

Baldwin County Commissioners
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting
December 1, 2020
6:00 p.m.

A Public Hearing on the FY 2021 Proposed Budget and the Regular Meeting of the Baldwin County Commissioners were held Tuesday, December 1, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., Suite 220, Baldwin County Government Building, Milledgeville, Georgia with Chair Henry Craig presiding.

Members Present: Henry Craig
Tommy French
Emily C. Davis
Sammy Hall
John Westmoreland

Also Present: David McRee
Carlos Tobar
Dawn Hudson
Jill Adams
Cindy Cunningham

Call to Order

Chair Henry Craig called the December 1, 2020 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Public Hearing on the FY 2021 Proposed Budget

Chair Henry Craig opened the Public Hearing on the proposed budget for FY 2021. He stated notice of the public hearing was published as required, and the purpose of the hearing is to receive public comments and input on the proposed budget for the January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 County Fiscal Year.

Assistant County Manager Dawn Hudson reported a copy of the proposed budget was made available for public review in the Commissioners' office and on the County website at www.baldwincountyga.com.

Ms. Hudson presented the proposed budget summary by fund for the period January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021. She stated the budget consists of: General Fund, Special Service District Funds including Unincorporated General Services Fund, Solid Waste District Fund, and Water / Sewer Fund; and Special Revenue Funds including Drug Treatment, E911, Law Library, Drug Task Force, Drug Education, Drug Seizure, Jail Inmate, Power Point Training Facility and the Hospital Special Service District. Ms. Hudson stated the General Fund totals \$21,904,000. She reported the Special Service District Funds total \$9,591,500 and provide services for the unincorporated area only. She presented a breakdown of the Water / Sewer Enterprise Fund and Special Revenue Funds.

Ms. Hudson stated the majority of revenues for the general fund come from taxes – property tax or sales tax. She discussed the Special Purpose Local Option Sales

Tax which is for capital expenditures. She reported the SPLOST was extended by referendum in March 2017 with collections beginning April 2018 with the expiration in March 2024. She discussed the status of SPLOST projects including the Administrative building, Courthouse renovations, law enforcement facilities and equipment, health facilities, recreation facilities; fire administration facilities and equipment; economic development; public works facilities and equipment; roads and bridges; water and sewer; animal control facilities and equipment and City projects. She explained intergovernmental revenue which consists of grant revenue from various sources for different programs. Special fees collected by the County, such as recreation, golf, or any kind of services provided by the County are estimated to total slightly more than \$2,000,000. She talked briefly about other miscellaneous revenues. She discussed information presented on a pie chart depicting revenue sources and showing that the largest portion of revenue is derived from taxes with slightly less than a 1% increase projected in revenue

Ms. Hudson discussed highlights of general fund expenditures that are in the proposed budget to include continuance of the civil service pay plan for Class 5 employees; SB 171 which provides an additional 5% pay increase for constitutionally elected officials, HB 316 which was the voting bill that was put in place for voting machines and maintenance. She stated these are some of the increased that are mandated by the State with the financial responsibility placed on counties. Other highlights that were discussed include 100% funding for the Development Authority as a result of the Service Delivery Strategy Agreement with the city; however, \$305,000 budget requests from departments are not funded in this proposed budget.

Chair Craig opened the floor for public comments / questions on the proposed FY 2021 budget.

There were no public comments, and the Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:18 p.m. by unanimous vote upon motion of Commissioner Sammy Hall, seconded by Vice Chair Tommy French.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Tommy French made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2020 Regular Meeting and the November 18 2020 Called Meeting as submitted. Commissioner Emily C. Davis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Amendment to Agenda

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to amend the Agenda to include a Proclamation to the Baldwin County School Superintendent and Board of Education. Commissioner Emily C. Davis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Proclamation to Baldwin County School System

Chair Craig presented a Proclamation to Superintendent Dr. Noris Price and Board of Education members Chandler, Jackson, Wicker and Hill commending the Board and school system for being named the 2020 Georgia Charter System of the Year by the Charter System Foundation and urged all citizens to join in recognizing the dedication and hard work of the Baldwin County Board of Education and all of its employees for working to provide an education system that meets the needs of both today's and tomorrow's children.

The Health of Baldwin County

Chair Henry Craig reported he had attended a course sponsored by ACCG titled Shaping a Healthy Community, and he wanted to share the following information: The US spends nearly 50% more money than the next highest Country on health care and has the lowest life expectancy of the 13 countries included in the information; 22% of children in Georgia live in poverty; 1 in 5 adults in Georgia experience mental health issues; 40% of children in Georgia are obese; Georgia ranks 48th highest in uninsured rates ranking higher than the US average in total uninsured population; 1 in 5 Georgians are food insecure. Mr. Craig discussed the shortage of physicians in rural Georgia. He concluded by reporting that Baldwin County is ranked 120 out of 159 of Georgia counties in health outcomes. Chair Craig stated Commissioners have a responsibility for the health of our citizens.

Resolution Establishing Additional Facilities for Holding Superior Court

County Manager Carlos Tobar reported that in light of current conditions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Baldwin County is recommending establishing additional facilities, other than the Courthouse, for holding Superior Court jury trials. After review of the situation, they have determined that the gym at Walter B. Williams Recreation Center will provide additional space that would better suit holding jury trials during the pandemic.

The County Manager presented a Resolution establishing the Walter B. Williams Recreation Department gym as additional facilities for holding Superior Court.

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to adopt the Resolution establishing additional facilities for holding Superior Court during the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioner Emily Davis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

A copy of the Resolution is herewith attached and made an official part of the minutes at pages _____ and _____.

Airbnb and VRBO

Chair Craig reported the Commissioners have received complaints regarding short-term rentals in neighborhoods. He stated Commissioners and the County Attorney have reviewed information as to how this is handled in other counties. Further information will be presented to the Board at a later date, and a public hearing will be scheduled in January on a proposed Ordinance addressing Short-Term Vacation Rentals.

Fire Service Mutual Aid Agreements

Fire Chief Victor Young presented Mutual Aid Agreements for fire services for Hancock, Putnam and Jones Counties. He stated Georgia law permits Mutual Aid agreements between Fire Departments. These agreements outline conditions for fire service assistance between jurisdictions and are entered into for the common good of the general public of the parties and for strictly governmental purposes.

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to approve the Fire Service Mutual Aid Agreements between Baldwin County and Hancock, Putnam and Jones Counties as presented. Commissioner Emily Davis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Fire and Rescue Fees

County Manager Carlos Tobar presented a fee schedule for fire and rescue fees for inspections and review of buildings, explosives, petroleum gas, personal care home permits. He stated these licenses/inspections will now be conducted by Baldwin County rather than the State Fire Marshal. A copy of the Fee Schedule will be included in the Budget Resolution.

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to approve the Fire Marshal's Fee Schedule as presented. Commissioner Emily Davis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Section 5311 Transit Application for FY 2022

Finance Director Jill Adams presented the FY 2022 Transit application in the amount of \$195,480 with a federal share of \$99,540, state share of \$600 and a local share of \$95,340. She stated this total includes \$6,000 for small capital purchases such as radios. Ms. Adams stated the grant period is October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022.

Commissioner Hall asked for information on ridership numbers and the cost per trip. Ms. Adams reported the cost per rider is \$10.00; however, this is 100% federally funded so the actual cost is \$5.00. Mr. Hall commented that he feels this is an inefficient system and not a good use of taxpayer dollars.

Chair Craig responded the program may be inadequate; but, there is no alternative solution at this time.

Commissioner French stated he has advocated for a regional transit system; however this has not happened. He stated County Manager Tobar has worked with the Middle GA RC for a regional transportation system.

Commissioner Emily Davis made a motion to approve the Section 5311 Transit application for FY 2022 as presented. Vice Chair Tommy French seconded the motion and it passed by the following vote:

Aye: French, Davis, Westmoreland, Craig

Nay: Hall

CJCC Accountability Court Enhancement & Innovation Grant Award

The Finance Director presented an Enhancement & Innovation grant award from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for the Accountability Court for the period January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021. She stated this is supplemental funding in the amount of \$28,800.

Commissioner Emily Davis made a motion to accept the CJCC grant award as presented. Vice Chair Tommy French seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Old Business

Commissioner Hall stated he would like to clarify the fact that he is not opposed to accountability courts; however, Baldwin County is responsible for these funds and must have accountability as to the expenditure of funds.

Chair Craig stated he has discussed this matter with the County Manager and Assistant Manager which will be further discussed with judges for the courts.

New Business

Commissioner Davis stated that it is World Aids Day and requested a moment of silence for those who have passed away due to this disease.

County Manager's Report

County Manager Carlos Tobar reported on the following items: Waste Management has acquired Advanced Disposal; Accountability Court will begin work on the front side of the building on Heritage Road; GDOT staff is awaiting word from FAA regarding the path; Nelson road culvert construction to begin December 7th; bids for the CDBG sewer project will be opened December 16th and DPH scheduled to move into their new building January 11, 2021.

Other Business

Chair French expressed his appreciation to Dr. Price and the Board of Education for allowing him to work with them on various projects.

Commissioner Davis asked about Christmas decoration at the Courthouse encouraged everyone to continue to practice social distancing, wear masks and practice good hygiene to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Commissioner Westmoreland asked for an update on Marshall Road. County Manager Tobar responded that additional work is required to complete this.

Juvenile Court Judge Kelly Rutherford was introduced.

Public Comment for Non-Agenda Items

There were no public comments to come before the Board.

Executive Session

Vice Chair Tommy French made a motion to adjourn into Executive Session at 7:10 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. Commissioner Sammy Hall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Reopen Regular Meeting

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to reopen the Regular Meeting at 8:20 p.m. Commissioner Emily Davis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Commissioner Sammy Hall made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:22 p.m. Commissioner John Westmoreland seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry R. Craig
Chair

Cynthia K. Cunningham
County Clerk