

Budget preparation process already has begun for next fiscal year



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COLUMNIST

Some of you may remember May 10, 1970, when a 10-year-old Michael Jackson sang with his brothers, the Jackson 5, on “The Ed Sullivan Show.” One of the songs they sang that night was titled “ABC.” He sang the words “ABC, it’s as easy as 1, 2, 3 ...”

So, now are you wondering how am I going to tie this song in with the budget department? Well, thank goodness this is a written column so you don’t have to listen to me sing or watch me try to copy Michael Jackson’s dance moves.

In this column, ABC stands for approved budget calendar. Over the last few weeks, every district has approved its workshop and meeting dates related to the fiscal year 2015-16 budget process. You may view the approved budget calendar on the District’s website – distictgov.org.

The fiscal year 2015-16 actually begins Oct. 1, however, we already have started the budget preparation process.

1, 2, 3 ... Let’s talk numbers! Did you know that the original adopted fiscal year 2014-15 budget is \$243,942,942 for 47 funds over 15 districts? This includes more than \$180 million for operations and maintenance costs.

The total operations and maintenance portion covers numerous functions such as utilities, sanitation, recreation, property management, safety and support services such as administration, budget, clerk, finance, purchasing, etc.

Here is a small sampling of

operations and maintenance items that are considered during the budget preparation process:

The Recreation Department is responsible for the operations of more than 1,087 facilities, including nine regional, 23 village and 45 neighborhood recreation centers; eight sports pools, 22 family pools and 45 neighborhood pools; four fitness clubs; 11 softball fields; three dog parks and many others. Plus, there are 16 executive golf courses where more than 1 million rounds of golf were played last year.

Department of Property Management is responsible for the maintenance and replacement of all of the district-owned facilities and infrastructure such as recreation facilities, postal stations, pools, preserves, wetlands, water retention areas/basins, multimodal paths, roadways, street lighting, and landscaping/irrigation.

Community Watch Department – there are 76 gate complexes with 21 staffed gates, including 11 that are staffed 24/7, with approximately 133,000 vehicles per day passing through them. Patrol drives more than 1,140,000 miles a year to patrol every neighborhood two times a day, 365 days a year.

Safety – Seven fire stations are staffed 24/7, providing commercial and residential coverage over a service area of more than 24 miles. They served more than 17,300 requests for services last

Extra! Extra!

Village Community Development District No. 9 will host a town hall meeting at 6 p.m. March 5 at Eisenhower Recreation Center. The meeting will provide an overview of the governance of your district, which includes the operation and financial picture. Residents also will have an opportunity to meet and ask questions of their elected officials and District staff members that provide services. For information, contact Jennifer McQueary, district clerk, at 751-3939 or jennifer.mcqueary@districtgov.org.

year, of which 80 percent were medical.

Unlike the song lyrics, the budget process is not as simple as 1, 2, 3. It is a major undertaking to prepare, review, adjust and finalize that many budgets for that amount of funding.

There are 15 districts that operate as separate governments with the responsibility to review and adopt their own budgets. There are also two committees (Amenity Authority Committee and the Project Wide Advisory Committee) that review certain funds and make recommendations to the respective District Board.

The departments currently are working on their budget requests. They are reviewing the needs and priorities for their areas of responsibility. The departments will submit their requests at the end of March after the preliminary budget workshops.

The Office of Management and Budget, along with the district manager, will review each budget during April and May. During the May budget workshops (see budget calendar), the board supervisors will review the recommended budget by line item to determine a proposed budget.

I’ll describe more of the budget process in my next Our Place column in May. All of the budget

preparation team are veteran players, so their professional experience and knowledge helps the budget process run smoothly.

The first round of meetings will be the preliminary budget workshops, which provide an opportunity for the boards to

provide direction to staff, for staff to update the boards on any items that may impact the budget, and for input from residents regarding the fiscal year 2015-16 budget.

All of the workshops will be held in the large conference room at the District Office, 984 Old Mill Run in Lake Sumter Landing.

Below is the schedule for the

preliminary budget workshops:

- March 12: District 5, 8 a.m.; District 6, 9:30 a.m.; District 7, 11 a.m.; District 8, 2 p.m.; District 9, 3 p.m.

- March 16: District 1, 8 a.m.; District 2, 9:30 a.m.; District 3, 11 a.m.; District 4, 1:30 p.m.

- March 18: Amenity Authority Committee, 1:30 p.m.

Of course, the budget process is a public process and we

encourage everyone to attend. You can express your thoughts and comments by attending one of these budget workshops, attending a monthly board meeting, calling Janet Tutt or myself at 751-3939, or emailing me at barbara.kays@districtgov.org.

Please feel free to attend a budget workshop even if you don't have any comments. This

is a great way to learn how your District government works.

I hope to see you at the preliminary budget workshops, and be sure to meet us back here next week at Our Place!

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