



# Walton County Taxpayers Association, Inc.

“The government is merely a servant – merely a temporary servant; it cannot be its prerogative to determine what is right and what is wrong, and decide who is a patriot and who isn’t. Its function is to obey orders, not originate them.” Mark Twain

November 29, 2006

The Walton County Taxpayers Association has been involved for several years in the county budget process. Our association promotes limited and efficient government, and free enterprise as opposed to government subsidy. We have publicly opposed, in budget workshops and in a formal letter to the county commission, the give away of taxpayer money to private non-profit organizations.

While the Board of County Commission has continued this practice, non-profit requests must survive a thorough review by county’s Citizen Services and budget scrubs by the county finance director. Requests are then subjected to public review in a budget workshop and budget hearings.

It was, therefore, reasonable for officers of the Taxpayers Association to question why the Walton County Chamber of Commerce did not first ask the private sector, specifically their approximately 1300members, for financial support for two new positions before asking for government subsidy. The Chamber of Commerce represents the private sector of our county, the epitome of free enterprise. Public subsidy should be their last resort, not their first.

When the county spends taxpayer money, it is appropriate for the public to question financial accountability. These questions are even more important when a private non-profit organization requests public funding which circumvents the normal process of county and public scrutiny.

To deny the public’s right to comment or ask questions in a public forum sets a dangerous precedent. To belittle a citizen during public comment from a position of power diminishes a fundamental part of government, of the people.

The county commission may disagree with the message or may not want to hear the message, but citizens have an inherent right to be heard. It is the taxpayers’ money they are spending.

Nowhere are citizens more involved in government than at the local level. Citizen involvement is vital to government by the people.

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“The Eyes and Ears of Walton County Taxpayers”