



BALDWIN COUNTY WORK SESSION

October 14, 2024

1601 N Columbia St, Suite 240

1:00 PM

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

John Westmoreland, Chair
Kendrick Butts
Sammy Hall
Emily Davis
Henry Craig via telephone

OTHERS PRESENT

Carlos Tobar
Dawn Hudson
Cindy Cunningham
Bo Danuser

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman John Westmoreland called the October 1, 2024 work session to order at 1:00 PM.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

Assistant County Manager Dawn Hudson presented the proposed line item budget to the Commission Members. She stated that they were \$472,000 from being in balance.

Ms. Hudson reviewed the anticipated expenditures in each departmental line items.

Ms. Hudson gave and discussed the revenue figure for:

- anticipated tax collection based on the 2024 levy,
- LOST revenues had increased by 2.5 percent
- grant revenues
- golf course revenues
- projected aquatic center revenues, and
- recreation revenues

There was a discussion about the aquatic center:

- a loss was shown for the first year to be conservative
- adopting policies
- awarding contracts for management
- being required to have a certified pool operator on site at all times of operation
- the County's lack of experience in managing an aquatic center
- the difficulty of getting life guards

Ms. Hudson discussed the line items in each department to include:

Elected Officials:

- cost of living increases for elected officials and a supplement for the chair
- there was no change to the travel and training line item

Voters Registration:

- combining voter's registration with elections and forming a new board
- 2025 would not be a large election year

- \$78,000 had been set for the new position of Election Superintendent and was based on surrounding counties as were the line item totals for the department

There was a discussion about setting up the Board of Elections.

Administrative Offices including Manager and Finance:

- software maintenance
- there was only an increase in the salaries and benefits

GIS/IT

- there was very little increase
- changes in employees
- using interns from Georgia College and State University

There was a discussion about the number of employees in each department and where that number could be found on the budget spreadsheet.

Tax Commissioner:

- there were no new requests except in the salary increases
- tax sales
- the Tax Commissioner's salary was set by statute but the county gave a supplement

Board of Assessors:

- there were vacant positions that had not been filled in three years
- the Board of Assessors met every month and had requested \$100 per meeting

There was a discussion about finding the money to balance the budget.

Public Buildings and Maintenance:

- line item included maintenance, repairs, and service contracts for the courthouse, government building, EMA and health department and senior citizens center

General Government:

- included county wide expenditures that did not fit in any other line item
- employee wellness program
- community promotions
- Community in Schools program
- the TAN note

There was a discussion about providing funding to Community in Schools and the community promotions the county supported through advertising.

County Manager Carlos Tobar explained the defined contribution and defined benefit plans.

Superior Court:

- Baldwin County was the largest in the circuit
- Requested increase in the salary for the court reporter

Clerk of Courts:

- request for an increase in salaries
- request for funds for imaging and scanning to archive old files
- request for funds for jury check in scanners and juror per diem debit cards

There was a discussion about travel and training costs.

District Attorney:

- request for \$10,000 increase in the salary supplement for each of the 4 Assistance District Attorneys
- request for a vehicle for the investigator

There was a discussion about the Assistant District Attorney's stipends.

There was a discussion about having to find \$472,000 to balance the budget.

State Court:

- State Court Judge was part time and got the same salary increase as other state elected officials
- State Court generated close to one million dollars per year
- most of the fines were set by the State

State Court Solicitor:

- request for an increase in salaries, supplies and training line items

There was a discussion about the victim's assistance fees added to cases.

Magistrate Court:

- employees receiving cost of living salary increases
- there were 4 part time magistrates

Probate Court:

- employees receiving cost of living salary increases
- request for funding for mandated e-filing of records and the upfront cost of purchasing scanners in order to comply with those mandates

There was a discussion about using sales tax money for capital purchases.

Juvenile Court:

- conflict attorneys

Public Defender:

- they returned money that wasn't used back to the counties

Public Safety:

- request for 3 positions, the number of employees and the starting salary of deputies
- increases were for payroll

Jail:

- inmate medical cost had increased
- meals cost had increased
- repeat offenders being incarcerated due to mental health

There was a discussion about the maintenance of the jail buildings and grounds and that the line item was based on the previous years of history.

Emergency Management Service:

- the line item was based on the contract

Coroner:

- line item increase was based on the cost of living and longevity raises

Animal Control:

There was a discussion about the animal control including the maximum numbers of animals the shelter could hold, the methods and personnel for getting animals adopted, euthanasia, becoming a kill shelter, spaying and neutering animals, lowering the limit of animals kept and creating a new policy.

Emergency Management Agency:

- county funded the director and deputy director positions
- the need for storage space for GEMA and FEMA emergency items, including water

Public Works:

- using SPLOST funds

- paving roads and the paving list
- the shop only serviced the heavy equipment with all other vehicle maintenance done through the leasing company

Public Health:

- contracting with River's Edge
- level of funding for DFACS
- providing indigent funeral services
- overview was paid to run the Senior Center

Recreation:

- increase in the request and using SPLOST funds
- there was no longer a contract with GCSU to use their pool

There was a discussion about maintenance at the Recreation Department.

Golf:

- the largest increase was in salaries and benefits

Library Administration:

- the cost was split with the city
- library branches

The discussion returned to recreation and providing transportation for participants.

County Extension:

- request for the 4-H position to become full time, the county's portion would be \$20,000, and that the 4-H program was an active program

Forestry Services:

- this line item is what the county paid to help prevent forest fires

Development Authority:

- request for an increase in salary
- One Georgia Loan interest payments would be for two more years

Airport:

- there was not a lot of adjustment to the line item
- revenue generated from hangar rental, personal property taxes on the planes, and movie location fees

Transfers from General Fund:

- per the Service Delivery Strategy, there would be a transfer of funds to the library for capital improvements.
- Transfer of subsidy funds to E911

Ms. Hudson stated that there was no contingency included in the budget.

There was a discussion about:

- property and liability insurance
- retirement increased but should be stabilized because of the change in plan
- budget adoption was required by December 31st
- changing the policy for animal control and commissioners having shelter information presented to them
- 77% of the proposed budget increases were for salary and benefits

There was a discussion about increasing revenues by adding housing to the tax base.

There was a discussion about increasing the millage rate to 10.32, that the budget was over by \$472,000, there was about a three-month operation contingency, and the TAN note.

The commissioners thanked Ms. Hudson for the information and would like to have budget meetings like this every year.

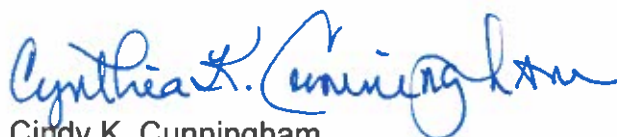
ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hall made a motion to adjourn the work session at 3:53 PM.
Commissioner Butts seconded the motion and was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



John H. Westmoreland,
Chair



Cindy K. Cunningham,
County Clerk