

Citizens Guide to the Budget

Taxing Authorities

There are over 45 different taxing authorities in Pinellas County which affect various tax districts. They include the county commission, municipalities, school board, transit, water management, and fire districts. These different entities all have public hearings on budget requests for the forthcoming year. Proposed millage rates necessary to fund the budget are set at one of the budget hearings.

County Aggregate - (This comprises three funds: General, Health Dept., and E.M.S.) **The General Fund** operates all the County Services, such as: County correctional system; 911 Emergency Communications System; twenty-two parks and a museum; Air and water quality programs; Dog and cat licensing, immunization and adoption programs; Enforcement of local environmental ordinances protecting wildlife, trees and grounds; Comprehensive planning; Economic and medical assistance to persons in need of basic necessities. The County Aggregate also includes funding for the Sheriff, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Supervisor of Elections and Property Appraiser. The **Health Department** operates the various County health programs such as screening, monitoring, and immunizing for certain communicable diseases like tuberculosis, measles, flu, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.; and administers school health programs, family planning, and prenatal care. The **E.M.S. Program** provides the County's Emergency Medical Services (including paramedics).

Pinellas Planning Council - provides countywide planning necessary for orderly growth, development and environmental protection of the county as a whole; coordinates all countywide planning and development with Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and the Florida Department of Community Affairs.

School Board - operates and maintains the Pinellas County's public school system, including academic instruction, administration, and support services.

Cities/Towns - 24 Municipalities in the County - provide police, fire, sewer, garbage collection, street lighting, street repair, school crossing guards and crime watch programs. Operate libraries, municipal golf courses, recreation complexes, parks, cemeteries, wastewater treatment plants, senior citizens' and community centers. Enforces city housing and development codes.

Municipal Services Taxing Units (MSTU) - provide various services to residents in the unincorporated areas of the county, such as: law enforcement (Sheriff's Department); issuing construction permits, enforcing local building codes and the State energy code and providing on-site inspection during all phases of construction; reviewing applications for land-use plan changes, site plans and rezoning.

Fire Districts - 12 Districts in the County - provide fire protection for residents in the unincorporated areas.

Library Services - allows citizens the convenience of one library card for fifteen member libraries and provides broad-based interlibrary loan and information network.

Palm Harbor Community Services District - provides funding for operation and maintenance of a public library facility, recreational facilities/programs, and related land acquisitions.

Feather Sound Community Services District - funds street lighting; recreational and green space acquisition, development and maintenance.

Southwest Florida Water Management District - is one of five regional districts charged by the state to preserve and protect Florida's water resources. Its mission is flood control, water supply, and water quality. SWFWMD covers all or part of 16 counties.

Pinellas-Anclote River Basin Board - is one of eight watershed basins within the Southwest Florida Water Management District. This basin board is responsible for identifying the water related concerns and problems within the basin, for adopting budgets to support those concerns, and fund resolutions to the problems. Projects funded include reclaimed water, conservation, flood plain analysis, storm water management, and water quality.

Pinellas Park Water Management District - builds and maintains major storm water drainage systems.

Juvenile Welfare Board - the first independent, special taxing district dedicated solely to children's services created by voters in 1946. JWB plans, coordinates, advocates, funds and evaluates programs for children and families. The Board contracts for services with public and not-for-profit agencies and programs countywide. JWB focuses on positive development for children and families and the reduction of risk in the areas of substance abuse, violence and harmful sexual behavior. The focus of services and activities is asset and community based, and emphasizes ages 0-6 and 10-14 using support and youth development principles.

Transit District - administers the countywide transit system, including more than 40 bus routes and Demand Response service for 21 municipalities and the unincorporated areas. It advocates mass transportation.

Clearwater Downtown Development Board - assists the City of Clearwater in the analysis, formulation and implementation of downtown development plans.