

MEMORANDUM

TO: Pender County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Al Greene, Interim County Manager

PURPOSE: Recommendation Regarding Board Retreat and Budget Process

DATE: February 14, 2008

The purpose of this memo is to recommend changes in the manner in which this year's planning retreat and budget process are handled, and to explain why those changes are being recommended.

In the past your retreat has included a financial overview from the Finance Officer, presentations of budget requests for capital and personnel by various county departments and agencies, discussion of pending projects and the development of "top ten" goals. Municipalities and other outside agencies have also made budget requests.

It is recommended that this year we not include presentations from county appointed department heads regarding their budget requests. The primary reason for making this recommendation is that the organization as a whole (and I) will not be ready by the time of your retreat to have credible budget requests prepared, reviewed, discussed and presentations developed. We have begun the process today of developing those request, but this is a time consuming process if we are going to do a professional level job. It requires a great deal of thought, planning and discussion at the staff level and it involves the time of every department and department manager that we have. It will also require the Finance Officer and I to meet with every department manager to review and discuss their request and how those requests fit into the direction of the department and organization. We will have to meet with some departments several times.

We do have ample time to accomplish this and present a comprehensive budget to you in mid May. What we would recommend is that you review departmental budget requests at that time, even if the budget review process takes a little longer. I believe that you will have a much more credible set of requests to consider at that time and the requests will be presented in the context of the overall budget.

What we would recommend is that agenda topics at your retreat include the current and projected financial overview from the Finance Officer and any budget requests that outside agencies, municipalities, elected department heads and boards would like to make. We also recommend that you spend considerable time discussing current critical issues involving utilities, planning and development

and the organization itself. We also recommend that you spend considerable time reviewing the status of current goals and establishing goals for the coming year.

In a nutshell, the recommendation is that you spend what time you have dealing with more strategic issues. We are at a critical point right now and our focus on those issues will be beneficial to the overall county effort, and the time that the staff spends preparing to discuss those issues will be extremely valuable to us. In fact, that is exactly what the staff must focus on at this time.