

MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 2016, AT 12:00 NOON IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING #2, 214 W. KING STREET

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

The Chairman called the meeting to order.
Pledge of allegiance to the Flag
Roll call to determine quorum

The following members were present:

Mike Babb, Chairman
Harold Brooker, Vice Chairman
Lynn Laughter, Member
Barry W. Robbins, Member
Roger Crossen, Member

Others Present:

Mark Gibson, County Administrator
Robert Smalley, County Attorney
Department Heads
Citizens
Press

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Brooker and seconded by Commissioner Robbins. Approval of the agenda was unanimous.

PUBLIC HEARING:

2016 Millage Rate:

Chairman Babb opened the meeting for a public hearing regarding the proposed 2016 Millage Rate for Whitfield County. This was the second Public Hearing regarding the millage rate another meeting will be held during the August 8th, regular business meeting.

Mr. Nelson Conger who resides at 4255 County Way, came before the Board to speak about the proposed millage rate increase. Mr. Conger stated that the Board should try to find another option instead of raising the taxes of property owners. Mr. Conger suggested that the Board do away with some services that are not necessary to the County such as Recreation.

Mr. Frank Barnes a resident of Whitfield County, addressed the Board regarding the proposed millage rate increase. Mr. Barnes noted that an independent audit be done on the County's finances to see if any wasteful spending could be found.

Mr. Marshall Mauldin a resident of Whitfield County, came forward to speak to the Board about the proposed millage rate increase. Mr. Mauldin noted that with Whitfield County being a low income County raising the millage rate will only result in more low income citizens.

Mr. David Pennington came before the Board to say that more services between Whitfield County and the Cities within the County should be consolidated. Mr. Pennington further stated that the main issue is a structural issue and that a unified government is that way to go.

Mr. Daryl Long came before the Board to suggest that the County give the City an opportunity to buy or sell the Northwest Georgia Convention Center. The County portion of the funding of the trade center is around \$400,000 a year, which comes out of the general fund. The City of Dalton's portion is around the same amount a year; however, the City uses the Hotel/Motel tax collections to fund their portion of the trade center. The City of Dalton averages around \$1 million dollars of hotel/motel tax collections a year which they use to fund their portion of the trade center. Mr. Long asked the Board to start communication with the City of Dalton so that the County wouldn't have to continue to fund the trade

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center out of the general fund every year. Chairman Babb noted that communication has already began with the City regarding this issue.

Mr. John Didier came forward and addressed the Board. Mr. Didier noted that consolidation of services with the City of Dalton is not a solution on the County's budget issues. Mr. Didier noted that considering the City owns Dalton Utilities which have over \$830 million dollar in assets, that the residents of the City of Dalton would not be in favor of a merger. Mr. Didier noted that the County should find other options to balance the County's budget.

Frances & Carter Boyd came before the Board to ask about her recent tax assessment. Mrs. Boyd noted that she has filed an appeal with the Board of Assessors. Tax Commissioner Danny Sane and Chief Appraiser Ashley O'Donald were both in the audience and are both going to assist The Boyd's with their question.

Mrs. Naomi Swanson who resides in the City of Dalton came before the Board to speak about the possibility of cutting services to the Citizens of the County. Mrs. Swanson noted that if governments do not offer these services to the Citizens that it would promote private business to provide these services which she thinks would be a good thing for Whitfield County.

Mr. Greg Hasty who resides in the Town of Cohutta came before the Board to speak about the proposed millage rate. Mr. Hasty is against the millage increase and asks that the Board to find another solution to the County's budget deficit.

There being no other comments or questions, Chairman Babb declared the public hearing closed.

ADJOURN: Unanimous

MIKE BABB, CHAIRMAN
WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BLANCA CARDONA, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: / /