

GRADY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING MINUTES

November 7, 2019 Budget Public Meeting 9:00 am

The Grady County Board of Commissioners met on October 23, 2019 at 6:00 pm for the Budget Public Hearing meeting. Chair LaFaye Copeland, Vice-Chair Keith Moye, Commissioners Phillip Drew, June Knight, Ray Prince, County Administrator Buddy Johnson, Financial Director Holly Murkerson and Executive Assistant Mary Griffin were present.

Mrs. Copeland opened the meeting with prayer and the pledge to the flag.

Motion by Mr. Prince, second by Mr. Drew to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was approved.

Public Hearing

Mrs. Copeland reviewed the rules for the public hearing.

Mr. Johnson, County Administrator, opened the hearing by stating where we are in the budget process.

- There has been one change to the proposed budget that would positively impact the millage rate increase needs for Grady County. The passing of the SPLOST referendum.
- We have made major overhauls of the failed financial reporting issues that plagued the County in previous years and through that process we have uncovered many shortfalls in revenues that are not performing or simply no longer exist.
- We have also uncovered many budgeting shortfalls that either were underbudgeted or simply not budgeted properly.
- We have inventoried our capital assets and equipment this past year which to no surprise is in dire need of updating in many Departments and Offices throughout the County.
 - Our Roads and Bridges equipment is extremely outdated and is costing us a large amount of funding through repairs and basic upkeep of old and outdated equipment.
 - The Sheriff's Office and jail both have requested over a half million dollars in capital asset needs, personnel, and equipment that they deem required for the performance of public safety.
 - EMS and Fire both need vehicles to replace the outdated or down vehicles in their departments.
 - We have undergone an emergency overhaul of the sanitation/garbage site issues in our County this year that will roll into 2020 to complete.

We have cut all the possible fat we can to offset some of these costs however the additional funding needs have unfortunately placed the County in an emergency budgetary crisis that will require increased revenues to correct the problems that persist and will not correct themselves without intervention.

- The County Road Maintenance/Construction needs must be addressed
- Construction Equipment/vehicles must be updated
- Public Safety Vehicles and Equipment must be purchased and updated
- Sanitation and garbage site renovation and restructure must be completed
- Bonds and incurred debt must be paid on time to avoid penalties and further credit rating drops.
- Tired Creek Lake maintenance and upkeep plus economic development research must continue.
- Lost Budgetary Revenues must be replenished with sustainable revenues
- **Note** we are utilizing fund balance moneys for this budget, but that fund balance cannot sustain the county over two years (even if the economy stays strong) and if no decision is made to increase the revenues, we will deplete the available cash fund balance by 2021.
- ☐ **Sustainable Revenue options for the County are generated in three basic ways.**
 - 1) Property Taxes
 - 2) Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST),
 - 3) Local Option Sales Tax (LOST).

A fourth option is the Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST), which the county does not have available currently.
- **SPLOST passing will allow for some relief to the millage increase if passed by the voters on November 5th, 2019. (Approximately 2.75 mils)**
- **Millage increase needed is 2 Mills since the SPLOST referendum passed.**

- **A mil is estimated at \$555,000.**
- **SPLOST Generates approximately \$1 . 5 Million per year.**

This past year, while a challenge, has been extremely productive and we are ahead of where I personally expected us to be as far as improvements and necessary structural changes.

- We have updated our required technical deficiencies that would have inevitably opened us up to cyberattacks and viruses going into 2020.
- We have made great strides in the administrative office as to the efficiency, effectiveness and oversight of the financial and human resources departments that were previously in total disarray and out of compliance to the point of significant findings in the annual audit reports. These findings have been corrected and we have put things in place that have us on track to ensure the audit will continue to show the county functioning above the basic requirements in 2020.
- We have mended all the government and many of the citizen relationships that were a hindrance to progressive success, and we are now working in unison for economic growth and positive changes for the future.
- We have attacked the garbage and trash issues head on and moved forward with a strategic plan to eliminate the sanitation problems that have embarrassed our great County in the past.
- We have attacked the road issues with what force we possibly could. Utilizing manpower and innovative ideas to overcome the shortfalls in equipment and funding.
- We have cleaned up our grant fund issues and are working to ensure the deficiencies in those areas are never repeated.

Above all we have turned the ship around for the county and in the right direction and now we must get the coal to produce the steam to make that ship move toward financial stability and economic success.

Barbara Erdmann, 985 5th St SE

Mrs. Erdmann stated her main concern is at this late time it is hard to budget for the increase and at the time of year that they are due. Wants to know why we pay taxes in December. Mrs. Darius explained the process to Mrs. Erdmann.

Gina Miller, 111 5th Ave SE

Concerned that the hearings are held during the week and only had one evening meeting and that was during red ribbon week when people who are involved in the community could not come. She is concerned as her taxes continue to go up.

Before presenting the formal action, Mrs. Copeland read a prepared statement as to why she had promised her constituents that she would not raise taxes.

FORMAL ACTION

FA053-19 Motion by Mr. Drew, second by Mr. Moye to increase the millage rate to 2 mills. Mr. Drew, Mr. Prince, and Mr. Moye voted for and Mrs. Copeland and Mrs. Knight voted against. The motion was approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Moye and second by Mr. Prince. The motion was approved.

LAFAYE COPELAND, CHAIR

KEITH MOYE, VICE-CHAIR

RAY PRINCE, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

JOHN WHITE, COUNTY CLERK

JUNE KNIGHT, COMMISSIONER

PHILLIP DREW, COMMISSIONER