

MEETING MINUTES FOR THE BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2017 AT 6:00 P.M. IN ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING #2, 214 W. KING STREET

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

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

The following members were present:

R. Lynette Laughter, Chairman
Harold Brooker, Vice Chairman
Barry W. Robbins, Member
Roger Crossen, Member
Greg Jones, Member

Others Present:

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

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

Budget Public Hearing:

Chairman Laughter noted that the public hearing was advertised in the newspaper and the proposed 2018 budget is posted on the County's website, and by State law it is required that prior to adoption of the budget a public hearing needs to be held. Chairman Laughter further stated that the adoption of the proposed budget will be held on December 11th, 2017 during the regular business meeting. Chairman Laughter further noted that per policy five (5) minutes will be allowed per speaker.

Before Chairman Laughter opened the Public Hearing Chairman Laughter read a comment from Vice-Chairman Brooker that stated that he would like to move the County forward. Chairman Laughter said she wanted the public to know that all Commissioners want to do the best job they can for the County and want to move the County forward.

Chairman Laughter opened the 2018 Budget Public Hearing.

Finance Director Alicia Vaughn presented the overall status of the 2018 budget. Vaughn noted that general fund revenues for the County will be \$47 million with expenditures being \$47 million, including a general fund surplus of \$683,715, also the Special Tax Districts show revenues of \$56 million with expenditures of \$56 million, including a \$435,379 surplus showing a balanced budget for 2018. Vaughn noted that there is a \$484,167 surplus in the 2017 budget. Vaughn noted that the decrease of sales tax revenue for 2012-2018 is 36% totaling \$5.4 million dollars. The LOST agreement that became effective January 1, 2013 was reduced from 64.850% to 63.752%, in 2017 the LOST percentage is 62.653%, the LOST percentage will drop two more times, once in 2019 and again in 2021.

Natima Walker from the Greenhouse Child Advocacy Center spoke to the Board about the services the Center is able to provide with funding from Whitfield County. Ms. Walker noted that the Center has helped over 200 children. Ms. Walker then said, in response to Commissioner Brooker's question if their caseload had gone up 108% as their budget request had. Ms. Walker said the caseload has gone up 108% since 2013 when the Greenhouse received \$12,000 from the County and that amount has not increased since then.

Mark and Greta Beckler came forward to speak of their Greenhouse experience. Mr. Beckler informed

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The Board that in February 2016 they cared for siblings from an abusive home. The Becklers spoke of The difficulties they were having in trying to connect with the children and ultimately one of the siblings had to be placed in a different home. At that time the Becklers were referred to the Greenhouse for counseling for both child and their family and helped them greatly to help the child understand their trauma and for their family to help their children to process what they were seeing. Mr. Beckler noted that even after the child was placed in a potential adoptive home, the Greenhouse still provided their family with individual counseling and support.

Mr. Phillip Neff came before the Board to speak. Mr. Neff noted that this is the second year that he is paying higher County taxes than City of Dalton taxes.

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

ADJOURN: Unanimous

R. LYNETTE LAUGHTER, CHAIRMAN
WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BLANCA CARDONA, COUNTY CLERK

DATE: / /