EMICA MINUTES OF 9/8/26

Maurice, in place of Rich, called the meeting to order at 7:00. Following the pledge, he introduced Laura who told the group about Planting with a Purpose, our big event on October 3. We asked for volunteers to help with it. Bob said there was no zoning information. He gave the Treasurer's Report as of 9/8/26. After expenditures of $532.81 for Newsletter printing, P.O. Box 6 Month Rental, and Repair Café Supplies, our Ending Checking Balance is $3140.51 with a Savings Balance of $10.

Kelly Haugh talked about the muck removal, now piles of sand near 528, for the next sixty days. Next should be Coquina that is the worst since the residents have not been able to use their canal for two years!

Suzie DeBusk of the Brevard League of Women Voters gave a description of how to amend the Florida Constitution, then a translation of the three amendments proposed for the November Election. The Constitution can be amended in four ways: 1. The Legislature proposes 2. Citizen initiative that goes for percentages. Signatures are checked. Ballot language must be approved by the Florida Supreme Court 3. Three lawsuits against something and 4. Constitutional Convention. To pass an amendment the vote must be 60%.

To see the amendments and more detail, see the attachments to these minutes

Amendment 1: A budgetary stabilization fund, rainy day money for unexpected deficit.

All fifty states have this. We last used this in 2008 during the recession. Withdrawal for critical shortfalls. The state highway budgets will be impacted. The median will be 13.8% of the state budget. The LWV and Florida Education are against this and no group other than the Legislature is for it. This should be a law, not an amendment because it would be easier to change.

Amendment 2: Would reduce local government revenue by 9%, $31 million. Only applies to objects used for agriculture.

At this time, nobody but the Legislature supports it. Against it are the Florida LWV and the Florida Education Association

Pros: It protects agriculture, safeguards our nation, provides food security.

Cons: Reduces local government, agribusiness would benefit most from this, should not be in Constitution

Amendment 3: Deals with property tax that is an ad valorem tax based on value of assessed property. It is considered the most unfair form of taxation. Currently, it is based on Homestead Exemption. Residence of six months, plus one day equals permanent residence. Considers value of house, plus millage rate. To make up the difference, the county, et al would have to increase taxes of some sort to provide necessary services to their communities. Smaller counties would be hurt the most.

Opponents: Everybody, every group – except the Florida Realtors Board of Directors and those in the legislature that voted for this

Supporters: Florida Realtors Board of Directors, Florida Legislature (75-27 House, with 16 not voting); 30-8 Senate, with 2 not voting).

A **Yes Vote** Would increase the current homestead property exemption from $50,000 to $150,000 effective January 1,

A **No Vote** leaves the taxes as they are now.

For more information, check out LWV's **411.org** and the **You Tube Channel** for the three local referenda of Brevard County.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Crooks

EMICA Secretary

For full information, check the sources below:

State Constitutional Amendments

Florida Amendment 1- Budget Stabilization Fund Ballot Language: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to increase the amount of funds that may be retained in the budget stabilization fund from 10% to 25% of general revenue collections, require the legislature to transfer the lesser of $750 million or the amount required to reach 25% of the general revenue collections each year unless certain conditions are met, and allow the legislature to withdraw funds for critical state needs. Synopsis: This amendment is proposed by the Florida State Legislature. It will amend Article III, Section 19. The term "revenue collections" refers to the last completed fiscal year's net revenue collections for the general revenue fund. This proposed amendment passed the House 100-1 and the Senate 29-4 Budget stabilization funds (BSF) are a form of savings account where states can place revenue, such as tax receipts, that will be used to finance unexpected budget deficits or emergencies

Under this amendment, funds could only be withdrawn from the BSF under three conditions: 1. The legislature passes a bill to withdraw funds to pay the expenses associated with an emergency. 2. The legislature passes a bill to withdraw funds to cover a shortfall in revenue, such as less than anticipated sales tax receipts. 3. The legislature determines there is a nonrecurring critical state need, the principal balance of the BSF is greater than 15% of state revenue collections, and two-thirds of the legislature approves the withdrawal of funds. **This amendment would also allow the legislature to suspend the annual revenue transfer to the fund under either of the following circumstances:** 1. No more than once every five years, the legislature determines that there is a critical state need that requires funding in an amount exceeding what would have been transferred into the BSF, and two-thirds of the legislature approves the suspension of the transfer. 2. The legislature withdraws funds from the BSF during the same fiscal year for an emergency or revenue shortfall. **The fiscal impact on the state is indeterminate, but likely insignificant.**

Opponents: **Florida Education Association, LWV of Florida Supporters: Florida** Legislature (House 100-1, Senate 29-4**)**

A Yes Vote Would increase the amount of funds held in the Budget Stabilization Fund from 10% to 25% of revenue collections. A. Require an annual transfer to the fund equal to $750 million or 25% of the revenue collections (whichever is lesser). B. **Define how money can be withdrawn from the fund.** C. Allow the legislature to suspend the transfer under certain conditions.

A No Vote Would keep the maximum allowable amount of funds in the Budget Stabilization Fund at 10% of revenue collections.

Florida Amendment 2- Exemption of Tangible Personal Property on Agricultural Land from Taxation

To exempt tangible personal property habitually located or typically present on land classified as agricultural, used in the production of agricultural products or for agritourism activities, and owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the

agricultural land from ad valorem taxation. If approved this amendment would first apply for tax years beginning January 1, 2027. Synopsis: This amendment is proposed by the Florida State Legislature. It will amend Article VII, Section 3. It passed the House 110-1 and the Senate 37-0.

This proposed amendment would exempt the value of certain tangible personal property (Tangible personal property (TPP) refers to physical, movable assets such as furniture, machinery, tools, and equipment used in agriculture or agritourism from ad valorem property taxes, if the property: 1. is habitually located or typically present on agricultural land. 2. is used for producing agricultural products or for agritourism and owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the agricultural land.

If approved by voters, this bill will have a negative recurring impact on local government revenues of $31 million, beginning in Fiscal Year 2027-28.

Opponents: Florida Education Association, LWV of Florida

Supporters: Florida Legislature (House 110-1, Senate 37-0)

A Yes Vote Would exclude tangible personal property, such as farm equipment or tools, from the calculation of property taxes if the property is typically present on agricultural land, used for farming or agritourism activities, and owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the land.

A No Vote Would continue to include tangible personal property, such as farm equipment or tools, in the calculation of property taxes if the property is typically present on agricultural land, used for farming or agritourism activities, and owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the land.

Florida Amendment 3- Increased Homestead Exemption; Lower Cap on Increases

This amendment reduces the annual cap on assessment increases for non-homestead properties from 10% to 5%. This amendment requires counties and municipalities to use property taxes solely for public safety, education and schools, infrastructure, natural resources, bond debt service, retirement benefits for employees, and operations and administration.

<u>Synopsis:</u> This amendment is proposed by the Florida State Legislature. This amendment passed 75-27 in the House (16 not voting) and 30-8 in the Senate (2 not voting).

This amendment would revise Article VII Sections 4, 6, and 9 and create new Article XII - Save Our Homes From Excessive Property Taxes. **If passed, it would become effective January 1, 2027**. ***Ad valorem and Non-ad valorem Taxes***: ***Tax bills have ad valorem taxes, which are based on a property's assessed value. These are referred to as "property taxes." Tax bills also have non-ad valorem taxes, which are flat fees that are collected to pay for specific local services or infrastructure improvements.*** **This amendment only alters ad valorem taxes.**

For homeowners who permanently reside on their property (house or condominium), there is ***a portion of the home's assessed value that is not subject to ad valorem taxes or "property taxes." This is known as the "homestead exemption***." Currently, the first $25,000 of assessed value is exempt from all property taxes, including those levied by school districts. An additional $25,000 of assessed value is exempt from all property taxes except those levied by school districts. This additional $25,000 exemption applies to the assessed value of homestead property valued between $50,000 and $75,000.

The bill passed by the Legislature (CS/HJR 1F) is summarized below.

• **For homeowners with homesteaded property established by December 31, 2026**, the homestead exemption for all property taxes, except those levied by school districts, would **increase - go up to $150,000 of the assessed value beginning on January 1, 2027**. **Go up to $250,000 of the assessed value beginning on January 1, 2028.**

- **Homesteads established on or after January 1, 2027 are only eligible for these changes after establishing residency status for five years**. After the fifth year, these homesteads are eligible for the maximum $250,000 exemption
- For **homeowners with less than 5 years of homestead exemption, up to $25,000 of assessed value is exempt from all property taxes and an additional $25,000 is exempt from all property taxes, except non-school tax levie**s.

- The new exemption **values will be adjusted annually for positive inflation growth beginning - January 1, 2028.**

A Balancing Act -*this means that local governments, county and municipalities, will receive significantly less revenue to fund government services that these same residents use. Since this amendment also dictates how property taxes are spent by counties and municipalities, local governments are further constrained in how they manage their budgets.* The Revenue Estimating Conference analysis (under the Florida Legislature) dated June 12, 2026 states local governments ***could expect nearly $5 billion less revenue in 2027-2028. That number is estimated to increase to $8.8 billion in 2028- 2029, $9.7 billion in 2029-2030, $10.7 billion in 2030-2031 and $11.9 in 2031-2032*** . These values do not take into consideration the total loss in revenue if a county or municipality reduces property tax exemptions for homestead property even

******• Adversely impacts counties, municipalities, and special districts like Children's Services Councils, Hospital Districts, Mosquito Control Districts and Water Management Districts. • Services like public parks, public transportation, recreation centers, health services, public landscaping, environmental resources would lose millions of dollars needed to provide those services. <u>This will force municipalities to either cut services or monetize services</u> such as increase parking rates and charge entrance fees for parks & recreation centers. • Public libraries are funded primarily through local property taxes and serve more than 23 million Floridians through 541 library locations, 22 bookmobiles, millions of annual visits, workforce development programs, digital access services, literacy initiatives, and educational programming.***

<u>Opponents</u>: Everybody, every group – except the Florida Realtors Board of Directors and those in the legislature that voted for this

<u>Supporters</u>: Florida Realtors Board of Directors, Florida Legislature (75-27 House, with 16 not voting); 30-8 Senate, with 2 not voting).

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