

CITIZEN'S GUIDE

to

**St. Lucie County's
Fiscal Year 2014-2015**

Final Budget



St. Lucie County

St. Lucie County - Florida Board of County Commissioners

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St. Lucie County FY 2015 Citizen's Guide

This pamphlet is a brief look at the 2015 St. Lucie County Budget. We hope it will enhance your understanding of how the County's funding is organized, the services it provides and the funding sources used to provide those services. Our purpose is to deliver to the citizens of St. Lucie County the very highest quality services possible, making every dollar count. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and to be able to make St. Lucie County government the best it can be.

Rationale for the Budget Structure

National Accounting Standards - Just as businesses follow what are known as generally accepted accounting principles (abbreviated "GAAP"), governments follow national standards for financial reporting. A government using consistent standards can look at itself over time to measure its financial strengths. Comparative measures of performance can then be made with other units of government.

State of Florida Budgeting Standards - The State of Florida establishes budgeting and financial rules for local Florida governments. An example is its rule for the timing of the annual budget cycle. The fiscal year for counties begins October 1st and ends September 30th of the following year. Other rules include how a county adopts a budget and sets property tax rates.

Federal and State Grant Requirements - St. Lucie County receives grants from several federal and state agencies. To insure the County uses these funds for specific programs, these agencies require the County to keep grant funds separate from all other County Revenues. This segregation requires a more complex financial structure to manage these "restricted" dollars.

Local Budgeting Standards - Finally, the Board of County Commissioners establishes uses for some fees collected by the County to insure they are spent on specific programs. Impact fees and permit fees are examples of revenues with such self-imposed restrictions.

Balancing the St. Lucie County Budget

Florida law states that a county must have a balanced budget. This means that the amount of proposed revenue must equal the anticipated expenditures in every fund. When it is said that the “budget is balanced”, this means that all revenue equals all expenditures and there is no budget deficit.

Sources

AD VALOREM TAXES	129,688,366
OTHER TAXES	7,366,328
LICENSES & PERMITS	14,691,879
INTERGOVERNMENTAL	45,201,117
CHARGES FOR SERVICES	36,904,428
FINES AND FORFEITS	1,094,827
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES	8,661,621
INTERFUND TRANSFERS-IN	19,829,425
PROCEEDS FROM LOANS/BONDS	1,200,000
INTERNAL SERVICES & OTHERS	586,972
EST. BEGINNING BALANCES	225,346,397
LESS 5%	-9,905,655

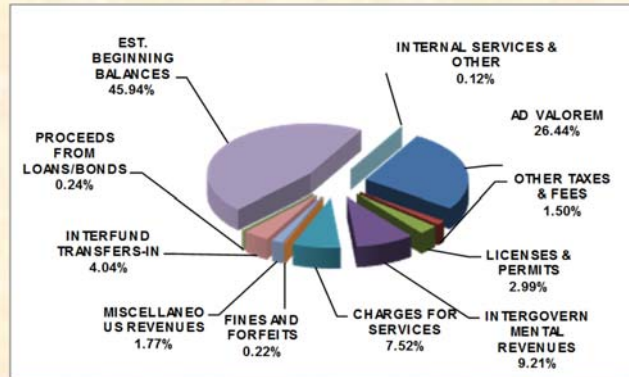
TOTAL \$480,665,705

Uses

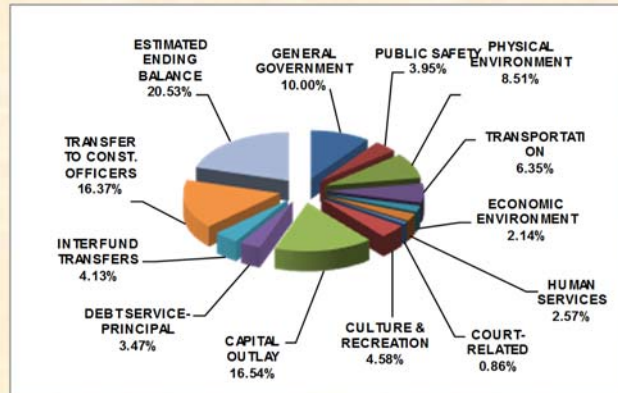
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	48,060,732
PUBLIC SAFETY	18,993,876
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	40,920,587
TRANSPORTATION	30,525,523
ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT	10,309,876
HUMAN SERVICES	12,339,569
COURT-RELATED	4,155,082
CULTURE & RECREATION	22,005,671
CAPITAL OUTLAY	79,508,065
DEBT SERVICE	16,670,137
INTERFUND TRANSFERS	19,829,425
TRANS TO CONST'L	78,669,712
ESTIMATED ENDING BALANCE	98,677,450

TOTAL \$480,665,705

Where the Money Comes From (Sources)



Where the Money Goes (Uses)



An Important Revenue - Property Taxes

A “property tax” more specifically called an “ad valorem” tax, is a tax based on the value of the property. In Florida there are three factors for calculating the amount of property tax assessed on a piece of real estate: the value of the property, the amount of the value exempted from tax and the tax rate.

Yearly, taxing authorities decide how much tax money their budgets require to operate and provide public services. The rate at which the tax is charged is called the “millage rate”. One mill is equal to \$.001. This means that if the millage rate is 8 mills then the amount of tax paid per dollar value is \$.008. It is much easier to think of the rate as how many dollars of tax will be paid per thousand dollars of property value. For example, if the property is valued at \$10,000 and the millage rate is 8 mills, you would pay \$8 per \$1000 value or \$80.

FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	Change from FY 14
6.9712	6.4612	6.4612	6.4612	7.1367	7.1881	7.1881	7.3910	7.3910	0.0%

The property taxes that come to the County for Fiscal Year 2015 will be used as follows:

Category	Percentage	Category	Percentage
Constitutional Officers	67.34%	Parks MSTU.	2.78%
Courts/Legal System	7.35%	Transit MSTU	1.52%
Voted Debt Service	0.19%	Community Service-Mandates	2.66%
Mosquito District	2.97%	Health Department	0.75%
Erosion District	1.11%	New Horizons-Mental Health	0.56%
Stormwater MSTU	1.86%	CRAs	2.47%
Unincorporated Services MSTU	2.34%	Board of County Commissioners Allocation*	3.38%
Law Enforcement MSTU	2.72%		

*Other revenues are being used to offset the cost.

The Budget Structure

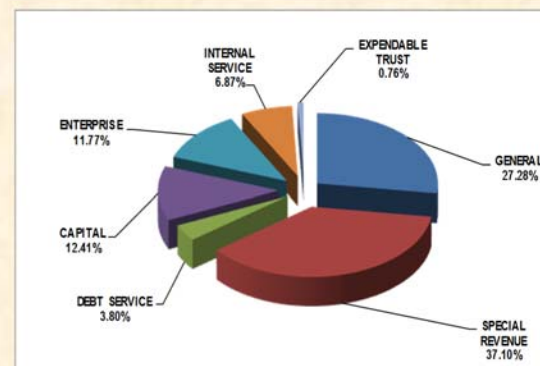
An important concept in government accounting and budgeting is subdividing the budget in to what are called “funds”. This is called fund accounting. Fund accounting allows a government to budget and account for funds restricted by law or policy. These funds allow the County to separate certain revenues and then account for the expenditures from those revenues.

Each of the funds must balance, meaning that the revenues must equal the expenditures in each fund. The County budget adopted each year by the Board of County Commissioners is actually the total of the separate funds as summarized to the right by fund type.

FUND TYPES

GENERAL	131,114,823
SPECIAL REVENUE	178,350,192
DEBT SERVICE	18,286,466
CAPITAL	59,642,349
ENTERPRISE	56,583,558
INTERNAL SERVICE	33,014,537
EXPENDABLE TRUST	3,673,780
TOTAL	<u>\$480,665,705</u>

Total FY 2015 Budget by Fund Type



Fund Descriptions

General—To account for all financial resources except for those required to be accounted for in a separate fund.

Special Revenue—To account for specific resources which are restricted for a specific purpose.

Debt Service—To account for the payment of general long-term debt.

Capital—To account for resources for the acquisition or construction of major capital projects.

Enterprise—To account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business.

Internal Service—To account for the financing of goods provided by one county department to another on a reimbursement basis.

Expendable Trust—To account for assets held by a government unit in a trustee capacity or as an agent for individuals, private organizations, or other governmental units.

Budget Highlights

- All of the County's proposed millage rates are the same as FY 2013-2014, except for:
 - General Fund
 - Fine & Forfeiture Fund (Jail/Law Enf)
 - Mosquito Control District
- While individual millages were adjusted. In total, the millage rates stayed the same.

Fine & Forfeiture Fund (Jail/Law Enf)

The proposed millage rate for the Fine & Forfeiture Fund was decreased by 0.7 mills with a corresponding increase in the General Fund by 0.7 mills. This millage shift did not alter the total millage rate or the amount of property taxes being levied.

The millage shift will provide additional revenue to the General Fund, which currently has a greater operating budget shortfall than the Fine and Forfeiture Fund. The millage shift will also prevent reserves from being depleted in the General Fund in future years.

Mosquito Control

In FY 2013-2014, the Mosquito Control Millage rate was increased from 0.2036 mills to 0.4065 mills. This was done to make the fund sustainable, replenish the reserves and build them to \$4million. This goal has been met. The proposed millage rate for the Mosquito Control Fund was decreased by 0.1543 mills, offset by an increase in the General Fund by 0.1543 mills.

	FY 13/14	FY 14/15 Proposed	Change in Millage
SLC General	2.9221	3.7764	0.8543
Jail, Law Enf	3.9699	3.2699	(0.7000)
Erosion Dist E	0.0925	0.0925	0.0000
Mosquito Cont.	0.4065	0.2522	(.1543)
Total County-	7.3910	7.3910	0.0000

Reserve Policy

Emergency Reserves. The Board shall maintain a designated Emergency Reserve equal to 5% of the total operating budget excluding funds that have a minimum of 10% or \$2,000,000.00 in reserves, whichever is greater. By majority vote, the Board may use all or a portion of this designated Emergency Reserve. Such use shall normally be reserved for natural or manmade disasters. For FY 2014-2015, \$613,659 of the emergency reserves is being used for Indian River Drive.

Fund Balance Reserves. The Board shall maintain a Fund Balance Reserve in the General Fund equal to 5% of the General Fund operating budget. By a majority vote, the Board may use all or a portion of this fund balance reserve to address unanticipated revenue shortfalls or any unforeseen expenditures not necessarily resulting from a natural or manmade disaster.

The following table shows the amount budgeted in FY 2014/2015 for these reserves:

	FY 2014/15 OPERATING BUDGET	5%
All Funds (Emergency Reserve Policy)	\$187,722,156	\$9,386,108
General Fund (Fund Balance Policy)	\$73,308,748	\$3,665,437
Total		\$13,051,545

Office of Management & Budget

2300 Virginia Avenue
Ft. Pierce, Florida 34982

Information about the budget is available by calling the Office of Management and Budget (772-462-1670) from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday.



Information can also be obtained through the County Website at : www.stlucieco.org