - Elimination saves 1) Vehicle maintenance, 2) Fuel at approximately \$4.00/gallon, 3) Staff time.
 - \$1,500 operation expense.
 - Staff time – uncertain.
 - Reduction of operating expenses in the Libraries budget proposal is based on not serving South of the bay, neglecting the major population of the County.
- Recommendation: Eliminate the Bookmobile.

Citizen Services: Extension Services.

- Issue: Potential Area for Reduction.
- Discussion: Logic. Major accomplishments of 8.5 employees reported in the budget proposal worksheets seem meager relative to the \$295K personnel request.
 - The Extension provides quality of life services only except for service to a small number of agriculturalists.
 - Walton County contributes approximately \$195,000 annually towards Extension Service staffing.
 - Funding of staff positions is done in cooperation with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS). .

- Recommendation: Negotiate with IFAS to reduce County staff funding by 30% to save approximately \$58,500.

Additional Thoughts.

Capital Budgeting. As the Board of County Commissioners is ultimately responsible for all buildings and space allotments, long range planning would improve with a separate inclusive capital improvement budget, not to include major expendable goods/materials. Department budgets would be all operations.

Support Services/Human Resources: Comp Time Compensation On Retirement.

- Issue: Personnel practice in Walton County may compensate retiring personnel far more than appropriate.
- Discussion: Compensatory Time (Comp time) is intended to relieve employees when they have worked beyond normal work hours.
 - Comp time is intended to provide relief soon after periods of extraordinary work loads.
 - After some time Comp time does not fill the intended purpose of providing physical and mental rest.
 - Walton County pays the employee for all accrued Comp time at retirement.
 - Hours of Comp time are accrued at whatever pay rate the employee has at the time.
 - Comp time is paid at the employee pay rate at time of retirement – generally a rate much higher than when accrued.
 - Paying for all accrued Comp time at retirement does not fulfill the purpose of the policy and is expensive.
- Recommendation: Adjust policy to require Comp time to be used within 180 days of accrual. After 180 days it is forfeited.

Inter-Divisional and Inter-Departmental transfers.

Consider establishing a system to assign a cost of services provided among Divisions and Departments and charging the user for those services. Effect would be to require users to put cost of services in their budgets for reimbursement to the providing Division or Department. Identifying and justifying those costs in the annual budget cycle should encourage more efficient use of County resources.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

CAUTION: These figures are hypothetical. Actual savings may differ significantly. Use these figures to understand the general magnitude of potential savings.

Division or Department	Action	Potential Savings
BOCC/Admin	Reduce staff size and consolidate Commissioner offices in County Buildings.	\$100,000 to \$210,000
Attorney	Eliminate counsel on retainers and hire Staff Attorney	85,000
Admin	Early Separation Program	Depends on participation.
Admin	Cell Phone Assignment – Set new policy	Uncertain
Corrections	Open second pod to other jurisdictions – revenue enhancement	Uncertain
Public Works	Assigned County Vehicle reductions	50,000 to 100,000
Public Works	Reduce paving projects 50% and overlay projects 25%	1,250,000
Public Works	Delay heavy equipment purchase one year	680,000
Public Works	Transfer funds from State mosquito control fund to pay for ditch maintenance done by PW	Uncertain
Support Services and Planning & Development	Combine GIS/IF and GPS Departments, reduce overhead positions.	40,000 or more
Support Services	GIS/IR; Do not fill vacant position	50,000
Multiple	Reduce laptop use, use newer technology	Uncertain
Support Services	Employee Health Insurance options competed among several providers.	\$132,000 to 330,00
Support Services	Liability Insurance; Raise deductible to reduce premium	19,000 to 58,000
Support Services	HR; 5 days of employee furloughs	371,000
Support Services	Animal Control; Combine Office Manager and Clerk positions	43,000
Support Services	Do not fill Vacant HR position(s)	44,000 – 88,000

Planning & Development	Do not fill vacant Code Enforcement position	67,000
Finance	Move Auto Clerk position to PW	Uncertain
Finance	Eliminate two buyer positions, revise purchasing procedure policy	89,000
Citizen Services	Library: Charge for Internet time	6,500
Citizen Services	Library: Reduce open hours during traditionally low patronage periods.	Depends on number of hours reduced.
Citizen Services	Library: Eliminate Bookmobile	1,500 plus staff time
Citizen Services	Library: Eliminate Gladys Milton Branch	43,000
Citizen Services	Extension Service: Reduce County staff funding 30%	58,500

CONCLUSION

The Walton County Board of County Commissioners and the Administration Division are to be congratulated for efforts to make County budget leaner and more effective. Innovative use of a Program Budget system by County Administration is a major step towards more efficient management of BOCC resources. Implementation of organizational change is universally difficult and the Walton County initiative especially so because of the roughly 8% reduction in projected revenues. But Program Budgeting focuses on services and can assure necessary ones are provided according to community priorities. It assures effectiveness is monitored and reported and it provides for annual review and continuous improvements.

This project disclosed special communications projects by Hal Laird and other money-saving innovations such as risk management. Those efforts deserve public recognition and perhaps a tangible reward.

Project Self-Assessment. This ISP Team is honored to help improve the Walton County budget process by offering specific recommendations based on research. In the time available, this team researched areas of County operations that often offer opportunities for improvement. A successful budget scrub project in Okaloosa County last year has been a guide. A project limited by a deadline may miss important details, but project coverage here has been relatively thorough and the Team has confidence in the recommendations offered. Any misstatements or errors are the responsibility solely of the ISP Team leader.

Thank You. Every County employee and official contacted has been open and helpful in providing responses to requests for information for this project. We thank you. We look forward to working with Walton County in any future requests for Institute for Senior Professionals assistance.

Respectfully Submitted:

Michael M. Flynt,
Director

Pat Hollarn
Director