

# Afterthoughts

## The Trip I Didn't Plan

By DELORES LEGGETT WALKER



In the early morning hours of Sept. 20, 2021, I embarked on a mysterious ship with an unknown destination.

I didn't have a reservation, nor had I paid for this unplanned voyage, yet here I was on the tumultuous high seas of an illness without a listed destination.

Through the fog of pain I made a call to my daughter Vickie, hesitantly admitting I needed help - immediate help.

As a retired dispatcher and officer, she pushed the panic aside and allowed her training to kick in long enough to call 911, leading to EMS arriving at my house about the same time she did.

One look at my pitiful state of affairs led them to suggest I make a trip to the hospital for further evaluation. Normally I would have disagreed, but common sense told me this was not the time to be in charge, although I did opt out of the ride in the ambulance after my mind was able to add up the difference in expense between my car and their mode of transportation.

Hanging on to as much reality as I could, I cooperated with Vickie as she became my helper and I became the needy one so weak that even a walk to the car was beyond my capability.

Once inside the car, I laid back in the seat and

imagined what I would be doing if I was indeed on the high seas of adventure. Somehow a trip to the hospital didn't fit into the scenario of a cruise, even though I have never experienced one first-hand.

The drive to Lake City Medical was a blur of sight and sound. My rational mind reminded me that I had not been taken to the hospital in more than 40 years. My imaginary mind struggled to stay calm as it conjured up high waves washing over the bow of the ship I had boarded through no fault of my own.

Now, those of you that know me are aware that I am a very efficient individual, so an unplanned event such as this was totally out of my comfort zone.

Thank God I had enough sense to squash the panic attempting to wash me into the turbulent sea of despair and whisper a prayer that this would end well.

For some reason it felt better to keep my eyes closed on the 45-minute ride to Lake City, except for the two or three times I glanced at my daughter, who reminded me of Cruella De Vil as she doggedly drove in silence with a grim look on her strained face.

I suppose it was good that I couldn't see the speedometer, but looking back on the ride, I'm sure we made it in record time, well under the

normal time it takes to get there.

I spent four days at the medical center, and during that time I received excellent care for what was diagnosed as an acute case of colitis. I must say this word had never entered my thought process, and I pray to God it never has the opportunity to enter my body again.

I'm sharing this detailed account with you for several reasons. If you've missed my column, I wanted to let you know I missed writing it for you.

The second reason, and very most important, is to let you know I recovered.

The third reason is equally important. No matter how good you are at planning your life, things happen that you didn't plan for.

The final reason is simply to convey this: Learn the value of each moment of life and appreciate those who love you, as well as those who aren't part of your inner circle, yet enter your life at a pivotal moment that truly is a life or death situation.

As for taking a cruise ship, I've decided I can live a good life without setting sail on the high seas.

That is not to say it wouldn't be a grand adventure, but my September cruise was a doozy, and I think I'll stay on solid ground the next time I get an itch to travel.

### In district's general fund

# Expenses may exceed revenues by \$2.59 million

**DISTRICT**  
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an estimated \$35,696 deficit in its instructional materials balance.

"This fund typically does not overspend, but it had a huge textbook adoption this year," Valentine said.

"The total costs for our language arts and reading curriculum was over half a million dollars. Textbooks costs have gone skyrocketing," Director of Instruction Sharon Hathcock said.

"There are some CARES dollars we can use to help with this; the \$35,000 is not something to be concerned about," Valentine said.

The instructional materials budget had a cash carry or roll forward

of \$116,979.32, with an additional allocation of \$204,611, for a total of \$321,590.

However, total expenditures were \$357,286.52, leaving the anticipated \$35,696 deficit.

Transportation has a much larger deficit looming - totaling \$853,497.

"The only caveat to that is there is a bill in the legislation that would require districts to transport kids who live within one mile of the school. While that won't affect us, hopefully the increase in transportation categorial (funding) that may come with that we could use to help cover some of that deficit. We won't know until the legislature takes action," Dyal said.

The district's total allocations for transportation is \$721,503, while expenditures top \$1,575,000.

The district is facing a \$24,618 deficit in its mental health budget, "but that will be helped by action on tonight's agenda. Our mental health provider was given all these extra hours over and beyond his contract, and he said he really doesn't need them, so he's giving us back those those hours," Dyal said.

"We should also be able to pick up come CARES funding to cover the rest of it," Dyal said.

The mental health budget had a roll forward of \$42,376.69, with an allocation of \$203,667, for a budgeted total of

\$246,043. However, expenditures have totaled \$270,661.81.

As for its general fund, the district started with a fund balance of \$4.2 million as of Aug. 1.

Projected revenues are set at \$23.45 million, and projected expenses are \$26.04 million - a deficit of \$2.59 million.

"We will be transferring \$500,000 from the property casualty insurance. That will bring our projected fund balance as of June 30 to \$2.4 million. Once the \$1.7 million in total expenditures beyond anticipated revenue is removed, that will leaves us with an 8.45% fund balance (around \$800,000)," Dyal said.

The district could benefit

from the governor's announced budget for education, he said.

"This is not the operating budget we have to work with, but what the governor is recommending. It still has to go to the legislature, and they have got to decide. The good thing is that this year the governor has strong support in the legislature, and we are hoping we'll get a lot of his budget (passed), which would help us out tremendously," Dyal said.

He then pointed out highlights in the governor's budget which could potentially benefit the district:

- The FEFP (Florida Education Finance Program) of the governor's budget increases student spending to \$8,000, an

increase of \$189 per student.

- The governor has budgeted \$1,000 bonuses for classroom teachers and principals.

- Funding to continue to work toward the goal of a minimum teacher salary of \$47,500.

- In the FEFP, an increase of \$124 in the Base Student Allocation (BSA). That total would increase from \$4,372.91 in 2021-22 to a recommended \$4,496.91 for the 2022-23 school year.

- An increase in "Safe School" initiatives, mental health and instructional materials.

- Returned funding for Early Childhood Teacher scholarships.

- Child Care instructor quality teacher training.

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