

**MINUTES**  
**EIGHTH BUDGET MEETING OF THE**  
**COLQUITT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**FISCAL YEAR 2015 - 2016**  
**THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2015**  
**5:00 o'clock p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The eighth budget meeting for Fiscal Year 2015 - 2016 was called to order at 5:00 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Terry R. Clark. The meeting was duly called and advertised.

**PRESENT:** Those present were Commissioners Luke Strong, Winfred Giddens, Marc DeMott, Donna Herndon, Paul Nagy, Johnny Hardin, Chairman Terry R. Clark, County Attorney Lester M. Castellow, County Administrator Chas Cannon, Finance Director Wayne Putnal, and County Clerk Melissa Lawson.

**FISCAL YEAR 2015 – 2016 BUDGET CONTINUED:** Mr. Cannon stated that current budget requests were down approximately 1.85% from last year, and briefly reviewed proposed millage rates with the board.

Mr. Cannon also presented millage rate options if the board were to utilize an additional \$200,000.00 of reserve funds. Mr. Cannon stated that if the millage rate continued to be lowered, and even greater budget needs were to be presented the next fiscal year, the increase needed to fund county operations could potentially be higher.

Mr. Cannon reviewed the 1.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for county employees, and informed the board that \$125,000.00 for merit pay increases was still included in the proposed budget.

A reduction in budgeted funds for the Colquitt County Health Department was briefly discussed.

Mr. Cannon reviewed a list of other budget revisions with the board, including Library funding and a \$60,000.00 reduction in overtime for county personnel.

**DRUG TASK FORCE MEETING:** At this time, Mr. Cannon informed the board of a meeting between himself, Captain Julius Cox, Moultrie Police Chief Frank Lang, and City Manager Mike Scott to discuss the joint drug enforcement team. Mr. Cannon stated the meeting was very positive, but further stated that none of the suggested changes had been implemented.

Mr. Cannon informed the board that the per diem rate charged for the housing of prisoners at the county jail had not been changed since 1999. As a result, Mr. Cannon explained his intent to generate correspondence to surrounding municipalities announcing the establishment of an updated per diem rate of \$38.48 per inmate.

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**BUDGET CONTINUED**: Mr. Cannon provided a list of county provided cell phones, as well as a list of department heads currently utilizing their own personal cell phones. Mr. Cannon proposed a \$50.00 monthly cell phone stipend for these individuals, citing an annual cost of \$6,600.00.

Mr. Cannon requested feedback from the board.

Commissioner DeMott asked if this subject was brought to Mr. Cannon's attention. Mr. Cannon replied that it was, by several department heads.

Chairman Clark and Commissioner DeMott remarked that they would prefer a stipend rather than purchasing cell phones for these individuals.

Commissioner Hardin stated that it was an embarrassment, when taking into consideration the salaries and benefits of the department heads in question, to argue over a \$50.00 cell phone stipend.

Commissioner Herndon questioned if it would be less costly to pay a stipend rather than purchase cell phone equipment.

Commissioner Nagy questioned if Mr. Cannon had received complaints. Mr. Cannon stated that the complaints were minimal.

Commissioner Hardin stated that granting the stipend could possibly open the door for additional requests for stipends.

The benefits and drawbacks of granting a cell phone stipend were discussed.

Commissioner Nagy stated that he would like more information regarding individual need for the stipend.

It was the consensus of the board to remove the cell phone stipend from the proposed budget.

Mr. Cannon discussed the reduction of indirect costs in the E-911 Fund, stating that he had informed the city that the county would not charge indirect costs to the city.

Mr. Cannon stated that based upon the Maximus study that was performed regarding the recreation program in 2001, Maximus recommended including those indirect costs when factoring cost analysis.

Commissioner Nagy questioned progress concerning revision of the Service Delivery Strategy.

Mr. Cannon discussed the overall budget for the Special Service District, stating that overall, the budget was still larger than the previous year.

Discussion ensued regarding publication of the five year history of levy.

Mr. Putnal stated that any tax increase would be calculated on the digest as a whole, and reminded all present that the discrepancy regarding Gross M&O millage rates in the county must be corrected.

Mr. Cannon presented an overall list of changes to the General Fund since the last budget meeting.

Mr. Putnal stated when the millage rate was last increased, no reserve funds were utilized.

Mr. Cannon stated that the intent was to budget liberally but spend conservatively.

Commissioner Hardin stated that county employees had done an excellent job at maintaining a minimal level of spending the last several years.

Chairman Clark wondered if not raising the millage rate accordingly would present financial hardships in the future.

Commissioner Hardin stated that when reserve funds are budgeted, it is always hoped that they will not need to be utilized.

Chairman Clark stated that the millage rate increase was necessary in order to correct the discrepancy in Gross M&O millage rates in the Incorporated and Unincorporated areas of the county.

Commissioner Hardin stated that any millage rate increase was difficult to digest, due to previous county increases and recent school board increases.

Mr. Cannon stated it was imperative to decrease spending, and to increase revenue outside of property taxes.

Commissioner Hardin stated that the landfill would be an excellent way to generate revenue. Mr. Cannon agreed, stating that if this was accomplished, the substantial amount spent each year to transfer solid waste out of the county would be saved.

Chairman Clark mentioned increasing the millage rate to 1.5% in the Unincorporated areas. Mr. Putnal stated that, if so, necessary capital would be added back to the budget.

Increases in inflation and increases in the Consumer Price Index were briefly discussed.

Again, Mr. Cannon mentioned how significantly agricultural exemptions impact Colquitt County.

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Commissioner Nagy questioned how the discrepancy with the millage rate could have continued for so long.

Mr. Cannon stated that for the last six years, taxes have been lower in the Unincorporated areas of the county, resulting in lost revenue. Mr. Cannon further stated that this must be corrected and urged board members to foster relationships with other local entities as well as state representatives.

Commissioner Herndon also questioned the discrepancy regarding millage rates and how the discrepancy went unnoticed for such an extended period of time.

Mr. Cannon stated that establishing and setting the millage rate was a collaborative effort between several departments.

Commissioner Hardin stated that Cindy Harvin, Tax Commissioner, questioned the discrepancy on several occasions.

Commissioner Hardin stated that in a case such as this, reserves could be utilized in an effort to keep the millage rate down.

Mr. Cannon stated that Colquitt County had a relatively small budget when compared to other surrounding entities.

Commissioner Herndon commented that she learned while in training that the millage rate should be something unknown from year to year, due to the fact that a budget should be based on what it takes to operate the county.

Commissioner Nagy stated that most people do not realize that the School Board received Local Option Sales Tax proceeds, this being the main reason for their low millage rate.

Mr. Cannon stated that the millage rate would be determined and adopted once the tax digest was finalized.

At this time, Mr. Putnal presented a budget amendment for the board's approval. Mr. Putnal explained that this particular amendment was needed due to the depletion of funds within certain line items near the close of the fiscal year.

Mr. Putnal stated that a portion of the amendment was necessary in order to compensate for public defender fees for the Juvenile Court. Mr. Cannon explained that this was a mandated cost for the county, and stated that mandated costs comprise 51% of the county budget.

Mr. Cannon stated that the board increased the risk of amending the budget by lowering the millage rate.

**APPROVAL OF MOTION TO ADOPT BUDGET AMENDMENT:**

Commissioner DeMott made the motion to approve budget amendment BA-2015-19, as presented, by Finance Director Wayne Putnal. Commissioner Nagy made a second. Those

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in favor were Commissioners DeMott, Nagy, Herndon, Hardin, and Giddens. Opposed was Commissioner Strong.

Mr. Cannon presented the proposed way ahead, consisting of focusing on the upcoming ABM energy project proposal, potential construction of a county landfill, and continuing to build and foster relationships with members of surrounding government entities, as well as state legislators.

Chairman Clark mentioned the possibility of meeting with state legislators when they are in town to attend the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition in October.

Mr. Cannon agreed, stating that this was an opportune time to meet with legislators in order to discuss issues that significant impact Colquitt County.

Mr. Cannon stated that the county would begin to feel the budgetary impact of the increased state motor fuel tax beginning July 1, 2015.

Mr. Cannon reviewed a list of key, upcoming dates with the board.

The board recessed at 6:05 for a ten minute break.

**DELINQUENT SOLID WASTE COLLECTION UPDATE:** Upon return from break, Mr. Castellow updated the board regarding recent developments concerning the collection of delinquent solid waste taxes. Mr. Castellow stated that there were several instances of property owners not being aware of delinquent solid waste taxes when purchasing property. Instead, Mr. Castellow explained that they became aware upon commencement of the levy process by the Solid Waste office.

Mr. Castellow stated that most local attorneys do not think of solid waste taxes as being enforced in the same manner as property taxes. However, Mr. Castellow stated that they are enforced in the exact same manner, and mentioned the possibility of local attorneys calling the solid waste office during the title examination process. Mr. Castellow stated that he would follow up with this issue by the generation of correspondence to all affected individuals, and further stated that in the meantime, the accounts would be pulled from levy but the liens against these properties would not be satisfied.

Mr. Castellow also reminded the board that the sale of fireworks would be legal in the state of Georgia effective July 1, 2015.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Commissioner DeMott made the motion at 6:20 p.m. to go into Executive Session to discuss the disposition of real estate, pending or potential litigation, and a personnel matter. Commissioner Nagy made a second. The motion carried unanimously. (An affidavit, as required by Georgia Law, was executed by all Board members present stating under oath that the subject matter of the closed meeting was devoted to the matters within the exception provided by law and identified the specific

relevant exception as provided by law. The affidavit is hereby made a part of the minutes by reference thereto.)

**REGULAR SESSION:** Commissioner Nagy made the motion at 6:57 p.m. to reconvene into regular session. Commissioner Giddens made a second. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Clark commended Mr. Cannon on the fine job he has performed thus far in the capacity of County Administrator of Colquitt County.

**APPROVAL OF MOTION TO EXTEND INSPECTION PERIOD – TERAMORE DEVELOPMENT, LLC:** Commissioner Hardin made the motion to approve extension of the Inspection Period, as provided by the Purchase and Sale Agreement dated August 15, 2014 with Teramore Development, LLC, to July 31, 2015. Commissioner Giddens made a second. Those in favor were Commissioners Hardin, Giddens, Nagy, and Strong. Commissioners DeMott abstained due to a conflict of interest. Commissioner Herndon also abstained due to a conflict of interest.

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Terry R. Clark  
Chairman

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Melissa Lawson  
County Clerk

Approved:

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# AFFIDAVIT

This is to certify that the Colquitt County Board of Commissioners held an Executive Session Meeting (closed meeting) on June 11, 2015 at 6:20 o'clock a.m.(p.m.). The majority of the quorum present voted in the open meeting to go into Executive Session (closed meeting). The subject matter discussed was applicable under the following code section(s):

O.C.G.A. 50-14-2(1) - Consultation with an attorney regarding pending or potential legal action.

O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(4) - Discussion of future acquisition of real estate. (Notice was given as required and minutes taken.)

O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(6) - Discussion of personnel matters.

I further certify that the subject matter of the Executive Session (closed meeting) was devoted to matters within the exception provided by law and the above checked identifies the specific relevant exception.

This 11<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2015.

Terry Clark  
Terry Clark, Chairman

Winfred Giddens  
Winfred Giddens, Commissioner

Donna Herndon  
Donna Herndon, Commissioner

Johnny Hardin  
Johnny Hardin, Commissioner

Luke Strong  
Luke Strong, Commissioner

Marc DeMott  
Marc DeMott, Commissioner

Paul Nagy  
Paul Nagy, Commissioner

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 11<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2015.

Melissa Lawson  
County Clerk or Notary Public  
My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

