

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: January 20, 2009

Date Submitted: December 19, 2008

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
Jennifer Langston, Special Projects Coordinator

Subject: Board Consideration of Potential Wakulla County Economic Stimulus Projects in anticipation of the Economic Stimulus package initiated by the Federal Government.

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item requests Board Consideration of Potential Wakulla County Economic Stimulus Projects in anticipation of the Economic Stimulus package initiated by the Federal Government.

Background:

President-elect Obama has proposed an economic stimulus package in the range of \$675 billion to \$775 billion to include funds for infrastructure spending on highways and public transportation, and major expansions of government-assisted health care insurance and unemployment compensation.

Specifically, some of the goals of the stimulus package include creating three million jobs with an emphasis on bricks and mortar infrastructure projects, and tax cuts for the middle-class in the amount of \$500.00 - \$1,000.00. It was first thought that the economic package would be ready for the President-elect's signature immediately after the inauguration on January 20, 2009, but may be February or March to allow for debate by Congress. Many variables of the Economic Stimulus package are unknown at this time. Each State will most likely receive a lump-sum amount of funding. It is anticipated, that the Legislature and Governor's office will address this issue in more detail in the regular 2009 legislative session, if notified by the Federal government between March-early May. Contingent upon the timing of actions of the Federal government, it may be addressed in the summer months in a special legislative session. The amount of funding distributed to Florida, details of distribution, and the eligibility criteria have not been formalized.

On December 30, 2008, in an effort to be proactive, the Chairman of the Leon County Board of County Commissioners, Bryan Desloge arranged a preliminary meeting with key regional partners to begin initial conversation in regards to the potential funding opportunities. Representatives from the City of Tallahassee, Leon County BOCC, Leon County School Board, Florida State University, Florida A&M University, and Wakulla County participated.

At this meeting, the group established five categories in which to delineate the projects (Energy,

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Infrastructure, Education, Healthcare, & Protecting the Most Vulnerable). It was decided that each partner would quickly identify those projects considered “shovel-ready” within six months, and also those projects capable of creating jobs. Consensus was made by the group to consider viable projects from a regional perspective to be submitted by the group as a whole. The group pledged to encourage additional regional participation by contacting Gadsden and Jefferson Counties.

On December 30, 2008, following the meeting, staff immediately began researching and identifying potential projects that met the broad criteria as discussed at the regional roundtable meeting. A preliminary draft of viable projects was submitted in preparation for the January 8, 2009 meeting. (Attachment 1) At the January 6, 2009 Board Workshop held to determine the State and Federal Legislative Priorities for the 2009 legislative cycle, staff briefed the Board on the preliminary discussion referenced above.

On January 8, 2009 a subsequent meeting was held with those in attendance at the initial meeting, including representatives from Gadsden County. At this meeting all submitted projects were discussed, and the total cost of the consolidated project list totaled approximately \$500 Million. The group agreed that each regional participant re-examine their submitted projects by expanding the criteria to allow for those potential projects to be considered that were able to begin construction later than 60 days out. Considering that funding may not be immediate, by extending the timeframe would also allow for additional projects to be considered. In addition to extending the criteria, it was decided that projects be categorized into Phases based on construction readiness.

- Phase I-Projects Ready to Begin within 60 Days
- Phase II-Projects Near-Ready to Begin in 180 Days
- Phase III-Projects to begin in One Year (2010)

The group urged each participant to further analyze the projects in order to make revisions or additions to the regional list prior to the next meeting on January 15, 2009. The group also pledged to reach out to Jefferson County government, as well as, the rural school boards.

Analysis:

Staff assembled to discuss the outcome of the meeting and the specific details of each project to be considered (Required Permitting Processes, Planning Stages, Multi-State Agency involvement etc...). Staff also delineated the projects into construction readiness phases as agreed at the meeting.

This agenda item requests the Board’s consideration of potential projects as listed in the attachment as a part of the Federal Economic Stimulus effort. (Attachment 2)

Options:

1. Accept Staff Recommended Projects for Consideration
2. Do Not Accept Staff Recommended Projects for Consideration

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3. Board Direction

Recommendation:

Option 1.

Attachments:

1. Wakulla County Economic Stimulus Projects for Consideration (Initial Submission)
2. Wakulla County Economic Stimulus Projects for Consideration (Revised Submission)