



1 Ms. Price commented that the next item was Board action on Resolution 2023-01 to adopt  
2 the tentative millage rate by separate vote.

3  
4 Ms. Hooper made a motion to approve this item.

5  
6 Mr. Harper seconded the motion.

7  
8 Ms. Price asked if Ms. Kirste would read this item, and then if they would be open for  
9 discussion.

10  
11 Ms. Kirste replied that they were on separate voting, and she asked to have the discussion  
12 first on this resolution.

13  
14 Ms. Price said that they were open for discussion on this resolution, which was to do the  
15 0.40 mills.

16  
17 Ms. Kirste confirmed this.

18  
19 Mr. Hurley expressed that he was disappointed with this. He opined that acting in good  
20 faith, the citizens of North Lake County had come together and by a resounding majority  
21 had voted that it would be in the best interest of the county, and that they would be willing  
22 to bear the expense and take care of their sick friends and neighbors who could not afford  
23 health insurance. He opined that citizens understood the way that they would fund this  
24 care, and that they knew that it would appear on their tax bill each year. He relayed his  
25 understanding that the hospitals and clinics treated these individuals, and that the providers  
26 would request that the Board reimburse them for their costs. He indicated his  
27 understanding that the Florida Legislature had provided funds allowing the Board to set a  
28 millage rate up to one percent, which would more than cover the costs requested by the  
29 providers. He said that in this year, providers had asked the Board to reimburse them in  
30 the amount of \$8,704,364, and that the amount of funding available to the Board by the  
31 Florida Legislature would be \$18,535,167, noting that this would more than cover the  
32 request made by the providers plus the Board's administrative costs. He opined that some  
33 had decided to turn their backs on their purpose on this Board and had advocated for lower  
34 taxes, which he opined was not the Board's job; rather, he opined that it was the job of the  
35 Florida Governor and the politicians in the City of Tallahassee. He opined that it was the  
36 Board's job to ensure that the indigent residents in North Lake County received healthcare,  
37 and to reimburse the funding that hospitals and clinics had already spent to do this. He  
38 stated that they were told that the preliminary millage that the Board had approved on  
39 August 31, 2023 could not be changed; however, he opined that this vote was not conducted  
40 according to State statute. He opined that they should not have had this vote until after  
41 September 1, 2023, and he believed that the Board could call that vote null and void and  
42 approve a millage rate which would take care of their providers. He hoped that the Board  
43 members would reevaluate their purpose for serving on the Board and do what they were  
44 elected to do. He also hoped that anyone on the Board who thought that they should not  
45 be true to their oath and reimburse their providers as mandated by the Florida Legislature,  
46 or who might have an ulterior motive and wanted to be a tax reduction advocate or to  
47 possibly disband this Board, should potentially resign and make room for someone who

1 would do what they did not have the courage to do. He relayed his understanding that the  
2 current millage rate left them \$609,025 short of providing reimbursement for hospitals and  
3 clinics.

4  
5 Mr. Hurley made a motion to disannul the August 31, 2023 preliminary millage vote, which  
6 he opined was illegal, and to revisit the millage rate.

7  
8 Ms. Price opined that setting a tentative millage rate was not illegal, and that every City  
9 Council and County Commission had an opportunity to set a tentative millage rate.

10  
11 Mr. Hurley opined that this could not be done before September 1.

12  
13 Ms. Price relayed her understanding that it had to be submitted to Mr. Carey Baker, Lake  
14 County Property Appraiser, by September 1.

15  
16 Ms. Kirste indicated her understanding that the Board would vote for a tentative millage  
17 rate after September 1, along with a tentative budget; furthermore, they did their final  
18 budget and final millage rate during the month of September. She said that there had been  
19 some discussion with Ms. Donna Catterson and Mr. Matt White, with Crippen and Co., on  
20 this matter, and that it was their belief that the Board could go higher than the 0.40 millage  
21 rate because it was a proposed millage and was not a tentatively adopted millage rate.

22  
23 Ms. Price relayed that this had been done in the previous year and that there was no issue.  
24 She commented that she had been clearly told that any taxing district could set a tentative  
25 millage rate because it had to be submitted to Mr. Baker before a certain time so that he  
26 could provide his truth in millage (TRIM) notices.

27  
28 Ms. Catterson confirmed this; however, she noted that it needed to be a proposed millage  
29 rate rather than a tentative millage rate. She said that Mr. Hurley was correct and that the  
30 Board could not vote on a tentative millage before September. She indicated that the Board  
31 could propose a millage rate, and that she would verify this with the TRIM staff on the  
32 following day. She commented that she had all the instructions and that it said “proposed”  
33 until September.

34  
35 Ms. Price relayed that everything she read said “tentative.”

36  
37 Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Phil Braun, Vice President and Chief Counsel for University of  
38 Florida (UF) Health Central Florida, for his perspective two weeks prior. He opined that  
39 while he and Mr. Braun may not agree on the correctness of the legal confiscation of  
40 funding from citizens for private organizations, Mr. Braun had acknowledged that without  
41 the funding that this Board had provided, the indigent residents would still receive adequate  
42 healthcare. He opined that with this being the case, there was no need for the continuance  
43 of this Board, much less taxing the Lake County citizens unnecessarily. He relayed that  
44 Mr. Ed Jimenez, the former Chief Operating Officer (COO) of UF Shands, had told him  
45 two years prior that he did not believe that ad valorem taxes should be used for hospital  
46 needs, and that he requested that hospitals be gradually be taken off the taxpayer source of  
47 funding. He opined that the Board did as Mr. Jimenez had requested, giving approximately

1 \$5 million to each hospital over the past two years. He opined that two weeks prior, Mr.  
2 Abel Biri, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for AdventHealth Waterman, seemed to be of  
3 the mind that the Board was the trustees of an insurance company. He opined that the  
4 funding that the Board received for their services said otherwise, and he believed that the  
5 policyholders had said that companies chose to pay their premiums rather than having them  
6 legislated by law from their bank accounts. He opined that Mr. Biri missed the mark by  
7 asserting that the voters spoke their mind in 2016, and he opined that they only did in the  
8 sense after a well-funded public relations (PR) campaign subsidized directly or indirectly  
9 by the funding that the Board provided for indigent care. He opined that for 60 years they  
10 did not hear anything from anyone about the unfairness of this, and he recalled that in 2020  
11 there was an election where three likeminded Board members were elected who had  
12 honestly expressed their views at the time, as well as their plans as Board members, and  
13 that they had joined Ms. Price as guardians of the public purse and to administer this  
14 funding. He opined that their views were expressed prior to the election in an article in the  
15 June 30, 2020 issue of the *Daily Commercial*, and that the results of the 2020 election  
16 superseded the results of 2016. He recalled that Mr. Biri had stated that the Board did not  
17 need to pay the hospitals, and that the hospitals were required by law to provide care,  
18 opining that Mr. Biri had contradicted himself by saying that this was true but incomplete.  
19 He relayed his understanding that Mr. Biri was saying that these false narratives were not  
20 truly false, but simply misunderstandings on the Board's part about their duty as they saw  
21 it individually and collectively. He opined that in the past the hospitals had liked to bring  
22 in good patients who had allegedly benefited from this tax funding, opining that due to Mr.  
23 Braun's acknowledgement, the Board knew that they would have received the same care  
24 whether the tax existed or not. He commented that in the past three years he had to use  
25 AdventHealth Waterman emergency services twice, and he expressed concerns for the care  
26 he received. He indicated that he had received great care at Blue Cedar Hospital in South  
27 Lake, noting that they were not subsidized by a tax. He mentioned that his view on funding  
28 this was only principle related in that he was wholly and consistently opposed to corporate  
29 welfare. He opined that the amount of funding that these special interests requested was  
30 roughly 20 percent of all the ad valorem taxes received from North Lake residents, which  
31 he opined were correctly used to fund police, fire, emergency medical services (EMS),  
32 Constitutional Offices, roads, sidewalks, parks, courts, jail, vehicle maintenance, and many  
33 amenities that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) did a great job in administering.  
34 He said that he would be a no vote on any funding being collected, or that he would vote  
35 for as little as possible for what he believed was an incorrect usage of tax funding being  
36 taken as ad valorem. He stated that he had also called on the local delegation to eliminate  
37 this Board.

38  
39 Ms. Hooper agreed with Mr. Smith. She said that St. Luke's Free Medical and Dental  
40 Clinic and Community Medical Care Center had all volunteer doctors; therefore, if there  
41 was any funding, then this was who she would like it to go to.

42  
43 Mr. Harper said that the tax was allocated for indigent funds toward both the hospitals and  
44 indigent care. He opined that there was probably a gap where there was indigent care and  
45 where there were people employed who would not be covered, opining that the hospitals  
46 would try to collect on that. He opined that the tax, which was voted in and which the  
47 Board was supposed to be supporting, was put in place so that they could support this gap,

1 and he also opined that people who had differences with the hospital care or with the vote  
2 was not the Board's position as they were supposed to separate themselves from those  
3 idealisms; additionally, he opined that they were there to help with the people's vote which  
4 carried the Board to where they were currently.

5  
6 Ms. Price opined that several hospitals had large donors who received preferential  
7 treatment when they checked in. She said that she received something from the hospitals  
8 weekly asking her to donate, and she indicated that she would fully fund all clinics;  
9 however, she would not fully fund the hospitals. She relayed that she would give the  
10 hospitals a small portion, as her view was that they continued to build care centers. She  
11 opined that if they were having issues, then they should stop building more urgent care  
12 centers. She added that she would not support revisiting the tentative millage rate.

13  
14 Mr. Harper opined that the hospitals were trying to meet needs where people were at and  
15 they were looking at helping the community long term. He recalled that 15 years prior they  
16 did not have clinics for people to visit, and that this funding had prepared them to reach a  
17 point where it made sense for them to invest back into the community. He opined that one  
18 had to spend money to invest in the community.

19  
20 Ms. Price said that she was not against funding indigent care; however, she had friends  
21 with health insurance who were repeatedly harassed for payment instead of the hospitals  
22 working with them. She opined that taxpayers were being taken advantage of, and said  
23 that she would not revisit the higher millage.

24  
25 Mr. Smith said that Mr. Biri had previously stated that the NLCHD tax cost the same as  
26 about two gallons of milk, and he said that North Lake County was approximately 200,000  
27 people. He relayed his understanding that the total amount proposed was \$18 million,  
28 which was \$90 per person. He said that his issue was principle driven but that this did not  
29 mean that he was not amicable with incrementalism. He wished that he could get past the  
30 principle and say that it was fine for the clinics; however, he did not think that it was fine  
31 to tax people to support the clinics. He opined that they could raise funding if they chose  
32 to, and he recalled that he had previously suggested this. He expressed support for 0.25  
33 mills, indicating his understanding that it completely funded the clinics and would possibly  
34 leave some funding for the hospitals.

35  
36 Mr. Smith made a motion to set a tentative millage rate of 0.25 mills.

37  
38 Mr. Hurley opined that the Board had to put their opinions aside. He also opined that the  
39 Board was not elected to only support clinics, nor did they take an oath to only support  
40 clinics; rather, they took an oath to support the hospitals and clinics, and to provide this  
41 care.

42  
43 Ms. Price stated that she had already said that she would not go higher than 0.25 mills. She  
44 indicated that this would fully fund the clinics and LifeStream Behavioral Center, and then  
45 there would be \$1.7 million for each hospital. She opined that there was nothing in House  
46 Bill 1299 (2012) which indicated that they had to do one mill; rather, it said that they may

1 do up to one mill. She opined that it was a rubber stamp before she was on the Board, and  
2 she opined that it was time to stop this.

3  
4 Mr. Hurley indicated his understanding that at the proposed 0.40 mills, they were about  
5 \$906,000 short of reimbursing the hospitals and clinics for what they had spent, and he  
6 questioned how the Board could do this.

7  
8 Ms. Price said that she believed that the Board had to be giving back to the indigent and  
9 private payers. She commented that she did what she felt was the correct thing to do, and  
10 that she was not advocating for anyone except the citizens of North Lake County. She  
11 indicated that she had more people tell her that they did not want to pay any tax to the  
12 NLCHD than people who willingly said to take their money. She relayed that she  
13 considered their opinion, and that she was trying to find a medium, which she opined was  
14 0.25 mills to fully fund the clinics. She said that she had been advocating that indigent  
15 residents of North Lake County needed training on how to take care of themselves to  
16 prevent them from going to a hospital emergency room. She opined that she was being  
17 fair, and she recalled that a few years prior they went to zero mills because there was over  
18 \$5 million in reserves from the previous year. She recalled that she had questioned why  
19 they would re-tax the people, and she commented that she was not out for the hospitals and  
20 the clinics; rather, she was out for the indigent and the people who had insurance but could  
21 still not afford to go to the hospital because of what they were going to owe. She stated  
22 that she was not trying to cheat anyone out of funding, but when they had entities ask for  
23 funding to help support them, it did not mean that one would receive all the funding that  
24 they requested.

25  
26 Mr. Smith added that he had found a YouTube forum where Red Apples Media, which he  
27 opined was funded by both of the major hospitals, had three representatives from different  
28 hospitals and clinics, and that there was an individual who had said something about  
29 funding the amenities for the hospitals. He relayed his understanding that the individual  
30 had said something to the effect of that they could move funding around. He opined that  
31 indigent care had and would be provided, and that Mr. Braun had acknowledged that. He  
32 opined that the indigent would not suffer if they did away with everything with regards to  
33 the hospitals, and he said that he would rather see funding be raised for the clinics going  
34 forward. He opined that he was amicable with 0.25 mills to get it closer to what it should  
35 be. He also questioned if the 60 percent of residents who voted for the NLCHD were only  
36 willing to provide funding because they were forced to, or if they would be willing to  
37 donate funding. He also opined that residents possibly did not know what they were voting  
38 for.

39  
40 Mr. Braun opined that his statements had been misunderstood, and he said that individuals  
41 would continue to receive indigent care; however, he relayed that it would possibly not  
42 always be the same care. He commented that his hospital spent over \$20 million per year  
43 on unfunded and underfunded care and that the \$2 million to \$3 million from the NLCHD  
44 was important because their operating margins did not cover it. He said that if a business  
45 made zero margins and then had to replace or build something, or if staff needed raises  
46 because the market demanded them to have more nurses, then how would they address this.  
47 He questioned what would happen if they continued to have no profit over time, and he

1 opined that the care would probably become less. He opined that the Board funded the  
2 hospitals similarly to how they funded roads, fire and schools because they were important  
3 to the community. He opined that hospitals were a significant community asset, and he  
4 opined that no business would come to a county with substandard hospitals. He opined  
5 that there was a larger purpose for the funding being provided, and that it was a small tax.  
6 He agreed that the Board should not set a millage rate of one mill at the current time because  
7 it was a significant amount of funding; however, he disagreed with not funding the  
8 hospitals. He opined that it was important to have a health structure and that if they did  
9 not have a way to provide for the cost of this care, then it would eventually be a bad  
10 outcome. He commented that if his hospital did not have this funding, then they would try  
11 to collect money because they could not continue to provide healthcare to everyone if they  
12 did not make a profit. He also explained that they built outpatient clinics to help address  
13 the need in the community, and he relayed his understanding that there was already a  
14 motion to set the tentative millage rate to 0.40 mills.

15  
16 Ms. Price commented that many counties in the State of Florida did not have a hospital  
17 taxing district, and she questioned how they addressed this. She added that South Lake  
18 dissolved their hospital taxing district but that they seemed to be functioning well. She  
19 also asked at what point they transported someone from an emergency center to the  
20 hospital.

21  
22 Mr. Braun commented that if people did not need emergency centers, then they would not  
23 build them. He relayed that Halifax County had taxing districts, along with Volusia County  
24 and several others. He opined that the payer mix was different in many of the larger cities,  
25 and he opined that the City of Clermont was not living off 80 percent Medicare/Medicaid  
26 patients. He said that when an indigent patient came into the City of Clermont, they had  
27 30 to 40 percent commercial payers making up the difference, and he opined that they did  
28 not have this in Lake County. He also stated that there were for profit hospitals in the  
29 Cities of Miami, Tampa and Orlando.

30  
31 Ms. Price asked if for profit hospitals were being built everywhere.

32  
33 Mr. Braun clarified that they were not building hospitals; rather, HCA Healthcare was  
34 building a freestanding emergency room in Lake County because he opined that they would  
35 pull more commercial payers and not because they were going to treat indigent or Medicare  
36 patients. He opined that the not for profit hospitals were community assets and that if UF  
37 Health Leesburg Hospital went out of business, each piece of property that they owned  
38 would revert back to the City of Leesburg and become a City property. He opined that the  
39 community owned these hospitals, and that saying that the NLCHD had rubber stamped  
40 the millage was incorrect. He opined that it had not been rubber stamped since  
41 Representative Larry Metz's bill, and that the Board would listen to the hospitals'  
42 presentations and gather the information before they set a tentative millage. He opined that  
43 they made a decision because the need was there and because the audits showed that the  
44 amount was there. He indicated that his hospital had submitted \$2.8 million worth of  
45 indigent care to just residents who qualified, and that they had only received \$2.7 million.  
46 He questioned where the people were who did not want the NLCHD in 2016, opining that  
47 they did not outnumber the people who did want it. He also opined that amendments were

1 done through a referendum and that a legislature could not eliminate an amendment just  
2 because they were elected.

3  
4 Mr. Smith opined that they were a republic and not a direct democracy, and that this was  
5 why they elected representatives to make these decisions. He relayed his understanding  
6 that at the time of Representative Metz' bill, the hospital interests had opposed against  
7 anything other than an automatic one mill. He opined that it had been rubber stamped prior  
8 to that, but that since then there could be an argument that it may have been looked at. He  
9 indicated his understanding that it was one mill each year and then finally it was 0.895  
10 mills.

11  
12 Mr. Braun opined that property taxes had increased and that it made less sense to have one  
13 mill. He recalled that he had previously said that until the day that the hospitals did not  
14 have indigent care, the day they made money off of this, and the day that the property taxes  
15 exceeded what the hospitals had, he would support keeping the millage at a rate that makes  
16 sense. He opined that they should fund what was there, which probably meant the 0.40  
17 mills.

18  
19 Mr. Smith opined that hospitals were not the same as roads, police, etc., because they were  
20 not owned by the government. He opined that this was why it should not be an automatic  
21 ad valorem tax.

22  
23 Mr. Braun opined that this was a private/government partnership, and that there were quasi-  
24 government partnerships all over the world for items such as this.

25  
26 Ms. Price relayed her understanding that there was a motion for 0.40 mills, and she asked  
27 if there was a second.

28  
29 Ms. Kirste thought that there was a motion on the floor to adopt the 0.40 mills.

30  
31 Ms. Price indicated her understanding that she needed a second motion for 0.40 mills. She  
32 also asked if there was a second for Mr. Hurley's motion to disannul the August 31, 2023  
33 preliminary millage vote, but the motion died due to the lack of a second.

34  
35 Mr. Hurley made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-01 setting the tentative millage rate  
36 for the FY 2023-2024 budget year at 0.40 mills.

37  
38 Mr. Harper seconded the motion.

39  
40 On a motion by Mr. Hurley, seconded by Mr. Harper which failed by a roll-call vote of 2-  
41 3, the NLCHD Board did not approve Resolution 2023-01 setting the tentative millage rate  
42 for the FY 2023-2024 budget year at 0.40 mills.

43  
44 Ms. Hooper, Ms. Price and Mr. Smith voted no.

45  
46 Mr. Hurley relayed his understanding that the Board was told when they passed the 0.40  
47 mills that it could not be changed.

1 Mr. Smith clarified that it could not increase.

2

3 On a motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Price and carried by a roll-call vote of 3-2,  
4 the NLCHD Board approved Resolution 2023-01 setting the tentative millage rate for the  
5 FY 2023-2024 budget year at 0.25 mills.

6

7 Mr. Harper and Mr. Hurley voted no.

8

9 PUBLIC COMMENT – RESOLUTION 2023-02 FOR ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET

10 Ms. Kirste read the title of Resolution 2023-02, providing for the adoption of the proposed  
11 budget for the 2023-2024 FY.

12

13 The Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

14

15 There being no one who wished to address the Board regarding this matter, the Chairman  
16 closed the floor for public comment.

17

18 On a motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Hooper and carried by a roll-call vote of 3-2,  
19 the NLCHD Board approved Resolution 2023-02.

20

21 Mr. Harper and Mr. Hurley voted no.

22

23 OTHER BUSINESS

24 Ms. Kirste noted that the next meeting would be on September 21, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. for  
25 the final approval of the millage rate and the budget.

26

27 Mr. Braun relayed his understanding that due to a large carryover from the previous year,  
28 plus some of the clinics not submitting enough for their funding, there looked to be \$1.2  
29 million to allocate to the hospitals or clinics. He relayed his understanding that his hospital  
30 had submitted \$2.8 million, and that there was about another \$100,000 in claims.

31

32 Ms. Price recommended to divide the extra funding to the hospitals on top of what the 0.25  
33 mills would offer; therefore, they would receive more than \$1.7 million.

34

35 Mr. Braun relayed his understanding that the 0.25 mills already had enough funding to  
36 allocate more than \$1.7 million and that it allocated \$3 million to the hospitals. He thought  
37 that since that funding was allocated for this year, and since the providers submitted claims  
38 exceeding those numbers, then the Board should fund the claims which were submitted.

39

40 Mr. Smith indicated that he would not have an issue with this, opining that the Board should  
41 not be sitting on funding which could be used.

42

43

44

45

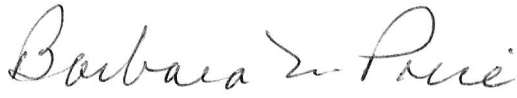
46

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8

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Price". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Barbara Price, Chairman