

September 28, 1999

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners met in workshop session in Commission chambers at 9:07 a.m. on Tuesday, September 28, 1999 at the Marion County Governmental Complex located in Ocala, Florida.

Upon roll call the following members were present: Chairman Parnell Townley, District 3; Vice-Chairman Steve F. Henning, District 5; Commissioner Judy D. Johnson, District 1; and Commissioner Larry Cretul, District 2. Commissioner Randy Harris, District 4, arrived shortly after the meeting commenced. Also present were Deputy Clerk Madeline Williamson, County Attorney Gordon B. Johnston, County Administrator Jim Lowry, a member of the news media, and approximately ten citizens.

Ordinances/Vehicles - The Chairman stated the workshop was scheduled to discuss the proposed ordinance regulating vehicle title loans. County Attorney Johnston stated the proposed ordinance was patterned after the Orange County Ordinance providing for an annual percentage rate of 30%.

Commissioner Harris arrived at 9:10 a.m.

Chairman Townley stated that thirty other counties had adopted a similar ordinance.

Commissioner Johnson out at 9:12 and returned at 9:13 a.m.

Commissioner Cretul stated the workshop was suggested to discuss alternatives proposed by title loan company representatives.

Commissioner Johnson out at 9:14 and returned at 9:15 a.m.

Commissioner Cretul stated he was open to alternatives acceptable to the industry and its customers. Commissioner Johnson discussed legislation that regulated title loans and bills being proposed. She stated the purpose of the workshop was to deal with interest rates.

Paul Ashe, representing American Title Loans, stated the proposed ordinance with a 30% interest rate would put the companies out of business. He stated company representatives would discuss the cost of overhead and uncollectible loans. Mr. Ashe suggested limitations on the term of the loan. He also commented on interest rates charged by pawn brokers and credit card companies. Mr. Ashe presented a copy of the Childers Bill (SB 898) and stated companies could not operate under the interest guidelines.

Roger Cooper, Quick Cash of Ocala, resident of Jacksonville, commented on the overhead for his building. He noted there were ten to fifteen title loan companies in Marion County. Jim Meeks, Top Dollar Title Loans, Pine Avenue, stated he operated his business without any employees. He discussed problems he encountered with customers who sell their vehicles after obtaining a duplicate title.

Commissioner Harris stated people who could not obtain bank loans needed a source for cash. Jeff Hotch, All American Title, stated the legislature will take some action. He stated he closed six stores in other counties.

Commissioner Henning stated he supported the 30% rate. Kevin Welker, Title Lenders, Inc., discussed the national bank exemption and stated it allowed importing rates from other states. Shane Wylon, Jerry's Title Loans, stated the proposed decrease to 30% would put him out of business.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Parnell Townley, Chairman

Attest:

David R. Ellspermann, Clerk

Meeting minutes adopted by Board of County Commissioners on November 9, 1999.

