



BALDWIN COUNTY PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

Government Building, Suite 220, 1601 N Columbia St

6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Henry Craig
John Westmoreland
Kendrick Butts
Emily Davis
Sammy Hall

OTHERS PRESENT

David Mcree
Carlos Tobar
Dawn Hudson
Jill Adams

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Henry Craig called the public hearing to order at 6:00 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE 1 FISCAL MATTERS

Public Hearing on Proposed Property Tax Increase

Chair Craig opened the Public Hearing for discussion of a proposed property tax increase.

Assistant County Manager Dawn Hudson made the following presentation regarding the proposed property tax increase:

Ms. Hudson stated the tax rate is set annually by the Board of Commissioners and separately by the Board of Education. She stated property is taxed on 40% of assessed value. Fair Market Value x 40% = Gross Digest; Gross Digest less exemptions = Net Digest and Net Digest x Tax Rate = Tax Levy. She explained the state formula that calculates the rollback rate. She stated the current rate is 9.83; the rollback rate is 9.64 and the proposed rate is 10.5.

Ms. Hudson then presented information about the impact of the proposed increase on a \$100,000.00 homestead property which will be \$25.80 and a non-homestead property of \$34.40. She discussed local revenue sources stating that 85% of County revenue comes from taxes. Ms. Hudson also discussed mandated services; required services and discretionary services that are provided by the County. 85% of services are mandated by the State of Georgia and 15% are discretionary services; but, these are services most citizens want such as animal control, roads & bridges. She discussed budget impacts such as rising costs of supplies, fuel, utilities, increased costs for public safety and EMS, stormwater fees, elections requirements and the loss of revenue due to the State cancelling the Central State Hospital Fire Contract.

Ms. Hudson opened the floor for questions and comments from Commissioners and the public.

The following people addressed the Board regarding the proposed tax increase.

Virginia Knapp — stated her assessed property value has increased 230% and now the millage rate will go up. She stated she has appealed the assessment; however, her appeal has not been heard yet. She stated people are having to pay more for everything and pay checks are not going up. Chairman Craig responded the County has avoided this for many years; however, with additional expenses the County must find a way to find additional revenue to continue to provide services. He encouraged her to continue to pursue the appeal.

Havey Behne — realizes sales tax dollars paid for Government Building and will pay for aquatic center; however, he questions whether tax revenue is being spent wisely.

Cindy Humphrey — questioned fire coverage on southside of County? Wondered if they only cover CSH. Why wasn't the Government Building built on County owned land rather than purchasing property. Airport and Golf Course are for small percent of citizens.

Vice Chairman Westmoreland stated the tax increase would bring in an additional \$1 million dollars in revenue and the presentation showed additional \$1.1 million in expenditures that will be necessary to provide services in the coming year.

Richard Knapp — discussed his assessment and that the huge percentage assessment should be figured into the tax rate. He stated the rate and the assessment should figure into the entire picture. Ms. Hudson responded the County is required to rollback for the assessment values and be revenue neutral. Mr. Knapp feels there should be a maximum amount that assessments can go up in a year. What is assessed value of properties going to do to the digest

Commissioner Hall responded that the digest will only be increased by about \$40,000 due to assessment. Information includes value of every property assessment.

Chairman Craig stated Commissioners must decide whether to increase millage rate or cut services.

Commissioner Butts reiterated the fact that if millage rate is not raised services will have to be cut from the 15% discretionary services.

Chairman presented an update on COVID statistics. He encouraged everyone to get vaccinated.

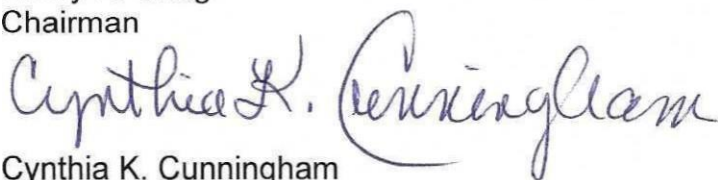
ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m. Commissioner Butts seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Henry R. Craig
Chairman



Cynthia K. Cunningham
County Clerk