

**DAWSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
WORK SESSION MINUTES – THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2023  
DAWSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER ASSEMBLY ROOM  
25 JUSTICE WAY, DAWSONVILLE, GEORGIA 30534  
4:00 PM**

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*Those present were Chairman Billy Thurmond; Commissioner Seth Stowers, District 1; Commissioner Chris Gaines, District 2; Commissioner Alexa Bruce, District 3; County Manager Joey Leverette; County Attorney Angela Davis; County Clerk Kristen Cloud; and interested citizens of Dawson County. District 4 Commissioner Emory Dooley was not present.*

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. 2023 Millage Rate and Property Tax (*1st of 3 hearings; 2nd hearing will be held at 4 p.m. July 20, 2023, and 3rd hearing will be held at 6 p.m. August 3, 2023*)

Chairman Thurmond made a presentation concerning the 2023 Millage Rate and Property Tax.

Chairman Thurmond opened the hearing by asking if there was anyone present who wished to be heard on the 2023 Millage Rate and Property Tax.

The following spoke on the 2023 Millage Rate and Property Tax:

Dan Dorfeld, Dawsonville, Georgia, said he and other citizens have formed a working group called the ‘Tax Accountability Steering Committee’ to focus on “the runaway property tax train that is rolling along in the county.” Dorfeld mentioned several goals that he said he would like to see achieved alongside the Board of Commissioners, including: a complete rollback of 2023 valuations pending a reassessment of all of the county’s parcels - residential, agricultural and commercial; a county-wide professional and impartial reassessment of property valuations; and a modification to age-based exemptions. “This has evolved over many years, and we know that the current Board of Commissioners inherited this mess,” said Dorfeld. “It became painfully obvious in last month’s BOC meeting when over 15 residents urged you to take action. We recognize that involves the state of Georgia, so we’re not blaming you, but we’re asking you to help support legislative action that would be formulated. Senior citizens in the county are getting crushed, particularly those on fixed incomes. They’re unfairly carrying the taxation burden compared to other counties. This has been greatly exasperated by the recent massive and non-uniform state spike in evaluations by the Tax Assessor’s office. While the BOC can help the millage rates, we know it doesn’t impact the Board of Education’s millage rate, which you stated constitutes two-thirds of residential tax bills ... Therefore, our ask is that both the county and the Board of Education, who we’ll be meeting with, appoint representatives to work with this task force to achieve a reasonable outcome ... We ask that you take this task force seriously and work with us on the important issue that impacts 100% of the citizens that are your constituents.” Dorfeld said the group also expects to meet with the state and utilize social media in its efforts.

Bryan Roy, Dawsonville, Georgia, said he has lived in Dawson County for 20 years and served 24 years in the military before he retired. “I live in a very small home in a

subdivision, so I am well under 2,000 square feet. I am one of the people that this has impacted the most. My valuation in the last three years on my assessment has gone up 73 percent and, for somebody who lives on a military retirement, that is a staggering amount of money that they have collected. He mentioned unfair exemptions and assessments, adding, "...on average, my house, on the lower end, went up 51 percent just this year. If I looked at all the wealthy houses in this county, they only went up about 30 percent. So the Assessor really hit the low end more than they hit the upper end."

Chairman Thurmond asked if there was anyone else present who wished to speak on the 2023 Millage Rate and Property Tax and, hearing none, closed the hearing.

The next public hearing concerning the 2023 Millage Rate and Property Tax will be held at the July 20, 2023, Work Session.

## NEW BUSINESS

1. Presentation of Board Appointment:
  - a. **Long Range Planning Committee**
    - i. Mya Thomae- *replacing Hugh Stowers*  
*This item will be placed on the July 20, 2023, Voting Session Agenda.*
2. County Manager Report  
*This item was for information only.*
3. County Attorney Report  
*County Attorney Davis had no information to report and requested an Executive Session.*

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

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Billy Thurmond, Chairman

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Kristen Cloud, County Clerk