

MEETING MINUTES FOR THE BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 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
Press

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

Budget Public Hearing:

Chairman Babb noted that the public hearing was advertised in the newspaper and the proposed 2017 budget is posted on the County's website, and by State law its required that prior to adoption of the budget a public hearing needs to be held. Chairman Babb further stated that there will be another public hearing during the regular December 12th, 2016 Board of Commissioners meeting the adoption of the budget is also set for that date. Chairman Babb noted that the date may change in order for the Board to receive input from the Citizens at both public hearings. Chairman Babb further noted that per policy five (5) minutes will be allowed per speaker.

Chairman Babb opened the 2017 Budget Public Hearing.

Finance Director Alicia Vaughn presented the overall status of the 2017 budget. Vaughn noted that general fund revenues for the County will be \$45 million with expenditures being \$45 million, also the Special Tax Districts show revenues of \$53 million with expenditures of \$53 million showing a balanced budget for 2017. Vaughn noted that there is a \$2.2 million deficit in the 2016 budget that would be paid for out of the general fund balance. Vaugh went over some of the 2016 vs. 2017 changes in expenditures to include; DA-new grant funded positions plus benefits, Tax Assessor-personal property audit, MPO-consulting, Public Works-2017 LMIG increase plus match. Vaughn also went over some changes in the 2016 vs. 2017 change in revenues to include; millage rate increase, LMIG-increase in funding, VOCA/VAWA grants-increase in funding. Vaughn noted the Board funded pension in the 2015 budget but not for 2016's budget. Vaughn stated that the 2017 proposed budget includes a 100% pension contribution. Vaughn noted that the 2017 proposed budget shows a total of \$1.2 million in general fund capital projects. Vaughn further noted that the 2017 proposed budget includes public safety and employee pay adjustments, during the last eight years that County's employees have received only two pay adjustments and retaining trained and skilled personnel helps Whitfield County remain competitive with surrounding areas. Vaughn also noted that Whitfield County has a low spending per capita among the surrounding counties with a comparable population. Vaughn went over the sales tax history for previous years, the LOST agreement that became effective January 1, 2013 was reduced from 64.850% to 63.752%, in 2017 the LOST percentage will be 62.653%. Vaughn further noted that the \$608,000 from the general fund will be used to cover the 2017 budget deficit to the 911 fund balance.

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Mr. Phillip Neff came before the Board to speak. Mr. Neff noted that the County is increasing the taxes but there has been no growth, and that taxes in the County have gone up compared to the City of Dalton.

Mr. Marshall Mauldin asked the Board who would be receiving pay adjustments. The Board noted that the proposed 2017 budget shows pay adjustments to keep Whitfield County competitive in retaining certified trained and skilled County employees.

Mrs. Kathy Holmes came before the Board to speak. Mrs. Holmes noted that she doesn't have an answer that would help the County's financial situation. Mrs. Holmes further noted that she understands that the tax digest is down, sales tax revenues are down, the 2.5 mill increase and no growth in the County. Mrs. Holmes would like for the County not to spend the reverses and to use it towards the County's fund balance.

Mr. Nelson Conger came before the Board to speak. Mr. Conger asked the Board to look into consolidating with the smaller cities.

Mr. David Pennington came before the Board to speak. Mr. Pennington noted that the proposed 2017 budget shows the County is spending all of the \$6.2 million surplus. Mr. Pennington further noted that the Board needs to have more of a say in the budgets of the Constitutional Officers and Courts. Mr. Pennington states that if there should be a collapse in the economy there will be no milling or paying so there is no point in purchasing a milling machine for the Public Works department.

Mr. John Didier came before the Board to speak. Mr. Didier asked the Board to reconsider the purchase of a milling machine for the Public Works department.

Mr. Van Roberts suggested that the Board of Commissioners attend a Dalton City Council meeting.

Mr. Frank Barnes asked the Board if the County is receiving all of the revenues from the 911 phone fees. The Board let Mr. Barnes know that there is legislation that is being worked on to help all of Georgia's County's recover 911 fees.

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: / /